

North Kent Lotus Group



Dear Enthusiast

We did it again - picked the perfect day for the barbeque. A lovely sunny Sunday, plenty of lovely Loti (and others), lovely food and lovely company. We had many compliments so a big thanks to the all those who helped on the day. Chris sent me an email.....

Judi and I would like to thank all the "Kippers" who worked so hard cooking the food for another excellent event. We do not know how they coped with the smoke and the heat!! The weather was perfect and a good crowd made for a very enjoyable day. Many thanks to all the NKLK workers who made it possible.

A rather amusing (or sad note for grumpy old men like me) was the "Lamborghini affair". Arriving like a praying mantis circling its Lotus prey it toured the field and saw that a private event was taking place and duly parked in the front in prime position.

.....How awkward they should have felt amongst the pretty light weight Lotuses and their polite owners. Oh what it is to be thick skinned!!

Thanks for that, Chris. I must add I thought the Lambo struck me as being a little dull-looking especially when you put it up against a car with true supercar looks - Jon and Michelle's V8 for instance??! Perhaps it was the colour.

For a selection of photos from the Barbeque have a look at the website.

Simon had the Elite ready for the BBQ (just!) and I must say it has a very nice paint job - the car's been transformed!



I forgot to report last month that my excruciating squeak (on the car) has now been fixed.

Back in May at Crystal Palace, I was chatting to Neil about it and scratching a proverbial chin he said "probably a shock-absorber". Well, I don't know if it's my descriptive powers or Neil's diagnosis ability but he got it right in one. So as they say "job done". The hard part's going to be trying to pay Norman for the work!!

I didn't make it to Donnington again this year, possibly next year but if anybody did go a short write up would be most welcome - so let me know.

The Club Elite trackday at Goodwood is looming, but even with Chris Parker's efforts to swell the list, numbers are not high. I'm not sure what the break-even figure is but let's hope it all works out for the day. As I've said before, even

if you're not booked in for the track, you can always get a free ride - so try and make it.

Just before that on the Wednesday we have the Mid-week Run - usual format - a coffee stop, interesting visit and pub lunch. Please meet at the Moat car park at Wrotham with full gas tanks for a sharp 10 a.m. getaway.

The club night saw a fair old turnout of cars in the car park and one new member - so a big welcome to Robert Stevens from Sidcup who has a Caterham 7 in classic green and yellow. It was also good to see Bob G - the V8's been off the road for a while so we haven't seen him in recent months.

John H has supplied his Goodwood FOS observations over the page (as promised from last time) and incidentally last months mystery car with Lotus connections was the Ecotricity Nemesis a 170mph, 8.5 seconds 0-100 supercar powered by wind. If you don't believe me have a look at their website. It all sounds pretty good to me but the thought of all those baked beans.....

I can't believe the next meeting is the September one, also it's late in the month, on the 14th - so autumn will be well underway. Sue and I should be in Spain that week but we've got Goodwood and the Mid Week Run before then so I'll see you at either or both of them.

John

GREATWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED 2011

I had decided against going to the Goodwood Festival this year, having perhaps "overdone it" in 2010 by going for all four days. However, a week before the event, I was offered some almost-free tickets for the Friday and Sunday, and caved in!

FRIDAY

Supercars up the Hill.....

The first car of interest was spotted in the GRRC members car park on the way in, a newly restored red Elan S1 26R convertible. I have no idea if such a car ever left Cheshunt, but it was Gorgeous!



As I walked through the ticket check-in I had a call from Tom Reddington, ex Bell and Colville sales/parts/admin star, asking if I was attending and if so, suggesting we meet up, and so my unplanned day started to take shape. We arranged to meet up in the Supercar Paddock. I watched the Supercar run up The Hill first, and thought the Trades Description Act might be being violated by some of the less-than-super participants, which included the new Vauxhall Astra three-door, a Jag saloon and one of those "Ferrari commemorative" Fiat 500's... The truth is, even bonafide supercars are a bit outclassed at this event. One car taking part was the Hennessy Venom, which you will know is a somewhat elongated and over-engined Exige-based special. The "expert" doing the commentary on this first run of the day informed onlookers that it was an Exige, but was thankfully put right by his better informed colleague...



I met up with Tom in the Supercar Paddock where he wanted to watch them returning from the run, and he told me that he is now the proud owner, State-side, of a DeLorean. Apparently, despite being a "rebuilt" car it let's rain in too easily to bring it to Blighty! We went for a wander and he caught up with a few acquaintances on the Lotus and Bill Shepherd Mustang trade stands. Last year they had a replica of the "Elanor" Mustang on the stand (like the one featured in the Nicholas Cage "Gone In 60 Seconds" movie) and it somehow took attention away from the road cars they were hoping to flog, so this year they had a quite convincing full size fibreglass mock-up of a WWII P45 Mustang fighter. Not such a distraction apparently.

Later, I was looking around the vintage and classic racing car paddock (Cathedral?) where I was spotted by Andy and Debbie K. I am sure they felt sorry for me, as I was now alone, and I was invited to stop off at their place on my way home to try out Andy's new toy.

Leaving the event, I found myself enjoying the view of the rear of a red turbo Esprit. As we crept along the lane, I recognized the driver of a car coming toward me as Land Speed Record Holder and pilot of Thrust SSC, Richard Noble. The registration number of the convertible he was driving gave away his identity: SSC 1K. What was he driving? An M100 Elan!

Arriving at Andy and Debbie's, I was greeted enthusiastically by their two dogs (both named after cars, but neither called Rover...) and was fed a delicious cheese toastie. I was then taken to try the new toy. Tucked

in a corner of his garage was a fully stripped, ready to be restored, Europa S2 bodyshell, no wheels, suspension or engine, yet this Europa was "ready to race"!

I opened the drivers door and folded myself the drivers seat. Steering wheel, gearstick and pedals were all there, although they were clearly not original items. My size eleven trainers seemed enormous, at least half an inch too wide to fit between the backbone/transmission tunnel and the brake pedal, meaning every time I depressed the clutch pedal, I made the brake pedal feel sad too...

Andy got into the passenger seat and Debbie punched a few buttons on a PC keyboard tucked under the rear of the bodyshell, and up popped "Le Sarthe" on the large screen in front of us. Not only did I have trouble with the pedals, braking violently every time I de-clutched, I discovered I had no feel for the gear shift either, and Andy very kindly took over that task. I managed to guide us to the end of the Mulsane straight before forgetting to turn right. After careering across the virtual grass, the car disappeared into a computer-generated black hole from which there was no escape. Well, not without help from Debbie, who then slipped behind the wheel while I transferred to the passenger seat, and treated me to a few demonstration laps. Her ability to bounce off Armco rivaled mine!

I enjoy taking my virtual car collection for a blast around the same circuit courtesy of Grand Turismo 5 and our Sony Playstation, but the added realism of actually being inside a car has to be experienced. The Europa's cabin is also wired for sound, and those who know Andy will not be surprised or disappointed to learn that the soundtrack is not that made by a Renault 16 engine or Lotus TwinCam, but by a GT40 V8. I got out with a very realistic, tension induced

stiff neck and a Ford V8 induced ringing in my ears! The "seat of the pants" feeling of movement that this rig currently provides is already quite amazing, yet Andy intends to install a full-on, left/right banking, acceleration-squatting/braking-diving suspension rig to the simulator. Debbie and I know it hardly needs it, but I do hope to be invited back for another go when it is up and running.

SUNDAY

"What happened there Nigel...?"

I left home early to allow enough time to get there for 08.00, when the gates open. Just as well, as someone decided to have an early morning RTA in what looked like it had been a metallic blue Chrysler PT Cruiser. Police directed all traffic left off the A23, along the winding and somewhat slower country lanes that added undesired time and distance to the mornings commute.

Humorous highlight of the day, for me and at least one other, was provided by "Lotus Ambassador" Nigel Mansell. He was charged with the task of demonstrating the Evora GT4 up the hill over the weekend, and on the Sunday morning run he decided to treat the crowds to a doughnut or two outside

Goodwood House. Everyone else had, so why not? But Nigel cocked it up, clumsily half turning and then stalling, then making what looked like a first time out learner drivers attempt



at a three point turn that seemed to take forever, putting the cars nose up against some straw bales, before getting it facing the right way and continuing up the track. Embarrassing, especially as the interviewer waiting at the top of the hill was bound to ask "What happened there Nigel...?"

A few minutes before the run, Nige had been interviewed about his recent activities and becoming a Lotus Ambassador. He talked about his son's involvement in motorsport, his own work with a youth charity, and his recent experience at LeMans. He made it quite clear that the 200+mph crash he had survived was caused by the tyres, and that the near disaster would never have happened had they

been using a different tyre supplier. Fair enough, but Our Nige has a reputation for regularly blaming "things" other than himself for his misfortunes, and when he appeared on screen with the interviewer at the top of the hill I suggested in jest to the man sitting next to me that Nigel would blame the tyres this time too for the poorly executed gyration. The question was put, and to my delight and that of my fellow spectator, Nige said "Well, it was the tyres.." though in fairness he continued by accepting some blame, saying "I had warmed them up too much and they were too sticky to spin the car"...

Dear Old Nige!

At the end of the day, when most were well on their way home, I found myself for the first time at the small ceremony on the lawn at the side of Goodwood House for the presentation of medals to the fastest drivers in their groups by Lord March, who also thanked all those who had contributed to the success of this years Festival. Fastest car up the hill turned out to be a Lotus of course, the 88 F1 car driven by Dan Collins. Lord March said to Dan he was sure a well known figure was spotted throwing a black cap high in the air to celebrate the 88's success. As ever, a wonderful weekend!

John H