

North Kent Lotus Group



Editorial

Inevitably not very much to report again this month, but there were at least a couple of events.

The first was the Hever Castle car show which I was unable to attend but I understand there was a good NKLG turn-out and that it was a good event. Beyond that I have no more information, perhaps we could get a report for the next newsletter.

The other event was the Group picnic, kindly hosted by Howard and Jenny in their spacious garden in which we could all be comfortable exercising appropriate social distancing. The event was delayed by a week to take account of the weather, and we had a good run from Wrotham through the Ashdown Forest in perfect conditions. Our thanks from all that attended to Howard and Jenny for their hospitality and to Jon for leading the way.

With seemingly little change on the horizon regarding the pandemic it would appear that the NKLG activities for the year are over, although a few hardy souls are still making an appearance at the club nights, but even that may be curtailed again soon the way things are going, and there is obviously no prospect of our having a Christmas meal this year. The newsletter therefore remains the one connecting thread holding the Group together.

Once again Vaughn has provided some substance for this issue, and I understand that Richard L has another exciting episode of the Elan Restoration Chronicles in production for a future edition, and I know I have appealed for contributions in the past without too much success, but now, more than ever, if you have anything that you think might be of interest to at least some of your fellow member please let me have it, it really is almost the only way we have of staying in touch and keeping the Group active.

Finally, I hope that you are all managing to keep well and sane in these peculiar times. Let us all hope that by the time warm sunny weather returns to tempt us to dust off our cars and get out and about in them again things will have improved and we can, properly, get back together again.

Just For Fun Photo Competition.

I received a deluge of just two responses to the photo competition in the last issue, one from someone who'd seen the picture before and knew who it was (but who also made the useful suggestion that we could use those bell-bottom trousers as a couple of gazebos at future events) and another with an incorrect answer.

The stylish gentleman in question was Roger Rogowski. As with many things in life, we did things differently then. (Just as well, I hear you say). Thanks go to Roger for providing the picture.

Needless to say, the response to my request that others join the fun and send me similar photographs of themselves seems to have found little traction

Happy Motoring?

After some seven long months of not driving my Elise's, due in part to Covid -19 non-essential travel restrictions, I recently decided it was time to fire up the Elise when I then heard that a local Sunday classic car group was holding its first post-Corvid 19 lockdown meeting at The Wheatsheaf pub in Bough-Beech. I thought that this meeting would be a suitable destination for my first trip even though it was a short one, mileage wise. These "breakfast" meetings are apparently normally held in the morning on the third Sunday each month in the summer.

Upon arrival, I was amazed at the large number of classic and desirable cars at this gathering and was relieved that all the car owners were observing social distancing/masks etc. With so many cars both front and rear carparks were in use and I found the various owners prepared to talk about their cars with any newcomers.

Apart from numerous Jaguar E Types, Mustangs, Cobra's, Alfa Romeo's, a replica Porsche 356 speedster and Ferraris (including a Dino) plus many less exotic but still interesting cars, there was a superb looking old LHD open Maserati which looked very original. This Maserati seemed to be similar to a 1953/55 racing A6GCS (2 litre straight six of 150 to 170bhp) and its engine sounded like a low revving straight six, so the car may be genuine (see photos).



You may have noted from the photos that the Maserati's registration number ends in "GCS" which adds substance to my model identification reasoning. However, I suspected it could be a very nice-looking replica (a continuation model some sixty plus years after the original!) but I decided not to risk my wellbeing on my first visit by asking the owner.

Upon his departure, the owner donned a white vintage racing helmet and goggles (very atmospheric) but his lady passenger, without helmet, looked rather self conscious and with a minimal and low windscreen was very exposed to the elements.



Only two Lotus were there, my Elise and a M100 which arrived just as I and many others were leaving but as he was rather late for the gathering, I was unable to talk to him.

Having enjoyed this event and with the weather becoming very unsettled, I departed and decided to switch on my side lights but **NOTHING HAPPENED**.

When I arrived home I started to investigate and the Elise displayed the following symptoms:-

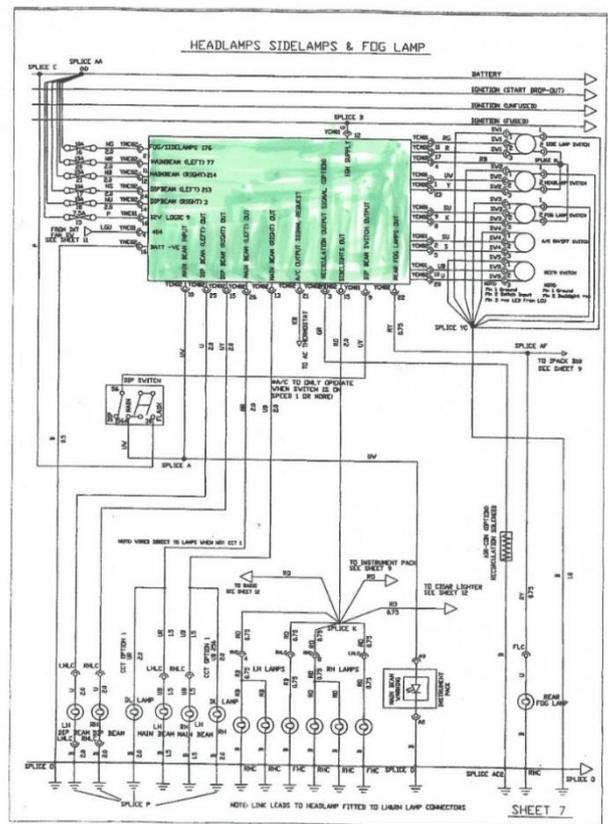
- No side or rear lights.
- No headlights, although the high beam headlamp flasher worked.
- No dashboard illumination.
- No lighting switch warning lights.
- No rear fog light.

From a combination of internet searches and looking at the Elise S2 electrical wiring diagram, I discovered that the lighting control and distribution system employed a plug-in module hidden behind the instrument display.

Eventually I had discovered how to remove the instrument display binnacle and hence gain access to the module. I then removed the module's cover and proceeded to examine the internal circuitry but could not see anything obviously wrong e.g. burnt out components, broken wires etc etc. See photos on page 4.

The official Elise electrical wiring diagram does not show any details of the internal module circuit design (see Green box in the diagram), so I had zero hope of tracing the fault and became resigned to having to buy a replacement module.

Lotus Service Notes Section MO





Instruments & module removed



Plug in Elise Lighting Control Module Box & Circuit board

By experimentation I discovered that the four heavy-duty open relays shown in the above photo, two control the left and right-hand side high beams and the other two the low beams. Hence it is possible for one of these relays to fail and only one light effected eg. no high or low beam on one side.

Elise-Parts quote £101.67 plus VAT for a new module but a company on the Internet named "Technozen" (www.technozen-electronics.co.uk) in Brighton claimed to be able to repair the offending module for £40.

A phone call to Norman at "NCT Cars" to see if he happened to have a spare module which could be plugged in to my Elise to prove my unit was actually faulty and if proven, possibly for sale was unfortunately un-successful as he did not have one and had not experienced this problem himself. Norman's advice was to risk the £40 repair just in case my diagnosis was wrong and it would at least eliminate one possible cause of my total light failure.

According to the Technozen web site, there are several module variants starting with the oldest type A117M0008F (mine) through to the current microprocessor version type E117M0008F with each variant using different technology and circuit designs. The earlier versions use discrete logic and later versions are microprocessor based. The latter, if they become faulty are generally unreparable.

Following a telephone conversation with Technozen's Paul Brown (Mobile No. 07527 877995) he confirmed my diagnosis/suspicions and told me that there was a small relay (shown Black with blue writing in the photo) that often failed, so on that basis I posted mine off to Brighton. Two days later, Paul telephoned me and told me that the relay was not the cause of my problem but after some eighteen years of use an electrolytic capacitor's electrolyte had leaked out and damaged one of the printed circuit board copper tracks which he had managed to by-pass. Paul additionally replaced a damaged voltage regulator and the offending leaky capacitor all for £40.

The repaired and tested unit was returned by special delivery a couple of day later and is now refitted and works perfectly, thanks to Paul. If you have an electrical problem with any plug-in type modules it is worth contacting Paul at Technozen – electronics and see if he can help.

My next Lotus task was to replace my old Bridgestone tyres which are now thirteen years old so that should have been a simple task, however that turned out to be far more difficult than you can imagine but that story will be told in a later newsletter.

Vaughn

PS. Since compiling this article the Sunday meetings at The Wheatsheaf pub in Bough-Beech have been suspended due to the six people meeting restrictions.

Group Activities

Due to the current Coronavirus 19 restrictions some activities will need to be arranged as and when circumstances permit.

Contacts

Regalia & Clothing: www.arktrading.com

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday each month, The Moody Mare, Seven Mile Lane, ME18 5QY

Web Site: www.NorthkentLotusgroup.org