

North Kent Lotus Group



Editorial.

Once again, a late newsletter, but mostly for good reasons. To begin with I was away on holiday at the end of June, closely followed by a long weekend away at the Le Mans Classic. Always a good event, this year's event seemed even better than ever, for reasons I can't really put my finger on. I don't think I have ever seen so many Lotuses in one place! Not just in the Club Lotus France display, which was huge, but also on the roads in general, but interestingly I don't think I saw a single Lotus on the road to or from Le Mans, so they must have all been home-owned, with not too many Brits in Lotuses down there.

The Group barbeque was the weekend after the Classic, and thankfully this fantastic weather we're having continued for that. I have yet to receive any feedback following the event, but my impression was that it went very well, and very much better than recent years. There was an excellent showing of, I believe, 19 cars and the facilities were excellent, with our own private outside space and pub staff cooking and serving the food for us. This was held at The Moody Mare, which may become our new club night base, please see the message from the Steering Group below, which addresses this point.

Our regular contributor (I know he likes to avoid name-checks) has supplied me with a small stockpile of items for the newsletter, so thanks again, as usual, and I hope you all enjoy this piece on Johnny Herbert.

Finally, I for one really enjoyed Richard's article last month, So Why (a) Lotus? We all have that story in our lockers, so how about you all start sending them over to me? I will (eventually) if you will

A message from the Steering Group:

As some of you may be aware, we have been considering a move to another location for the club night meetings, and it is important that the Membership has a full understanding of the rationale for this, and the reasons for the proposed choice of new venue.

Reasons for the move: NKLK has relocated from our current 'home' on a previous occasion, the main reason at that time being that the Group was finding itself having to compete for space with league pool games being hosted by the pub, however following the closure of our replacement venue we returned to the 'Rock. The pub made us very welcome, and indeed the pool table was removed from the bar on club nights. This arrangement has worked well for some time, and the 'Rock has the added benefit for us of a hard-surfaced car park of adequate size, although some Members have expressed disquiet regarding the narrow lanes that access it. What has prompted the suggested move is the pool table and games, albeit not league games, have returned on some club nights, and indeed the pub hosted a function for another organisation on the night of the July club night, which has placed us back in 'competition' for space.

Alternative Location: The Steering Group has been seeking an alternative venue for some time, and the Membership at large was asked for suggestions. Various locations have been considered, however few possessed the required combination of location, access, facilities and car park.

The proposed new club night venue is The Moody Mare on Seven Mile Lane. This ticks the majority of our requirements boxes, and the management of the pub have been engaging and accommodating in discussing our wishes and requirements. Many of you will have had the opportunity to see the facilities when the Group held its BBQ there earlier this month. The one shortcoming of The Moody Mare is that it has a very small paved car park, with a large, unsurfaced, overspill car park, however this is not considered to be of too poor a quality, and the pub has acknowledges the potential difficulties that this could present us with and will endeavour to ensure large hollows are filled. Additionally, some Members have noted that the pub hosts quiz nights, which may clash with club nights. We are assured that these events are infrequent, and are held on the first floor of the pub when they do occur, so any impact on us should be minimal. Most importantly, we will have our own room in which to meet, so other activities in the pub, and its general business, will not affect us.

A message from the Steering Group, continued:

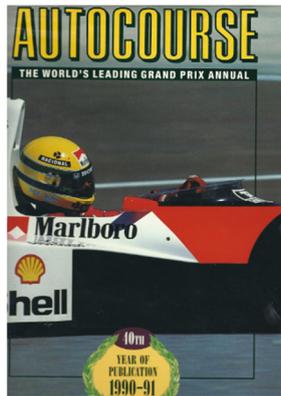
The Steering Group therefore recommends that the club nights relocate to this venue, hopefully from the September club night onwards, however comments from the Membership would be welcome, before a final decision is made.

Old & New Books.

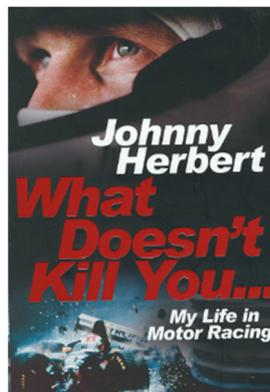
Following on from a previous contribution (Old Books and Lotus) I discovered ten (yes 10) copies of Autocourse in the Sevenoaks Oxfam Book shop.

If you have never seen a copy they are the definitive annual publication / record of all F1 races and includes full race reports, photographs, grid positions, Lap charts and the final results of all the F1 races for each year. These reference books are invaluable when researching F1 history or looking up a fact that has mysteriously disappeared from your mind. eg. When did Senna first drive a Lotus and which model was it!

The collection I acquired started with a single copy covering the 1982/3 season where the drivers included Nicki Lauda (McLaren), Alain Prost (Renault turbo), Keke Rosberg (Williams Cosworth V8), Gilles Villeneuve (Ferrari V6 turbo) and Nigel Mansell (Lotus Cosworth 87B and 91) and concluded with a much later copy, the 2004 edition (although some years were missing from this collection – which was a pity).



Another recently published book I have was about Johnny Herbert entitled “What doesn’t kill you”, Penguin ISBN 9708593078389 published in 2016.



Like most drivers Johnny started his career in karts, progressing through formula Ford and then in 1987 he joined Eddie Jordan’s F3 team driving a Raynard chassis with VW engine. He won the F3 Championship where he was up against Damon Hill, Roland Ratzenberger, Martin Donnelly and Gary Brabham.

Old & New Books (continued)

He describes in detail his first F1 test drive in a Benetton B187 with 1000bhp turbocharged Cosworth V6 at Brands Hatch and concluded that “they were animals to drive”. After fifteen laps he had to stop as his neck was in danger of collapsing due to the forces involved.

Peter Warr (Lotus Team manager) invited Johnny to do a test day at Monza mid 1988, and he managed to outpace the then current World Champion Nelson Piquet in the same model Lotus (102). After that performance Ferrari, Lotus and Benetton management all became interested in him.

However, his career was interrupted by his horrific accident in a F3000 race at Brands Hatch in August 1988 where Gregor Foitek made an over ambitious attempt to pass and hence made contact causing Johnny to crash and smash his feet / legs. The book goes into great detail how he recovered (eventually) but he continues to have problems walking even to this day. In spite of this disability he helped win the Le Mans 24 hours race in a Mazda 787B with a rotary engine.

In 1991 Johnny raced the Gordon Coppuck designed Lotus 102 (Judd V8) alongside a young Mika Hakkinen and the two got on well even sharing hotel rooms although once on the track both became very competitive. Unlike some F1 drivers, Johnny does not seem to have become a “Prima Donna” and had his (damaged) feet firmly on the ground.

But yet again the book details how after Johnny moved to Benetton his team mate Michael Schumacher refused to share his car/performance data with Johnny BUT with the connivance of the Benetton management (Flavio Briatore), Schumacher gained access to Johnny’s data. Yet another example of the way some top drivers behaved (win at any cost).

Talking about Briatore, do you remember his instruction to Nelson Piquet Jr to crash his F1 Renault into the pit lane wall in 2008 in order to bring out a safety car and allow his team mate Fernando Alonso to catch up and win the race? For this Briatore was suspended by the FIA from all subsequent Formula One events and FIA-sanctioned events indefinitely, whilst engineer Pat Symonds received a five-year ban.

Yet another interesting book and worth reading.

Vaughn

Contacts

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, The White Rock Inn, Underriver, TN15 0SB

www.northkentlotusgroup.org

2018 NKLG Events

	Date	Event
February	Wednesday 28 th	Film Night – Stanhope Arms, Brasted
March		
April	Sun 1 st – Mon 2 nd	Festival of Steam & Transport – Chatham Historic Dockyard
	Wednesday 11 th	AGM
May	Sunday 13 th	Motors by the Moat at Leeds Castle
	Sun 27 th – Mon 28 th	Crystal Palace
	<i>Sunday 27th</i>	<i>Brands Hatch Masters</i>
June	Sunday 3 rd	RUN, details TBA
	Sunday 17 th	New Classic Motor Show – Groombridge Place
	<i>16th – 17th</i>	<i>Le Mans</i>
July	Sunday 1 st	Sundridge Car Show
	<i>6th – 8th</i>	<i>Le Mans Classic / British GP</i>
	<i>12th – 15th</i>	<i>Goodwood Festival of Speed</i>
	Sunday 15 th	NKLG BBQ
	<i>Sunday 22nd</i>	<i>Silverstone Classic</i>
	TBA	NKLG BBQ
	TBA July or Aug	Recharge Run, Dungeness Power Station
August	Sunday 19 th	Herne Bay Classic Motor Show
	Monday 27 th	Bexhill Car Show
	Sat 18 th – Sun 19 th	Biggin Hill Air/Car show
September	Sunday 9 th	Edenbridge Car Show
	<i>9th – 11th</i>	<i>Goodwood Revival</i>
	Sunday 30 th	Grand Motorbilia Day – Battlesbridge, Essex
October	TBA	Run to Chapel Down, Tenterden
	TBA	Rob Walker Day, Ashtead, Surrey
November		
December	Saturday 1 st	Christmas meal