

# North Kent Lotus Group



## Editorial.

Last newsletter of the year! I'm getting this together in the run-up to Christmas, and whilst I'm fairly sure I'll get the emailed version out in good time, there is a chance that the printing process may be delayed by the festivities. If that's the case and you're reading a hard copy, this will be the first newsletter of the New Year! Apologies if that's the case.

I think that we can look back on an excellent year of events and activities, with a least one event every month of the year. On behalf of the Membership I'd like to thank all those individuals (& couples!) who organised these for all their time and energy. The Club would be so much poorer without their input. You know who you are!

The final event of the year was the Christmas meal at the Holiday Inn. Apart from having to compete with the sound of the disco in the next room I think this was enjoyed by all. Following the meal and the raffle, the NKLK Cup was awarded to John Underhay in recognition of his tireless management of the Group's finances. He has been doing this for the Membership, and has also been a member of the Planning Group, since the creation of NKLK and he is owed a great debt of gratitude by the entire membership. It was also recognised that throughout his service to the Club John has always enjoyed the input and support of Joan. To acknowledge this, a bouquet was also presented to Joan. Thanks go to Howard E for his presentation on the night.

It transpires that, on the same evening as our Christmas meal, there was a large-scale food poisoning going on at one of our former Christmas meal venues. Yet another demonstration of just how caring & efficient the Planning Group is at arranging things on behalf of the Membership!

Already we have events to look forward to in the New Year, with the film night on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

Finally, my thanks, yet again, to Vaughn for another contribution to the newsletter, and Seasons Greetings to you all. Looking forward to seeing you in 2017.

## Jota Sport Visit

Just missing out on being the last event of the year, by just 24 hours, was the Group visit to Jota Sport near Tunbridge Wells. Jota Sport runs cars in the Le Mans 24 hour and European Le Mans series, and this was an opportunity to see behind the schemes of the operation.

Their unassuming base consists of two industrial looking sheds, one housing the offices and car preparation area, the other the engineering shop, which in addition to having some highly impressive computer-controlled machines also accommodated an interesting mix of 1970's vintage Porsche, the Harrods Le Mans McLaren F1 and an unmodified Mazda MX5.

The car preparation area was fairly empty. In spite of having returned to base from the last race of the season in Bahrain only the week before, the cars had been completely stripped, the engines having been shipped-off to the specialist and the 'tubs' of the cars, bar one, returned to the manufacturers for updates for the next season. In spite of this, there was a lot to see, including the bodywork of the cars from the last two seasons, including that of the LMP2 class-winning car from last year's Le Mans.



We were shown around by one of the co-owners of the company, Sam Hignett, who gave us all the time we wanted, and we were made to feel very welcome. Our thanks to him, and to Howard and Jenny for arranging the trip.

## This and That

I was reading an article the other day which described how daily newspaper cartoonists have to create several “topical” cartoons each day for the newspaper editor to pick from. I find it difficult to comprehend how they can do that and it must be a real talent or just very vivid imagination.

My lack of this talent came sharply into focus this morning as I have been sitting looking at a blank screen on my PC wondering what to do to help fill the NKLG newsletter ( no pressure there - Roger!).

As you may remember, a previous contribution (June 2016) was all about “Re-Cycling Old Books” and I wondered if further examination of these various books would provide some inspiration. I have always made the assumption that everyone interested in Lotus knows everything about the various cars, articles and people involved but that may not be right so here goes: -

My favourite author is Denis Sargent Jenkinson (DSJ) – December 1920 to November 1996, who was the continental correspondent for the Motor Sport magazine. He did not just write about motor sport but actively participated in it and was the 1949 World Champion Motor Cycle sidecar passenger with Eric Oliver. He also famously navigated Stirling Moss when winning the 1955 Mille Miglia but that is yet another story.

Amongst his many articles, he wrote in 1969, about the time he borrowed a Lotus F2 single seater type 12 racing car from Colin Chapman (front engine - Coventry Climax) for a Christmas day “road” test. It is incredible to believe but he drove the car without number plates, lights, mudguards or silencer on public roads at lunch time on Christmas Day on the basis that everyone, including the police, would be a home having lunch and the roads empty (*no speed cameras then*). According to this article (re published in “Jenks a Passion for Motor Sport” ISBN 1-899870-22-9) he managed to get the car up to 120 mph on a bypass near Basingstoke then the driveshaft broke leaving him stranded. He then had to try and hide the car in someone’s drive until it could be collected.

It was subsequently found that the car’s drive shaft had been used previously and had been refitted the wrong way around and the reversal of rotation was just too much for the splines.



A Lotus Type 12 in Action

He also road tested an Elan +2 (4 speed TC) registration NAH 120F, in May 1969 and although complementary about the car, considering it a more civilised car compared with previous Lotus, he complained about the delay in “flashing” the pop up headlights. He also expressed an opinion that although the Plus 2 was wider and heavier it did not roll as much as expected and he felt that he could “live” with one whereas he felt that the (Baby) Elan cockpit was too cramped and Spartan and would tend to get irksome after a week at the wheel (*now that should annoy the “baby” Elan owners - VR*).

In another article, he described a trip in a Renault R16 engined Lotus Europa (reg TNG 10G) from London to Sicily and back in 1969 where he was due to report on that year’s Targa Florio race. According to this article, he decided to leave his E Type at home and agreed with Graham Arnold, the Lotus Sales manager at that time, with the proviso that should it break down, (*nothing new there – VR*), DSJ would leave it by the roadside, catch a train and let Lotus know where to find it.

He caught a car ferry plane at Lydd airport and then motored down with the “little Lotus on full song 6100 rpm all day and singing to itself quite unperturbed”. Apart from a little tinkering with the ignition and air filter it made it and he wrote a very complementary three-page road test report that was published in Motor Sport in July 1969.

I just wonder what else I may find in old books, Lotus wise, next time but only time will tell.

Vaughn.

**Don't Forget!**

**Film Night at the Stanhope Arms in Brasted**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January.**

### Contacts

**Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, The White Rock Inn, Underriver, TN15 0SB**

**[www.northkentlotusgroup.org](http://www.northkentlotusgroup.org)**