

# North Kent Lotus Group



## Editorial

A brief editorial this month to leave space for *two* contributions, what a great start to the newsletter year! My thanks to Richard and Mark for their articles.

The weather over the last few days has been almost spring-like, which puts us all in the mood for dusting off the cars after their winter hibernation, and already there are a good number of events being suggested via emails for us to look forward to.

One significant one is the possible trip to Hethel (significant in that it could be fairly costly) and it is dependent on a sufficient number of members attending, so please look out for that and advise if you're interested in attending.

Finally, the March club-night is also the AGM, as highlighted in the previous editorial. I've not received any requests for consideration for Steering Group positions, or any items of business to be discussed. If you have anything in mind, or of concern, please let me know.

The AGM's, don't appear to be everyone's favourite club-night and attendance is generally fairly poor, but we have a number of new members now, so let's break with tradition and aim for a good turn-out.

March is also membership subscriptions time, don't forget we have a new 'flat rate' of £10, (we have done away with the single/joint membership scheme), the £10 covers each household, irrespective of the number of individuals that may cover.

Hopefully see a lot of you at the AGM!

Roger D.

## Baby Elan Restoration Update (as at 31-12-2021)

I cannot believe that it's now nearly six months since my last newsletter update. As always, progress has been slower than expected. In part, this has been due to a higher debt advice workload following the unexpected death of a fellow volunteer. Nevertheless, some significant progress has been made with highlights (and lowlights) below.

To minimise difficulties later, I decided I needed to attach the steering column before building up the engine bay and ultimately starting the engine. However, this meant that I needed to install the main wiring loom and dashboard first. To prevent re-work later, it also made sense to test as much of the dashboard equipment as far as possible.

**Vacuum Headlight Switch:** Replacements are unavailable and if mine did not work or leaked then I would probably have to resort to an electrically operated solenoid system.

Further research flagged the point that, for non failsafe cars, there has to be leakage on the headlight actuator side as otherwise the headlights would not return to their closed position.

Consequently, one needed to know which switch pipes attached to the actuator and vacuum tank pipes respectively.



This was a point of detail I had missed to record when I stripped the original dashboard.

In order to test the switch operation, and to check for leaks (when open), I attached an air hose and immersed the switch in a bowl of water (see picture).



All worked fine and the box only leaked air (with the valve closed) when the air was applied to one of the pipes, so I was able to determine the appropriate pipe attachments. Hopefully there won't be problems at a later stage.

**Wiring and Dashboard Installation:** From other blogs etc, it seems there are two main ways of approaching this. A) Install dashboard into the car and then install loom connections from underneath and behind. B) Install loom, make connections with the dashboard proud of the crashpad pad then push it back under the crashpad and secure it. I chose the latter with some elements that could only be properly secured from the rear of the dashboard (e.g. choke, heater and bonnet cables) attached whilst on the bench. To avoid other difficulties, I also attached the glove box and the radio.



To help hold the dashboard stable whilst attaching the wiring to switches etc., I made a "table" (see photo) for the dashboard to sit on.

I then proceeded to connect and test each circuit that I could (e.g. heater, lights, radio etc.). Having bench tested my fuel gauge and sender unit previously,

I was surprised when the fuel gauge read full when the ignition was switched on. My worry was that I might have to take the fuel tank out again to fix the sender unit. Thankfully though, after further cleaning of the gauge electrical spades, the gauge read empty.

The biggest challenge was then pushing the loom, cables and dashboard into place. For this, I enlisted the help of Vaughn who wisely suggested the glove box need to be detached. We duly did this but even so it was definitely a two man job! I have left the problem of re-attaching the glove box for a later date.

**Steering Column and Wheel alignment:** With the dashboard in place I then set about installing the various elements of the steering column, not forgetting the earth wire to link the 2 sides of the universal joint.

However, my front wheels were visibly in "toe-out" which I wanted to correct before I attached the steering wheel.



I created a fixed measuring “tool” from a length of wood and two upright shelf brackets with the distance between the uprights at about 10 cms less than the track width. This enabled me to then measure (separately) the width between front of the tyres and between the rear of the front tyres (mid way across the tread and at hub height). I then adjusted the track rod ends to obtain the required “toe-in” of circa 3 mm.

NB. As my intention is to have all the car’s geometry checked and adjusted professionally on

completion of the rebuild, I think this should be accurate enough for the time being.

For those of us who are getting on in years (and who additionally suffer from back problems), the thought of arching one’s back across the sharp edge of the elan’s sill whilst fiddling with connections and brackets under the footwell does not bear thinking of. Hence as you will see in the photo, I have cut a piece of board to fit the angle along the sill with the door open and fixed to 2 motor cycle jacks to be able to set it at the correct height. It has already proved to be a vital back saver!



Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy 2022!

Richard L.

### The Zenos E10, what might have been ...

Hi all,

Happy New Year!

I hope you’re well and enjoyed the festive period.

Sadly, I was running a bit late for last week’s Sevens and Classics’ Wintertide. Fortunately, Mark Bareham had got there in good time and posted pics of the interesting cars (on our club Facebook page)!

Inside the showroom, next to an insane Ariel Nomad, a Zenos E10S was proudly presented which caught my eye!



I first saw the E10 at an SMMT Motor Expo at Canary Wharf, I think in 2015. Ansar Ali (formerly of Caterham and Lotus) was showing visitors around the car. He and Mark Edwards (from Caterham) founded Zenos Cars in 2012 and with the help of some enthusiastic and innovative engineers from the Norfolk area, the Ford EcoBoost-powered mid-engine sports car was their impressive creation.

It was to be offered in convertible, coupe and track day-focused forms. I thought it could have been the nemesis to bring to the Elise an untimely end.

Around that time, we had the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration of the Elise available to us which Lotus had launched in 2010. They had downsized the entry-level car with a 1.6 litre unit and replaced the high revving 1.8 litre unit with a slightly gentler but equally powerful one. While the chassis continued to gain plaudits the car magazines were often negative of the cabin and that it hadn't kept up with the changing times.

In comparison the E10 offered something fresh and innovative. A proposed £25K starting point brought 200bhp, in-board front mounted dampers, an aluminium spine and a cockpit made from recycled carbon fibre.

I recall that climbing over the high sill then placing both feet onto the seat base before dropping yourself into the well-shaped composite seat you're encased in an equally minimalist but much more modern cockpit. You could even specify the car without a windscreen!

I wasn't sure it would appeal to Seven owners? I imagine many are quite adept at taking their cars to bits, building them back up and fettling them – not so with an E10. Similar for many Lotus fans too!

Though to me, Zenos offered a glimpse of what a 21<sup>st</sup> century re-imagined Caterham 21 might look like (the Elise being the 21's nemesis). Perhaps not unsurprising given the backgrounds of the Zenos team.

But I thought to myself they'd built the wrong version of the car. To battle the Elise for new owners and be profitable I thought it needed doors, windows, a useable boot and at least an Elise S2 style roof!

Tactfully I did explain to Mr Ali that I'd be first in line once the doors and roof arrive. I don't think he took on my feedback though.

Sadly, Zenos went into administration in 2017. An interesting car but I wonder if they had really figured out their market.

Oh, and the other Lotus connection: Matt Windle, the current MD for Lotus Cars, joined Lotus from Zenos in 2017!

Every best wish for the New Year!

Mark B

Ps, since posting my article on our Facebook page, Steve Tillett (Tillett Racing Seats) got in touch to say that he created the sports seats for the E10. I notice from the web-site some interesting seats for the Elise

#### **Contacts**

*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)