

# North Kent Lotus Group



## Editorial

Whilst we still have the winter to get through I'm sure, like me, you are already looking forward to next summer and motoring about on hot sunny days. (Le Mans Classic is already booked for me!)

With that in mind, you will recall that last month Vaughn reported on a monthly Sunday morning motoring get-together that he and I had joined at The Woodman near Ide Hill, although it turned out to be the last one of the year.

Mike Merry has brought it to my attention that this pub has three such meetings a month, on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays, and if that's not enough they also have a meeting on the first Saturday of the month too. He has also pointed out that there is a gathering every 3rd Saturday of the month at Botley Hill Farmhouse (which is, in fact, a pub) at Warlingham. The ever-increasing interest in classic cars probably means that the list of such gatherings is almost limitless, so keep your eyes and ears open for any others and we'll add the details to the events list.

In time one or two of these may become unofficial NKLG 'branch meetings', we'll have to test them out, but if nothing else they would perhaps form the catalyst for Group runs later in the day. Something else to look forward to!

Next month's newsletter will carry a report of the NKLG Christmas meal, and it should get to you just before festivities commence, but I often struggle to get the newsletter prepared in good time under normal circumstances, so there's every chance that this deadline will be missed. In case it is, I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and healthy New Year.

Roger D

## Lotus News and Rumours.

Did you know that in the November /December issue of "Absolute Lotus", the NKLG 25 year celebration was announced together with a photo (the text is believed to have been submitted by Roger R).

In the December/January 2020 issue of the above, Lotus confirmed that it is to return to top-level cycle racing in collaboration with Hope Technology with an innovative new track bike designed to deliver medals for the Great Britain Cycling Team in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. One internet site states that Lotus has created the unique front fork design and handlebars for the new bike, working with Hope Technology, to integrate these components into the overall package. This has included a full programme of wind tunnel evaluation on both bike and rider, plus testing to maximise the strength while minimising the weight. Lotus has also worked on improving stiffness and front end feel to improve rider confidence.

The same issue of Absolute Lotus" includes an e mail from our long-suffering Editor describing the new Lotus Logo as "awful", claiming it dumbs down and loses history and heritage. *(The real achievement though was getting NKLG's name in two consecutive issues of the magazine! – Ed).*

The January 2020 issue of Octane includes an interview with Julian Thompson of Elise S1 fame and also a five-page article all about Colin Chapman's personal Mk2 Lotus Cortina (they refer to it as a Cortina Lotus, which is possibly correct).

Vaughn R

## NKLG January Quiz Night.

January is a quiet month socially and for Lotus driving so, to spice up the January meeting on the 8th, we will be having a Lotus quiz evening. I suggest we start the quiz at 8.30pm and I'm asking that you arrange yourselves in teams with a maximum of four per team.

There will be six rounds of ten questions including a picture round with a fabulous prize (maybe) for the winning team. Every question is Lotus related and I guarantee that none of the answers is "Colin Chapman" so start swotting up.

Roger R

## Excess to Requirements.....

The club has two gazebos that are excess to requirements, and are free to any members who can use them and are able to collect them from John Underhay. They are, apparently, no longer waterproof (although this could be easily remedied with a suitable can of spray) but they are always good for shade under the beating sun. Just what we need to be thinking about at this time of year...

The club also has six green stacking garden chairs which, although not exactly excess to requirements, do need a new home. They are therefore available to any member on 'long term loan' if they can use them.

Again, if you are interested, please get in touch with John U.

## An Unexpected Encounter.

Whilst Diana and I were on holiday in the South of France, we just happened to meet a Scotsman named Iain Ower who had noticed that I was wearing my Lotus 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary cap and asked me if I had a Lotus and if-so what model it was. During our conversation, Iain told me that he **had driven a LOTUS 11** in period. This raised my interest to a somewhat higher level (and even a touch of envy!) and led to several more conversations during the holiday. It is rare to meet someone who drove a Lotus 11 in period, hence I decided to make the most of this unique opportunity to find out more.

Iain told me that he greatly admired a near-neighbour in Scotland called Gordon Crozier who was a great athlete, rugby player and had an intense interest in cars/motor sport in the mid 1950's.

Gordon Crozier very kindly offered Iain a drive in the **Lotus 11** at the Scottish Edzell racing circuit around '1956 or '57. Iain apparently did not disgrace himself and also drove Gordon's Triumph TR2.

Unfortunately, not long after, Gordon was driving his Jaguar (*believed to be a XK120 as the Internet records him racing one – vr*) to a race meeting near Stockton (possibly Croft) when whilst driving at very high speed, hit a tractor that had pulled out of a field. Although Gordon survived, he was terribly injured and that finished his racing career.

As a side note, Iain also told me about being be-friended by Raymond Mays, invited as a guest to the BRM factory in Bourne and then watching the V16 BRM's race at Charterhall (driven by Froilan Gonzalez and either Ken Wharton or Ron Flockhart), Aintree, Brighton Speed Trials and elsewhere but details of those recollections may have to wait for another time.

Iain then became interested in competing in what were then the new Mini Coopers and joined the recently formed Scottish branch of the 750 MC, enjoying hard-surface events throughout the 1960's. After the English chairman who'd started this 750 MC group left, Iain took over the role in '67 or thereabouts. He told me that the top people in the Scottish club scene at that time were **Jimmy Clark**, Jimmy Mackay and Hugh Shannon.

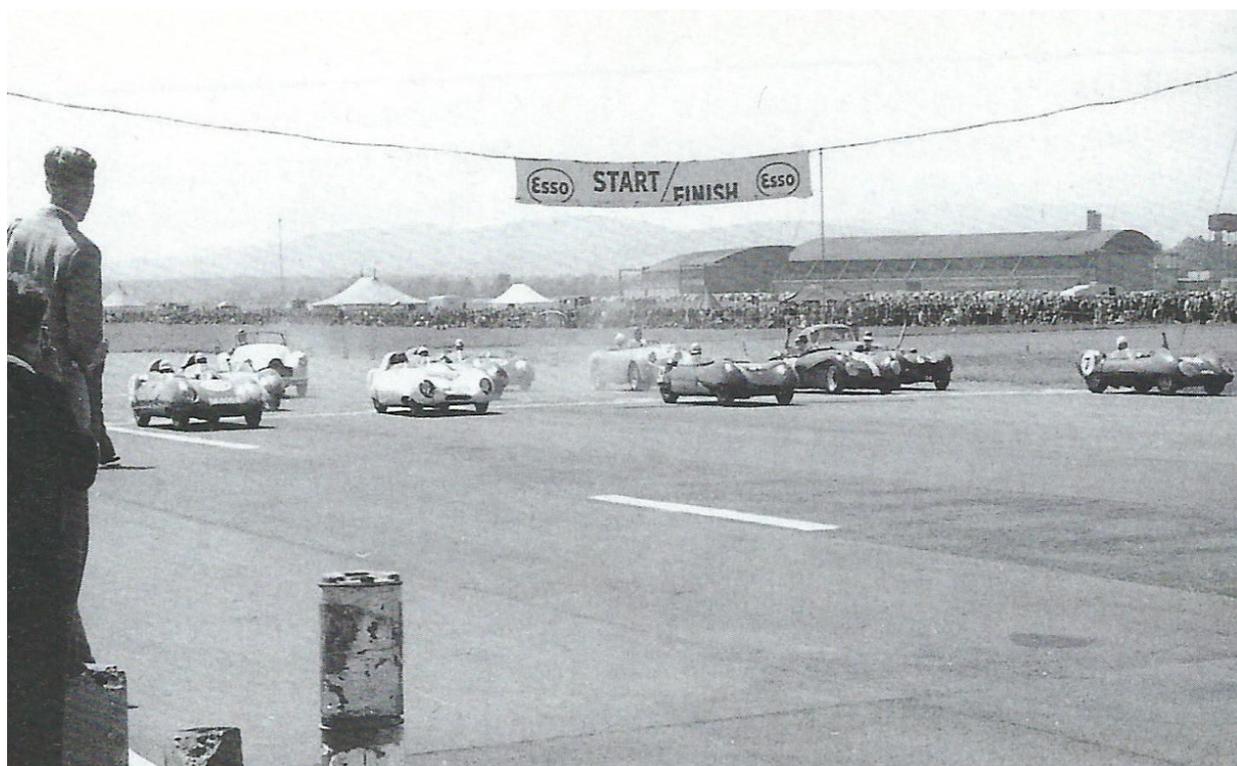
Iain also told me that he was a member of a four-car 750 MC team in a 5-hour relay race at Oulton Park. Also entered was a team Ecurie Red Rose E-types and Iain was told that there was nothing to worry about as the **J.Y. Stewart** driving one of the Jaguars wasn't the well-known Jimmy Stewart of Ecurie Ecosse fame but his unknown younger brother Jackie!! According to Iain it rained like hell and they beat them!!

As I know nothing about Scottish racing circuits, together with the mention of Iain's involvement with a Lotus 11 at Edzell, I decided to do some research on my return. My research disclosed that Edzell was a Scottish airfield north of Dundee, first established during World War I but was closed in 1919. It re-opened in the 1930s as a civilian airfield but on the outbreak of World War II saw it return to service as RAF Edzell. In the late 1950s it was used as a motor racing circuit of 3 miles in length, however only a few races were ever held before it was re-opened for aircraft only.

I have a book entitled "Motorsport Explorer" (ISBN 978-1-4425-634-1), printed by Haynes, August 2012 which identifies all historic and current UK race circuits and the entry for Edzell states: -

*The Aberdeen and DMC organized their meeting on the 20 June 1959. The programme consisted of seven races for cars and five for motorcycles. Tommy Dickson charged off into the lead in the sportscar race in his Lotus 11 [see photo]. Stan Hart led the 1500cc race easily in his formula 2 Cooper-Climax with W.E.J Allen second in a formula 2 Lotus.*

Wikipedia states: - *One of the last sports car races on the circuit was won by the future double World GP Champion **Jim Clark** and the last motor racing meeting at Edzell took place on Saturday, 20 June 1959.*



**Numerous Lotus at the start of the last race at Edzell in 1959 with Tommy Dickson on the extreme left of photo**

During our conversations Iain mentioned the name "Jock McBain" who was the principle organizer of the "The Border Reivers" racing team. According to the internet, McBain was a Chirnside garage owner and agricultural engineer and keen to have a go at racing himself.

*Note: Jim Clark lived and farmed at **Edington Mains** just outside Chirnside in Berwickshire.*

McBain persuaded some of his customers to buy Cooper 500cc racing cars and together they formed the Border Reivers racing team. Another local farmer, Jimmy Somervail, bought one of the famous ex-Prince Bira ERAs, another – Alec Calder, whose wife Matty was Jim Clark's eldest sister – joined with his Brooklands Riley and other members included David Swan, Colin Clark and Ky Mauritzen, later joined by Keith Hall and others.

The web site <http://www.borderreiversracing.co.uk/history/> gives much more details about the history of this team and also its association with Jim Clark.

I have asked Iain if he has any other interesting information relating to his Lotus exploits and if he has and agrees, I hope to be able to include details in a future NKLG newsletter.

Vaughn R

### **Situations Vacant.**

Although not due for re-election until the AGM in 2021, a couple of members have found it necessary to step down, and these positions therefore need to be filled at the AGM in March.

The first position, Webmaster, requires some specialist knowledge or at least an understanding of how computers work. (Collective sigh of relief from a lot of us at that point, knowing we're not eligible, and that certainly includes me). Richard Cox has done some fantastic work in the background getting our internet presence and webpages updated, but other commitments demand that he now passes this crucial role onto somebody else. If you think you would be in a position to take this on please speak to Richard who will be able to explain what's required and what that involves.

The other role is that of Group Co-Ordinator. I was very honoured, and surprised since I had not been seeking it, to be elected to that position in 2015, and it involves far less knowledge and input than Richard's role, the other members of the Steering Group actually do all the work! I am unfortunately finding that my workload is such that I am not able to give this role the attention it deserves, and I think that in the right hands this role can energise and revitalise the Group as a whole. I am therefore asking that those of you who would like to make more of a contribution to the Group make yourselves known for consideration, to be put to the Membership for election in March.

The one significant responsibility that I felt this position carried was that of ensuring that the newsletter was maintained. My view is that the newsletter is a crucial component part of the Group and must therefore be produced, which is why I took on the role of Newsletter Editor, ('temporarily', as I may have mentioned once or twice!) for much of my time in office. I have previously announced that I would step away from this following the next AGM, so I am very hopeful that this position too will be filled. Again, please put yourself forward if you think you may like to take this on.

*Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month, The Moody Mare, Seven Mile Lane, ME18 5QY*

**Web Site: [www.NorthkentLotusgroup.org](http://www.NorthkentLotusgroup.org)**