



# North Kent Lotus Group

Dear Enthusiast

It's November but there's still plenty of opportunity to take the Lotus for a run - even topless! The weather's been exceptionally mild but you wonder if it'll change with a jolt.

Also being November, there's not much to report re events etc and it's very nice to receive Vaughn's excellent Targa Florio article. "What is this to do with Lotus?" Well it involves four wheels so that's alright by me. Articles etc always welcome.

So the big event is the Christmas meal on the 3rd December. We've pushed the boat out a little this year and selected some very nice prizes for the raffle - which usually goes down well. A £50 voucher to spend at Denbies Wine Estate in Surrey ([denbies.co.uk](http://denbies.co.uk)); a £30 food hamper; an electronic car battery trickle charger and conditioner and a copy of "Colin Chapman - Inside the Innovator" by Karl Ludvigsen. And that's not including any items that are traditionally (and generously) donated on the night.

Incidentally, the Ludvigsen book looks brilliant I've had a very quick flick through it (I don't want to dog-ear the edges!) and it'll be on my Christmas list!! Duncan has a copy and I hear he gives it a big thumbs up also. Published price is £35 but you can get a fantastic deal on Amazon at the moment - but then again you might just win it!

Howard forwarded me the F1 announcement that Team Lotus will be no more next year. It didn't take much to work out that we could see a "Caterham" on the grid but it happened quicker than I thought it would. Howard also commented that it's a real shame that the Team Lotus moniker will

disappear and you can't disagree with that.

And talking F1 - have you seen (or suffered) any of the Tamara Ecclestone documentary on the box at the moment. I can't (or don't want to) remember which channel it's on, but it's so comforting to know that all those millions (or should I say billions?) that Mr Ecclestone has fleeced from all of us is being spent so wisely.

Back in the Summer I read "Bernie's Game" by Terry Lovell. An excellent read - try and get a copy if you can (you're welcome to borrow mine). The last paragraph comes from the Bible - "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul?" - Matthew 16:26. Once you've read the book you'll understand exactly why the author finished up with this quote.

A busy club night, the pool table was still in the main bar but the players were not of the shouting and hollering variety so our two groups co-existed quite peacefully. I had a severe telling-off from Howard E, as in last month's newsletter I stated that his new baby was an S3 with some S4 bits on it but it turns out that it's an S4 with some S3 bits on it. After a long conversation, with others joining in to help clear up the confusion, I managed to clarify that the car doesn't have front wheel drive. He's now managed to stretch the hood into position, having to resort to maneuvers similar to those we used to watch on Saturday afternoon wrestling. Still no photos though!

It was good to hear that John C is on the mend he's had some setbacks but he's on track now and with Christmas on the way that's got to be good news.

So back to the Christmas meal. It's on Saturday 3rd December

at "Chez Sophie" The Harrow Inn, Harrow Road, Knockholt TN14 7JT 7.30 for 8.00. The booking cut-off date has now passed but it's worth giving John and Joan a ring if you haven't booked up yet.

So see you at Chez Sophie otherwise on club night at the White Rock on the 14th.

I'll leave you with Vaughn's article over the page. Keep the articles coming.

John

## What is this to do with Lotus ?

At the last NKLG meeting I sensed a hint of desperation when John Frisby mentioned that I had not made any contribution to the newsletter for some years - Ouch! Since my Europa was sold and my Elise arrived there has been very little to report, which in my case thank goodness, tends to destroy the saying "Loads of Trouble Usually Serious".

The difficulty is finding something interesting to write about but during a conversation with Chris Couldrey at a recent NKLG meeting he mentioned that he wanted to drive around the Targa Florio mountain circuit in Sicily, presumably in his Elise and it reminded me that Diana and I did just that back in 2002 but unfortunately in a Fiat hire car.

I had acquired an "out of print book" by David Owen relating to the history of this very race, starting from the first race in 1906 up to the last event held in 1973. The book contains a comprehensive record of the various routes, names of the drivers, lap times (1906 = 276 miles at an average of 29 mph) to (1973 = 491 miles at an average over 80 mph) and this race seemed to have attracted the majority of professional works teams and drivers of the day.

Can you imagine current F1 drivers attempting to race on normal public single track mountain roads, without run-off areas and with spectators on the edge of the road. They did in the 1950's to 70's - and the drivers included Stirling Moss, Von Trips, the Rodrigues brothers, Graham Hill, Jo Siffert, Vic Elford, plus Nino Vaccarella the local Sicilian Lawyer.

The cars they used included works Ferrari, Maserati, Alfa Romeo, Mercedes, Porsche and even a Lola but I was unable to find any reference to a Lotus (much too fragile?).

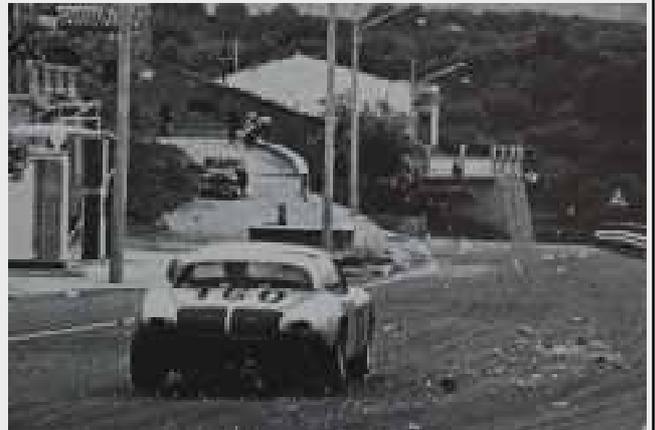
In preparation for our holiday in Sicily (2002), I read through the book and identified various villages, corners and features on the route from the books numerous photographs all of which my wife thought was very "anorak". On arrival I was somewhat surprised to find that very little of the circuit features had changed over the previous fifty or so years and it was interesting to photograph and compare the past and present. The following images may convey little has changed.



Vaccarella/Hezemans Alfa Romeo 33/3 in 1971



The same corner in 2002



Jo Bonnier's winning Porsche in 1963



Same corner 2002

The only “tentative” link to Lotus was that the famous Motor Sport journalist Denis Jenkinson (Jenks) drove a Lotus Europa (with Renault engine) all the way to Sicily in 1968 and was so impressed that he devoted three pages in his Motor Sport report of the trip. Well I had to get a Lotus into this somehow.

Vaughn



The original pits



“JENKS” in Sicily