

North Kent Lotus Group



Editorial

The problem with bi-monthly newsletters is that I'm hard-pressed to remember what was in the previous one, and with recent swapping of laptops I don't have a copy to hand, and yes, I did check the website, and it's not there either. (Chances are I neglected to send Ron a copy, so I need to resolve that too).

What I am aware of however is that we have, at last, been able to enjoy some events and one another's company again in the last couple of months, and the turn-out for these events has generally been good, like uncorking a bottle, I think everyone was itching to get out and about.

I haven't received any reports of these events, but one highlight worthy of a mention is that Jon L's Esprit was voted the 'most popular' at the Club Lotus weekend in the Cotswolds at the beginning of October, and he's got a certificate to prove it! Well-done Jon, and congratulations.

The Steering Group met at the end of August, the main business being organising the Christmas meal, details of which you will have received, and I hope that the majority of you will be able to attend.

Another matter discussed was the membership fee, the outcome of which was that we will discontinue the £5/£8 single/'family' membership. As of March 2022, when memberships are due for renewal, we shall have a single £10 fee applicable to all, be it single members, couples or indeed entire families at a single address.

Finally, another call for photos and details of members' cars for the website. These can be emailed directly to Ron.

Roger D

Maidstone Sports Cars Visit

For various reasons, COVID being one, it seemed like a lifetime since I last drove my Elise but I managed just one trip in late July together with other NKLG members to Maidstone Sports Cars (MSC) at Tong Farm near Ashford.

A small group of members gathered at Borough Green but due to some local road closures, Chris C led us through some very narrow and bumpy cross-country lanes, some appearing to have little normal use as they had grass growing in the centre. This route demonstrated that my front spoiler, which is excellent for straight line stability, becomes a real handicap when the roads are less than smooth with a couple of "crunches" heard coming from the front during the trip.

The sudden appearance of six Lotus Elise's in convoy traveling through these narrow lanes would have been an un-expected surprise to any local tractor driver and I was just happy not to be the lead car, we finally emerged un-scathed.

Un-like main Lotus sales outlets, MSC appeared to have no formal showroom and are very much service orientated with a number of large separate farm type buildings being used. According to their web site MSC are now Lotus approved to undertake repairs/servicing. During our visit we were offered drinks and hot food which was very welcome.

There were a number of non-Lotus cars apparently in the process of restoration/storage there eg. MGA roadster, plus an older TVR, Caterham and a couple of Lotus Elise S1's fitted with Honda Type R engines which were much more interesting. The number of visiting Lotus cars on the day must have been nearly fifty including Evora's, Elans etc. and my favourite a Pistachio coloured Europa TC was on show (see photo).

Subsequently I decided to take my Elise back to MSC for its VVC cam belt(s) change although the Elise has only covered 4500 miles in the last five years but extending the life of the belts is just too risky. I also "splashed out" on a full "D" service, the first full Lotus service my Elise has had in fourteen years of ownership. I wish to point out that I normally do all the servicing myself with the exception of replacing the two cam belts (it's just more complicated being a MG/Rover VVC engine and I am getting rather too old to do it).

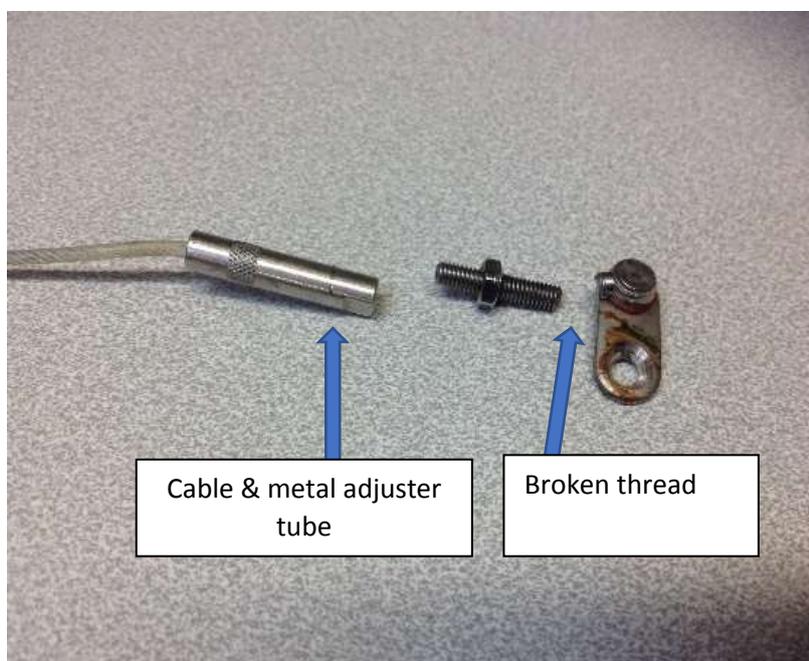
With the belts changed I can now look forward to another five years of motoring but will try and do a few more miles next year, weather permitting.

Unfortunately, the June/July newsletter was published prior to receiving some photographs from Roger R taken during the MSC visit and the subsequent BBQ but these have been appended to the bottom of this newsletter.

Elise Hood Teaser

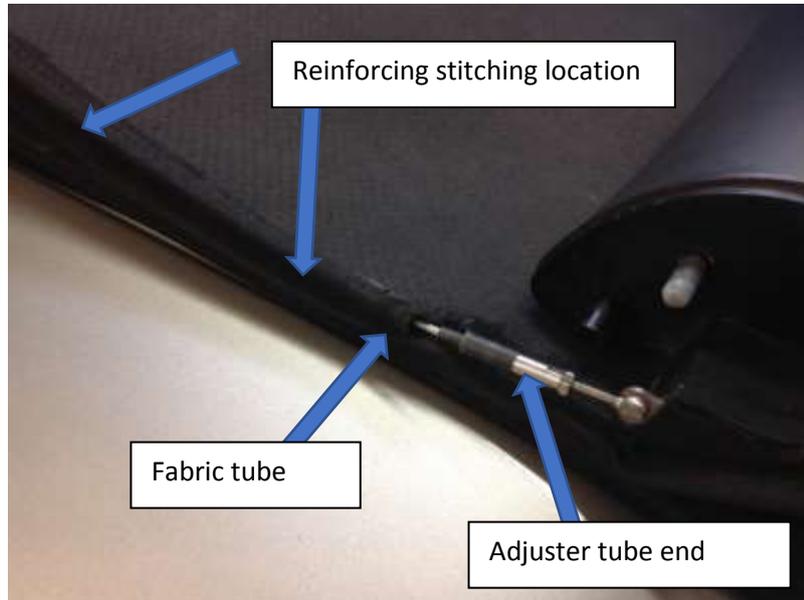
After my Elise windscreen replacement saga (see the last issue), the thread on my hood tensioning cable adjuster decided to snap which allowed the rear of the hood to become very slack. Had it been the front tensioning cable, the forward motion would have made the hood bellow up leading to possible damage.

Following enquiries, I discovered that the metal adjuster end is not available separately so a new cable assembly is required at a cost of £68.56 including VAT and PP.



Looking carefully at the way the tensioning cable was incorporated into the hood, I could see that it was stitched into a long/narrow fabric tube and initially thought that I would have to get the cable professionally replaced and hence be without a hood for several weeks. I had already made a tentative enquiry during the NKLG visit to Maidstone Sports Cars, by asking if it was difficult to replace the cable, but the person I spoke to just smiled. Even after this discouraging news, I decided to have at least one attempt to do it myself.

Upon receipt of a new cable assembly from Paul Matty, I already knew that the metal adjuster tube was too large in diameter to pull through the fabric tube so I had no option but to un-stitch a row of secondary tube reinforcing stitches adjacent to the cable run (see photo).



Fortunately these reinforcing stitches are separate to those used to attach the fabric tube to the hood and the hood surface is unaffected after being removed. Even then the new cable adjuster tube could still not be pulled through the tube so I inserted a long circular rod which was a little thicker than the metal adjuster tube into the fabric tube in an attempt to stretch and straighten the fabric tube.

After the rod had been left in place for three days, the fabric tube had stretched just sufficiently for me to pull through the new cable/adjuster tube through the fabric tube using very strong garden twine but even then, only after a long struggle.

The lack of the reinforcing stitching does not seem to have caused a problem to the hood fitting as far as I can tell and should it become apparent that they are needed, they could be replaced by stitching by hand. Care is also needed in adjusting the cable tension and ensuring that the roof is pulled down correctly but is not too tight as that would put the cable/adjuster at risk of breaking again.

I have come to the conclusion that it is “just” possible, with a degree of luck, to do the job yourself and I just hope this article helps others who find themselves in a similar position.

Something for Christmas

Turning to a totally different subject, I recently received a battery powered clock as a rather unexpected gift from my daughter which I thought may be of interest to NKLG members.

As you can see from the photo the face is a printed copy of a traditional speedometer with a veneered style background together with a Lotus logo. These clocks are apparently made in Wiltshire and retailed by www.chronosclocks.com at £45.



Sorry about the distorted frame shape in this photo but it was very difficult to photograph due to reflections from the glass, but you should get the general appearance. Currently two other Lotus themed clocks are offered for sale, Elan M100 Turbo and the Elite Type 14.

Scraping the Barrel Cont.

Returning to the subject of the less well-known Lotus F1 drivers: -

Peter Arundell (1960 to 66)

Believe me or not, I had already completed my research into Peter Arundell's career and drafted this newsletter article in early February 2021 when by pure coincidence Richard Heseltine published an article all about Arundell in the May/June issue of "Absolute Lotus". I find it hard enough thinking of a suitable topic for the newsletter without then being up-staged by a mere professional writer!

Formula Junior

According to entries in Wikipedia and Motor Sport web sites, he was born in 1933 and after doing his national service in the Royal Air Force started racing a formula junior Elva-DKW in 1959.

Elva racing cars were manufactured in garages in both Bexhill and Hastings and a web site "Elva.com" gives further details.

The cars produced were powered by either DKW three-cylinder two-stroke engines, tuned by Gerhard Mitter in Germany or by BMC A series engines. The photograph shows an example of an Elva-DKW taken during a recent historic race.



As a side note, I was once overtaken by Harry Epps who owned the large garage in Green-St-Green, Orpington who seemed to be testing his Elva FJ single seater on the A224 up towards Pollhill.

He did have trade plates hung on the rear of the car but no mudguards, lights or silencer and although I attempted to keep up with him in my tuned "Frog Eye" Sprite it was impossible as he disappeared rapidly up the road only to soon re-appear but by then going the other way. Happy motoring days, no speed limits and few police cars around in those days.

Following Arundell's win in the Elva-DKW at the 1959 Brands Hatch Boxing Day race, he was invited to join the Lotus FJ team for 1960 season as a team-mate to Jim Clark and Trevor Taylor. He won the Monaco Formula Junior race in 1961 and 62 and the formula junior championship driving a Lotus 22. In September 1963 he won the Anglo-European Formula Junior Trophy at Brands Hatch in a Lotus 27.

F1 & F2

The Wikipedia web site indicates that in 1962 he drove a Lotus 24 (B.R.M V8 engine) in a non-championship race in Reims but he had to retire. He had an entry in 1963 again for a non-Championship race in Germany driving a Lotus 25 (Climax V8) and finished in 2nd place. He signed a contract as Jim Clark's full-time team-mate in 1964 and had two 3rd place podium finishes again driving a Lotus 25 (Climax V8).

While racing in F2 at Reims-Gueux in France in 1965, he spun his Lotus 32 (Cosworth) and was hit at high speed by Richie Ginther and was thrown out of the car, which resulted in him missing most of that season.

He returned to racing in 1966 at the non-championship South African Grand Prix and finished 3rd driving a Lotus 33 (Climax V8), but in the F1 championship races his best result being 6th in the USA. Wikipedia web site states that on a few occasions, Jim Clark took over Arundell's car prior to the start of some races when his own car developed faults, leaving Peter without a drive.

Lotus Cortina

According to btcc.fandom.com, Arundell also drove a works Lotus Cortina in 1964 and 1965, backing up Jim Clark. He had four 2nd places in 1964 and in 1966 one 1st, four 2nd and a 4th.

He did not enjoy any further successes although in 1968 he drove a supercharged Ford Escort TC for Allan Mann Racing with a best result of a 3rd that year. He finally retired from racing, having started in only eleven F1 races and then moved to Florida. He died at his home near Fakenham; Norfolk aged 75 in 2009.

P.S I have not copied Richard Heseltine's article, honest!

From knowing very little about Peter Arundell it is interesting just how much you can find out from internet web sites, so watch this space.

Vaughn

MSC Visit



BBQ



Contacts

Regalia & Clothing: www.arktrading.com

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