

North Kent Lotus Group



Editorial

I know that Roger D has for some time wanted someone else to take up the editorial role. The fact that I feel really sorry for Roger with his current paid workload seems to have raised his hopes that I am a willing volunteer. At my advanced age, I am not looking for recognition or glory and for the long-term future of the group's newsletters the new editor should be someone much-much younger than myself with renewed enthusiasm for all things Lotus. In the meantime, I will do what I can to help Roger keep the newsletter going. Thanks also goes to Richard L, who has provided yet another Lotus Elan restoration update, so this newsletter seems to have become a "bumper" issue.

Roger D has previously circulated an e-mail seeking new committee members to replace those wishing to stand down. Chrissie Rogowski has now volunteered to become the next group treasurer taking over from John Underhay who has held that position for more years than I can remember and we will all wish to express our thanks for his unstinting support of the group.

Just to show that Roger D has not given up contributing he has provided a timely warning which is reproduced later in this newsletter.

I am led to believe there was a good NKLG "turn-out" at the Hever Castle car show, but sadly, nobody has compiled a report for the benefit of those unable to attend, more's the pity. Yet again I echo Roger's D's plea for more contributions to the newsletter as it is increasingly difficult to find/create topics of interest and it would be a pity if the newsletter was only issued every three months due to lack of content. Some NKLG members may feel they have nothing worth offering or even feel too embarrassed to put pen to paper (or should it be fingers on the key-board). Both Roger D and I are happy to assist with editing contributions or adjustments to presentation if required and it could be published anonymously if it helps generate inputs.

On a more personal front, Diana and I are in the throes of buying a new home and just to compound my stress, my Elise has suffered a cracked windscreen. Apparently, Elise windscreens are not a normal stock item and it took over two weeks to get a replacement. Fitting the screen is also difficult due to the S2 clam shell centre spine overlapping the bottom of the windscreen which is a rather bad Lotus design. I had to first release the clam shell rear/upper fixings, including those difficult bolts just inside the door opening which allows the front clam shell rear edge to be lifted slightly to give enough clearance for the fitters to position the bottom of the windscreen prior to bonding. Yes, it took two fitters to do the job as each had to lift the corners of the clam shell whilst I lifted the centre whilst the screen was positioned and then bonded.

The new screen came complete with a new black windscreen surround attached so is now looking very smart indeed.

Memo to myself, must avoid getting too close to lorries and getting stone chips!

Vaughn

The “Trials & Tribulations” of rebuilding 50-year-old cars

My last newsletter explained and provided examples of the 6P rule (Proper Planning Prevents...). Based on my recent experience I would add “Prepare” for the unexpected and check as much as you can as you install. I am sure those more experienced than myself will be well aware that 1960 cars were never built to the same precision as modern cars (especially Lotus) providing extra challenges to restoration or replacement with new parts.

Whilst there has been progress, my restoration remains at a slow pace:

Dashboard: New S3 dashboards are difficult to source, so when I managed to find one last autumn I grabbed it immediately. Earlier this year, when I started to check that the switches fitted correctly, I found the holes to be correctly sized. However, in some cases the routing on the rear was not deep enough.

To avoid damage, I decided to use dremel sanding discs to deepen the holes rather than try routing them out further. Those that I deepened are not quite as deep as in the old dash but in my opinion some were too deep being nearly down to the veneer!



Main gauges: Unsurprisingly, I have used Speedy Cables to restore my tachometer and speedometer. The former has now been converted to negative earth and to function with electronic ignition. For the speedometer, Speedy Cables need some calibration data requiring 6 revolutions of the wheels associated with number of revolutions of the cable. You would have thought this was an easy task and eventually it was!

However, when the cable didn't initially turn with the wheels, I was very concerned – was the speedo drive worn, necessitating removal of the gearbox? Previously, I had bench tested the cable but decided to remove cable and test it again – no problem. When I re-installed, it was working. I have concluded that it is possible to insert and tighten the speedo adaptor whilst not properly engaging into the drive. Yet again, demonstrating the need to test as far as possible every item as it is installed.



Bonnet: Those who have joined recent Zoom club meetings, will have heard of my troubles with the lack of bonnet to camshaft cover clearance. This emerged when setting the height of the bonnet retaining clips on the bulkhead.

Option One had added an extra diagonal band of fibreglass to strengthen the underside of the bonnet. But this was not the only problem - the height of the front of the camshaft cover was also too high. Reading in LotusElan.net, it seemed it was not an uncommon problem and there were a variety of solutions.

A common issue was the lack of gearbox mounting spacer which, when not installed has the effect of raising the front of the engine. Mine was in place and was of the correct dimension (11 mm).

For the "Tall Block" engines it is recommended to use 17mm spacers to overcome the problem. In an attempt to identify the cause of my issue, I compared just about every relevant aspect (including type of block, height versus chassis and dimensions of engine mountings) with other NKLG cars (Chris C and Roger D's).

Apart from the obvious aspect that my engine mountings were brand new as opposed to ones that had "settled", there was no clear explanation. Oh and changing the bonnet colour didn't help either (Ha, ha!)

To cut the story short, I have now had most of the extra fibreglass removed from the area that fits just above the raised part of the camshaft cover, swapped out the new uprated rubber mounting for standard ones (though this made very little difference) and doubled the gearbox spacers to 22mm. Currently, I have about 7 mm clearance (recommended circa 9 – 10) but I hope, that once the car is run in, the engine will settle further. If it does then I can chose to keep the extra clearance or reduce the thickness of gearbox spacers.



Fuel Tank: More positively, I can now report that the fuel tank and wiper motor have now been installed.



The installation of the fuel tank was delayed as I awaited the return of my re-furbished petrol cap. As I wanted to use my original cap, I managed to drill out the seal rivet, obtain a kit to replace the seal. The cap was then re-chromed and re-assembled.

The replacement (Paul Matty) alloy fuel tank is ever so slightly different (from the original steel one) in hole position and angle of filler neck (as others have found according to LotusElan.net).



However, most of the problems were overcome by using some extra large washers and a more flexible rubber filler connector than supplied by PM. Fitting the spare wheel in the residual space was always a problem but the combination of brand new tread, 155 vs 145 tyres, and tank position means that I have had to deflate the spare slightly and will have to carry a footpump in future. Again reported by others.

Richard L.

Warning E10 Petrol!

I am aware that many in the NKLG community are not Club Lotus members, and consequently they will not have received the latest copy of the club magazine, and there is a small item in it that I think should be shared with a wider audience.

As from September this year, 95 octane fuel will contain 10% ethanol rather than the 5% it currently contains. This can apparently have a detrimental effect on older cars, and the RAC has issued a statement recommending that cars registered prior to 2002 should not use 95 octane after this month.

Fortunately, the Government has pledged that it will maintain 5% ethanol content in all existing 97/99 octane fuel for the foreseeable future, but as the magazine article suggests, it would be prudent to check the labelling at the pump if your car falls into that age bracket. As an alternative, additives are available, but either way there will be a cost implication to a number, if not the majority, of our membership.

Roger D

Scraping the Barrel – Part 2

Returning to the theme of the less famous Lotus drivers listed on the Classic Team Lotus web site, I investigated the careers of the following: -

Alan Stacey (1955 to 1960)



Alan Stacey was born in 1933 and as a result of a motorbike accident at the age of seventeen, had an artificial lower right leg so is rather a special case. This photo shows Chapman, Ireland, Clark and Stacey in 1960.

I can only think of one other disabled driver, Archie Scott-Brown, who was active in the 1950's and raced Lister-Jaguars. Archie's disability was a result of his mother catching German Measles during pregnancy and he was born with severe disablement to his legs (his feet were twisted almost backwards) and without a right hand. Eventually after many operations he was able to walk and then learnt to drive and eventually raced (See image below).

Sadly, Archie Scott-Brown was killed at Spa in 1958 aged 31 whilst racing his Lister-Jaguar sports car (knobbly). Incidentally he died at the same corner that claimed the life of Richard Seaman in 1939 (Mercedes - W154).

According to the "historic racing.com" web site, Alan Stacey's racing career started in 1955 driving a Lotus 6 which he had built up from a kit. Then in 1956 he built a Lotus 11 and used it to win races at Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Silverstone and Goodwood etc. Colin Chapman subsequently offered him a works drive in 1957.

Because of his artificial leg, he was unable to "heel and toe" effectively and the Lotus mechanics installed a motorcycle style twist-grip throttle on the gear lever to help him speed up his gear shifts.

Alan Stacey made his Formula 1 debut at the British Grand Prix in 1958 and qualified a front engined Lotus 16 but had to retire from the race on the 19th lap with overheating problems. This was the Lotus with the rear mounted 5-speed sequential transaxle incorporating a ZF limited slip differential.



The Lotus transaxle was designed by Richard Ansdale and Harry Munday (of Twin Cam head design fame). Even after Keith Duckworth had improved its design it remained troublesome due to its compact size and narrow width gear clusters and I believe it was Innes Ireland who gave it the derogatory nickname "the queerbox".

Having gained entry into F1, Stacey did not allow the use of a foot operated accelerator to hold him back. According to the French journalist Gerard (Gabby) Crombac, Stacey used deception in order to be allowed to race on at least one occasion. In June 1958 he travelled to France for a 3 Hour race at Rouen and it was there that he had to undergo a medical examination.

Worried by the bureaucracy of the French organisers, he took Crombac with him to the examination. After the doctor had tested the reaction time of Alan's good leg by tapping it just below the left knee with a small rubber hammer, Crombac distracted the doctor so that Alan could cross his legs and when the doctor was again looking, back again, enabling his good leg to be tested a second time and he got away with this deception. He continued racing in 1959, again driving a Lotus 16 but with little success.

Stacey was entered in a works Lotus 18 in the 1960 F1 race at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium.

That race weekend started badly when Stirling Moss crashed his Rob Walker owned Lotus 18 in practice when a rear wheel became detached whilst approaching Burnenville, which was on the old circuit. Moss broke his nose, three ribs and both legs in the crash. I seem to remember that it was reported at the time that faulty machining and heat treatment of the stub axles was to blame.

According to "Formulaspy.com" several drivers stopped to give Stirling aid and with no sign of an ambulance arriving, Mike Taylor, also driving a Lotus18, was sent back to the pits to get help but he crashed at about 130 mph near Stavelot when a steering column weld on his privately entered Lotus failed.

Taylor was thrown from the car and his resulting injuries left him paralysed. After therapy he regained his ability to walk but his racing career was over. He successfully sued Lotus, one of the few successful actions against a racing car constructor ever recorded but he died of cancer in 2017 at the age of 84.

Then on lap 25 of the actual race, Alan Stacey was travelling at about 140mph on the Masta straight, again approaching Burnenville, when he crashed. Stacey's teammate Innes Ireland wrote an article about Stacey's death in which he stated spectators claimed a bird had flown into Stacey's face while he was approaching the curve, possibly knocking him unconscious, or even possibly killing him by breaking his neck or inflicting fatal head injuries, prior to the car crashing. The car climbed an embankment, went through ten feet of thick hedge before landing in a field and catching fire. Conflicting internet reports suggest that he died after either being thrown out of the car or in the burning wreck.

He was just 27.

Another driver, Chris Bristow was racing the two works Ferrari's of Wolfgang von Trips and Willy Mairesse for 6th place in his Cooper T51, when he made what appeared to be an unforced error and crashed, again at Burnenville, the Cooper struck an embankment and rolled over several times.

Some internet sites report him as having been thrown out of the car and being decapitated by a barbed wire fence. Other web sites suggest the decapitation happened when the car rolled. It was reported that Jimmy Clark, then in his first season of F1 for Lotus, nearly struck Bristow's body where it had landed on the track. This horrifying experience, coupled with the death of Archie Scott-Brown two years earlier, lay at the root of Clark's hatred of driving at Spa.

Carlos Reutemann

It has recently been reported that Argentinian F1 racing driver Carlos Reuteman has died of cancer at the age of 79. He drove for Team Lotus for just one year (1979) alongside Mario Andretti. He finished up 7th in that year's driver's championship which was won by Jody Scheckter in a Ferrari 312T.

Reutemann's F1 results for 1979

<u>ARG</u> 2	<u>BRA</u> 3	<u>RSA</u> 5	<u>USW</u> Ret	<u>ESP</u> 2	<u>BEL</u> 4	<u>MON</u> 3	<u>FRA</u> 13	<u>GBR</u> 8	<u>GER</u> Ret	<u>AUT</u> Ret	<u>NED</u> Ret	<u>ITA</u> 7	<u>CAN</u> Ret	<u>USA</u> Ret
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He was more successful in the driver's Championship whilst driving for Brabham (3rd 1975), Williams (3rd in 1980 and 2nd in 1981). After retiring from F1 he became an Argentina politician.

Vaughn

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