

North Kent Lotus Group



Dear Enthusiast

Since the last letter we've had Bexhill, Edenbridge and the Autumn Run, the latter being the only one I was able to make. A great day out, finishing up at Howard and Jenny's. Jon and Michelle, as usual, provided a great run with one of the biggest turn outs in recent times. The spectacle of a snake of Loti turned many a head as we politely weaved our way along country lanes and through villages. I say politely but that doesn't mean it wasn't spirited! The sun shone. It was a perfect day. The coffee stop at Perryhill Orchards found us vying for space with MR2's, as an MR2 club was obviously taking advantage of the good weather and stretching their tyres also. I've got to say, seeing some very nice early MK 1 MR2's made me think what a classic design it is, with many cues taken from the Giagaro Esprit - it's pure 80's. We headed on to Howard and Jenny's, where we assembled for refreshments joined by a couple of Lancias including Howard's



So a big thank you to Howard and Jenny and Jon and Michelle.

I received the following message from Chris. I did know about Lipscomb, as probably a few others did, but it's all happened very quickly;

A couple of bits of information about Lotus that members may already know, but could be worth a mention in the newsletter.

1. *Lipscomb garage at Aylesford has stopped selling Lotus cars (not even any last minute deals to look at!!)*

They are, for the time being, to continue parts and service of Lotus cars.

2 *Lotus are currently offering a good deal on new cars if anyone is in the market for a new Lotus, particularly if you have a trade in. The offer is for 50 per cent deposit or trade in against deposit and then payment of the remaining 50 per cent in two years time, with no interest charge or fees of any kind. So if you have a suitable valued Lotus to trade in, you can, for example, do so and walk out with a new Elise, without paying a penny for two years!!*

I have taken advantage of this offer and I suspect another member of the club has also done so!

Chris has driven away a 20 year anniversary edition supercharged Elise, which, when you look at the spec looks pretty tasty. He took advantage of the 50/50 deal, which means you can, if you have a reasonable trade-in, drive away in a brand new Lotus. Very interesting and Howard E has also taken advantage with an Exige S.

That said, it was a funny club night (October, that is) - I don't mean funny ha ha but funny peculiar. At one point everybody was actually sitting down, probably due to a fair majority taking advantage of Frank's wide selection of tasty morsels. But I didn't get to see Chris's new purchase and I didn't get to speak to Howard

John.

Howard & Jenny gave me a card at the last club night (apologies for the delay in sending this!) saying what a pleasure it was hosting the Club at the end of the Autumn Run, and also thanking those Members who willingly helped to clear up at the end of the day. It would be good if we could pass this message on via the Newsletter.

Many thanks, best regards.

Roger D.

re the Exige. I only just managed to glean from Terry that he's purchased a Mini, but then Terry changes his cars like underwear. Perhaps we need to have monthly dining evening separated from a monthly "Lotus" evening!!

My workload is still piled high again at the moment so it has been good to receive some nice info/articles from everybody. So apologies for a missing September newsletter but I'll leave you with Vaughn and Diana's Reims visit ; Howard and Vaughn's Bexhill input and Roger and Chrissie's Angouleme trip. Next club night is on 11th at the White Rock. Incidentally, it looks as though the WR will be our new home for the foreseeable future. See you there.

JOHN

WEBMASTER/NEWSLETTER EDITORS REQUIRED
Please contact Roger

ROLLING EVENTS DIARY

December

5 Christmas Meal

By The Way

Last week Diana and I decided to take a short holiday to the French Alps by road (for one week).

However the journey was not that short as the actual round trip was just under 1200 miles. I must admit that cruising down the French toll roads at 80 mph plus with everyone else, not counting Caravans and the few large Lorry's, is a real pleasure as the roads were particularly empty. The French population apparently object to paying the tolls even though they can travel long distances very quickly.

Unfortunately, as far as I was concerned, we did not use the Elise which incidentally has blown the flexible section of the exhaust down pipe and is now waiting for Norman to get a replacement. It seems that fitting my new Lotus Sport Silencer must have given the flexible section a last good hammering and hence it blew.

Back to the story about our trip. On the return journey we decided to stop overnight in Reims and whilst there picked up a local map which showed the old Reims Grand Prix race circuit only five miles away from our Motel.

I had read somewhere that following the closure of racing there, which used normal roads, the old pits and grandstands still existed, so as we had time prior to our evening meal, a short trip was undertaken just to see what had survived

According to my Internet research, racing on the circuit started in 1925 with a series of races entitled the GP de La Marne with the various winners included Louis Chironand, Rene Dreyfus (Bugatti T35's), Tazio Nuvolari (Alfa Romeo Typo B) and later on in 1938 Manfred von Brauchitsch in a Mercedes W154.

Later post WW2 races had the winning drivers - Alberto Ascari (Ferrari), Manual Fangio (Alfa Romeo 158), Jean Behra (Gordini T16) and our own (British) Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari), Peter Collins (Lancia Ferrari) and in 1952 Stirling Moss in a C Type Jaguar.

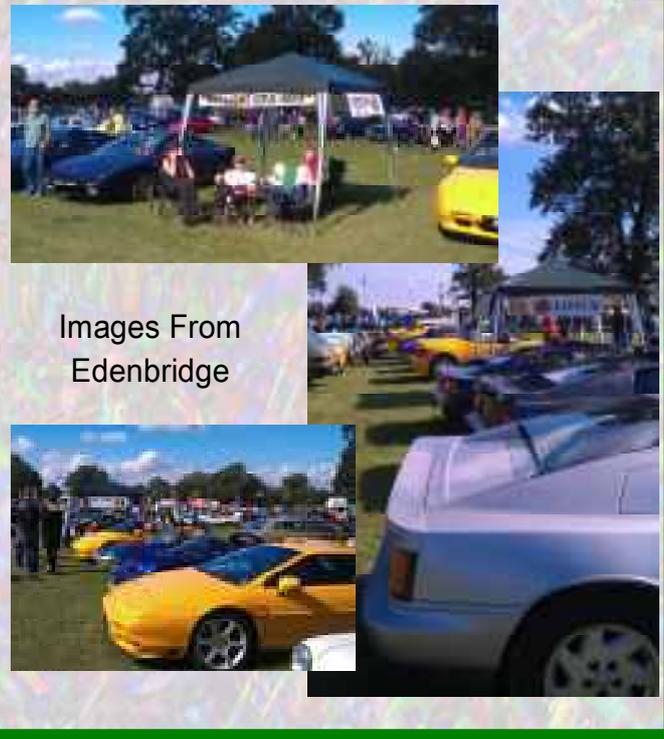
The Motor Sport magazine racing correspondent Denis Jenkinson in his book "Jenks A Passion for Motor Sport" raised some suspicions about Jean Behra's 1952 Gordini win. He reported that during a visit by the French racing driver Maurice Trintignant to the Gordini works soon after this surprise win it was noticed that several "oversized" pistons were seen laying on a bench which were quickly hidden away out of sight. In his book "Jenks" hinted that it may explain how the French Gordini T16 unexpectedly beat all the more powerful works Ferraris in that race and that the Gordini never performed that well ever again.

In the 1960's Jim Clark won in a Lotus Climax and Mike Spence in a Lotus 22 formula Junior.

Upon arrival at the pits complex we saw that many of the old advertising hoarding's had been renovated but this has not seemed to have damaged the historic atmosphere. Being a very fast triangular circuit consisting of three long straights the speeds attained must have been very high, even today crossing the road to take photographs is a little risky as cars were passing me at speeds in excess of 80 to 90 mph this being the normal main road between the villages of Gueux and Thillois.

One passing car was a French registered MGB who went up and down the road several times – pity I did not have my Lotus as I could have shown him what a fast car a Lotus is!!!!

I hope the following photographs may give you an impression of what remains of the complex and in my opinion it is worth a visit if you are passing. VAUGHN



Fun in the sun – and rain, Angouleme September 2015

The Circuit des Remparts is an annual race meeting, which has been held in Angouleme, with a couple of breaks, since it was first organised in 1939, the first break due an outbreak of unpleasantness in the same year.

The circuit of just under a mile and virtually unchanged since the first meeting, is entirely around the town centre with roads either closed off to spectators or lined with Armco and fencing to enable spectating in safety, either in temporary stands placed at strategic points around the circuit, or from the



pavement. Spectators are very close to the action and a ticket to any one of the grandstands also provides entry to the paddock created in the main town square, where the public are free to wander

around the cars. As these are town centre streets, there are no run offs, tyre walls or gravel traps, so the circuit is very unforgiving for competitors and, after most races, the circuit had to be cleared of crashed or broken down cars.

The town is taken over by the event in more ways than one for three days as there is a concours competition on Friday evening and a rally on Saturday as well as the race meeting on Sunday,



and the town is busy with spectators and visiting classic cars, one street is given over to stalls selling automobilia and the town hall square is given over to an exhibition of veteran cars.

This was our second visit, planning for which started twelve months before when I booked our town centre accommodation followed by booking our grandstands seats when they became

available in March and registration for the rally when registration opened in June.

We arrived on Friday afternoon as rally packs are issued only on Friday in the town hall. It was a straightforward procedure to be

issued with a rally book providing detailed instructions for navigating the route, wrist bands, an enormous rally plate, free town centre parking pass for Sunday and various goodies including an event programme and poster. The Saturday morning assembly point was just over the river from



the town centre, where complimentary croissants, pains au chocolate and tar-like coffee – an instant adrenaline rush free with every cup – *cont*

Dear Terry & John

As is generally accepted, the August Bank Holiday Bexhill 100 show was not the best summer weather we “enjoyed” but there were more dry patches and light drizzle patches between the downpours.

Those dry patches certainly brought out many more attendees both in terms of cars shown and public attendees so while nothing like what would have appeared on a fine Bank Holiday Monday, this year's event must be more encouraging to the organisers than last year that was a complete washout when any public attendee got in for nothing, whereas this year the attendees should have done some good for their charity.

Vaughn, Diana, Trevor, Howard and Jenny attended. Maybe Vaughn will give you a better report! I could not be in the picture, because I took it!

Howard T

John

I think Howard T has said all that is required although the photo looks as if there are no other cars in a “wet field”. Still I agree the weather was not as bad as last year - thank goodness and should give the organisers hope for 2016.

We all enjoyed ourselves.

Vaughn



were available. The gendarmerie were out in force to escort us round, both real and retired types in traditional uniforms including kepis riding vintage motorbikes or driving vintage patrol cars. Everyone was in an anticipatory mood as more competition cars arrived, which seemed to be mostly French, closely followed by British, in number but most European countries were represented. Lotus was represented on the rally by three baby Elans, three M100s including yours truly, and a Seven.

At 8.30am, cars started to line up for the off and, before we knew it, we were heading out of town although we needed a brief stop to put the hood up as it started to rain. The course followed a number of twisting, muddy lanes through the Charente, which is cognac producing country. The scenery, dominated by vineyards and impressive looking chateaux, was spectacular though there was really no time to stop and admire the view before our scheduled morning coffee stop. The weather was starting to brighten so a lot of hoods were taken down while we regretfully inspected the accumulated mud on our cars, then it was off again, along another circuitous route to the town of Jarnac, where Courvoisier is based.

As this is a gentleman's rally – no mad non-stop tearing round the countryside here - our lunch stop was at the Jarnac race-course, where gin and tonics were liberally provided followed by a four course lunch with plenty of wine. Lunch was made even more enjoyable as we were joined by six very friendly Austin Healey enthusiasts we had met during the morning and a Jaguar owning expat couple we had met over gin and tonics but, after a couple of hours, it was time to set off again. The roads were a lot straighter and wider in the afternoon, which I'm sure was deliberate after such a generous lunch and, in many of the villages we passed through and along the route In general, crowds had

gathered, some with picnic tables and chairs enjoying an al fresco picnic, in one instance with candelabras.

Somehow, although the afternoon route was easier, quite a few of us managed to get lost and missed our afternoon stop but it



didn't matter and, after about a hundred miles of huge fun, we were approaching Angouleme town centre, where the crowds leading up to and around the finish line were huge, enjoying what was by now a very warm and sunny afternoon. It was a memorable day and a great curtain raiser to the race meeting the next day.

Practice started at 8.00am, too early for us although we were in our seats by 9.30am and stayed until the end at 7.15pm as the racing was absolutely compelling and the weather was again very warm and sunny. There were nine practice sessions and ten races covering a diverse range of cars including pre-war sports; pre-war cyclocars; minis; Monomill, a French version of Formula Junior; GT cars, post-war sports and several million pounds' worth of Bugattis. As the circuit is less than a mile round and a lot of it visible from many vantage points, it was easy to walk round and take photos of many different parts of the circuit. Lotus was well represented with an Elan and two Sevens in the post-war sports race and two Lotus Cortinas in the GT category. Another memorable day was finished off with a meal outside enjoying the warm evening air, our table flanked either side, strangely enough by more Brits so we were able to swap stories of the weekend we had just enjoyed.

I recommend the weekend to anyone to try at least once, we'll back at some point again if we have anything to do with it.

Roger