

# North Kent Lotus Group

## Dear Enthusiast

Christmas is almost upon us but the annual Christmas meal has come and gone and from comments coming in, the evening was a great success. The venue was great, the food was excellent and the atmosphere was perfect with icing on the cake being in the company of a great bunch of people aka the NKLK. Howard took the role of Master of Ceremonies and did a splendid job but asked me to mention that with the buzz of the evening, he wasn't able to get round to thanking everybody who donated prizes for the raffle. There were some most generous offerings, so a big thank you to all that bought something along. "Chez Sophie" will be on a very short list (of one?) for next year. If there was one criticism that can be easily remedied, it was a lack of a few extra vegetables on the table.

In our haste to make it on the night, I forgot to pick up my camera so I don't have any pictures of the evening - if anybody has taken some please forward them to Terry for the website.

It was John C's first appearance since his accident so he seems to be shaping up nicely, he also made the club night with no walking aids (apart from Pauline!) So Christmas was a great night with a great turnout, even Mark and Caroline made it up from Folkestone.

Sitting with Howard at the meal, he tells me that "Scruff" has now gone. Must be one of his shortest ownerships! Anyway, it's gone and so has the Caterham, so make way for a Type 26 - yes Howard has another Elan, not much info or any pictures at the moment but watch this space



*I left the stable door open and Scruff got away, last seen heading towards Marden - Howard*

We should be seeing the new owner of Scruff as he said he was keen to join the group so we should get to see the car yet.

I'm now a fully qualified expert on Elise alternators. Mine exploded (well, it did make a bang) on the M3 at gone 11 o'clock at night which resulted in an RAC chauffeured journey home. I don't know why, but I was determined to make it to the M25 on the battery, it made it, but only as far as the Chessington turn-off. Ian quite rightly pointed out that I should have turned off my headlights and slipped in behind a Volvo (for a steady drive home!) - I'll remember that for next time. Finally got to bed at three in the morning. Strange thing was that unloading the car from a transporter didn't wake up any of the neighbours!

Anyway, I thought I'm old enough now, so I'll have a go at doing it myself and with the Internet and Norman's help I did it with no problems. It's a bit of a keyhole surgery type job as access is through the offside wheel-arch, which, as you can imagine, doesn't give you much room to play with.

I received a letter from the PR company that is re-launching the official Lotus Club. I used to be a member but let it lapse, anyway, the new magazine is £20 a go. Lotus is definitely aiming for the top end of the market and seeing the press

reports on the progress of the new cars (Esprit etc), it's looking more like it's going that way - but don't worry, if the whole project is successful, the demand for "early examples" is bound to rocket - looking at prices of baby Elans and other early stuff at the moment, I think it's already started. If you're interested in the Official Lotus Club take a look at [www.lotus-magazine.com](http://www.lotus-magazine.com)

A very small turnout on club night but what with the Christmas meal etc it was to be expected. The conversation got 'round to first cars, mine and Chris's was, coincidentally, an 850 Mini (I soon moved up to a Cooper - in those day's of long hair, I had a hairdryer with more power than an 850 Mini). Ian started with an Alpine, would you believe, and he still has one today, which now sports a rather nice Gulf Oil colour scheme.

It'd make a nice feature to put together a list of "Member's First Cars" so let me know. Perhaps we could add the best and worst car you've owned.

He's not a member! And it's probably not his first car but Howard sent me a very interesting interview with Derek Bell;

Pistonheads.....You've had quite a career, spanning everything from Ferrari F1 cars to 800hp Group C Porsches. How did it all start?

*Derek Bell: First race of my life? March 13th 1964. Driving a Lotus Seven which I'd finished building at 2am the morning of race day. We had to run the bloody thing in. So I took it out for a drive at around 11pm, peeing with rain, and I had to do 200 miles. In an open car. My team partner drove the car up in the morning, I won the race, and we drove it back home.*

PH: And pretty soon you found yourself on the grid at Le Mans.....

Happy days!!!

There's already talk of next year's events and the Lotus festival that has been held at Snetterton for the last few years, is moving to Brands Hatch - which is good news. So we must do something there. Roger has offered to take on the SENLAC show at Bodiam. It rained this year so next year will be dry! The unfortunate thing is that it clashes with Le Mans.

You should get this in time - Hanger 111 are having a bit of a do.....On Thursday 29th and Friday 30th December, Lotus Specialist Hangar 111 will be hosting two end-of -year open days to celebrate their successes in 2011.



Both open days feature:

- Mince Pies, Hot Drinks (tea, coffee, hot choc), Sandwiches and Light Refreshments from 11am
- Free Lotus weigh-in - ever wondered what your Lotus weighs?\*
- Free Suspension Geometry diagnostic check
- Road demos of our new Rover K-Series K260 supercharger kit (268bhp/1)\*
- Watch Hangar 111 sponsored driver Andrew Bentley driving at Spa
- Stock clearance of Lotus Merchandise & Accessories at very special clearance prices
- Take a closer look at the Elise 111R Production Class Race car - ready for hire in 2012

Full details can be found on the Hangar 111 website:

www.hangar111.com

Well, that's about it. I hope you get this in time for Christmas and if you do, have a great time over the holiday period.

The first meeting of 2012 is on Wednesday 11th January so see you there

Have a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

John

### Is it me?

Or is it them? My search for a decent garage continues... What do you make of the following?

As you may be aware, i have had my doubts about the ability of the garage I have used since moving to Watlings Close, and decided to give the garage where the van is MOTd a try. Nice clean tidy workshops and all the accreditation you could wish for. I had a full service and MOT done by them at about £400. The first trip I took on it was to Birmingham. While up there I noticed a new noise. My guess was the differential. It needs the oil level checking as part of the service regime. I wondered if they (or the previous lot) had taken the trouble to check it (ever...). The noise was related to road rather than engine speed, and became obvious from about 35mph. I took it back to the garage and asked them to check it and find what the problem was. This is their reply:

Please find below quoted options for repairs to your vehicle.

Option 1: To carry out replacement of axle bearings and prop shaft bearings £854.40 INC VAT

Option 2: To carry out replacement of a second hand axle ( no guarantee or warranty) £399.60 INC VAT However the prop shaft would need to be sent away to be looked at before quoting price for.

Option 3: To carry out replacement of reconditioned axle ( 1 year warranty) £519.60 INC VAT However the prop shaft would need to be sent away to be looked at before quoting price for.

In trying to decide whether the car is worth spending anything on, I sent this reply:

A difficult decision to make! The Previa in obviously not worth a lot, so to keep spending largeish amounts on it does not make a lot of sense. However, having just spent £400 on the service/MOT with you I am keen to keep it and use it if there are no other obvious issues.

I am aware that there is some rust on the car (tailgate and sill inside the sliding door) but have no idea what it is like underneath. I would appreciate the opinion of your mechanic as to the overall condition of the vehicle and whether it is

likely to require further work soon. If it is about to turn into a money pit I think i would prefer to replace it.

And this was their reply:

Good Afternoon Sir, I have spoken with Mark our service manager. He would advise not to have any repairs carried out due to the whining noise may not go if repairs are carried out. He said the repairs are not essential.

Eh? I take the car in with a new mystery noise, they say the axle needs replacing but don't bother as it may not solve the problem.....!!!!

I replied this morning:

Dear Sophie

I am confused by your reply. I brought the Previa back to you because I noticed a new noise. I took this to be a sign of something wrong, wearing out. I asked you to identify it. You reply, saying the axle/driveshaft need replacing, with a list of options of how to do this. I ask whether this cost is justified in view of the value of the car, and your reply is that it is not essential. I assume this means something is wearing out but the car is still safe to drive? You then say, and this is the confusing bit, the replacement parts may not cure the noise. If the noise is not cured by the repair, the problem is still there. Please explain.

John Harper

Make sense to you? What do you think? What would you do?