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LOTUS:09

& Clubman Notes



The Official Magazine of
Lotus Club Victoria &
Lotus Club Queensland

Features:

Mt Cotton
Lakeside
Tesla Drive
Toowoomba
MacLeans Bridge





Historic Mt Cotton Hill Climb

By John Barram.

The annual Historic Mt Cotton meeting was held on Sunday 3 May 2009, but this year with only a small showing of the Lotus marque.

The ground improvements at this track continue to the point it must be one of the most pleasant motor sport venues in the country – more like somebody's big back garden than a race track. And it was a beautifully sunny autumn day.

Noise limits on competing vehicles are an issue with the lovely Lotus 41 having troubles last year and not running this year and open wheeler cars in general being down on numbers.

In our class John Lungren and I were running our Sevens against a replica seven and a brace of Welsor clubman track cars. While his car was running well, John Lungren was not at his best, but managed a third in class.

I regularly ran the Seven at this track in the early 70's, driving on what I now recognise as dreadful wheels and tyres. I even rolled the car once in my efforts to go fast. My best time then was 53.8sec. Perhaps you can teach an old dog new tricks because now running on much narrower wheels and superior rubber I achieved my best ever time with this car of 51.1sec. to win the class.





Toowoomba Classic Car and War Bird Show

by Greg Bray

Im not an early morning person so it was hard to get to Park Rd, Milton for 6.30am start. Mind you we were all probably later than Gavin and Carina who thought they'd missed us and dashed off to the second rendezvous. Good to see new member David Holland make it to the run in his very nice white Elan plus 2 he brought over from South Africa and now has on the road. His wife Terry and son Ross followed in their Subaru. Ross wishing to clock up some kilometres at the wheel. Also good to see Greg, Patrick's bestman accompanying Wade in his Esprit. Completing the line up at Milton was Cameron in his Elise, Naresh and friend in Exige, Chris and I in our Elan. On reaching Blacksoil Russell and Lee, Gavin and Carina joined us in their Elises.

As usual on a run one of us had a little problem, this time it was Wade's turn in his Esprit. A throttle cable kept coming off the pedal, which needed adjusting up. We pushed on and reached the airfield in Toowoomba after 9.00am I think. I was pleasantly surprised at the great turn out of cars at the event and the many people there. Never seen so many Alvis' all in one place, lots of Healeys, Jags, Mini's, etc., few Lamborghini's even a lone Delorean and steam vehicle. Some new with the old, the latest models of Aston Martin and Bentley were present. But of course the best line up

was of the seven Lotus cars. Interesting war planes and their history were on display, with many flying demonstrations too loud to be missed. The weather was perfect, sunny but with that cooler Toowoomba air.

Whilst having refreshments under the huge Rotary club marquee Toowoomba residents and new club members and fellow Pomme Steve Lazell and new wife Tanya eventually arrived. It was sad to hear that they had to abandon their original idea of bringing along their S.4 Elan which Steve had brought over from the UK not so long ago. It developed an engine oil leak that very morning. Great to meet a younger chap who had chosen to own one of the older Lotus models, I'm not biased about Elan's of course.

A good day was had by all I'm sure and well worth a repeat trip to the event next year.

Chris and I stopped off at the very picturesque Picnic Point on the way out of Toowoomba to view the direction home. Finally got home after the early start and I went straight to bed, so I could get up again at 11.00pm to watch the Moto GP Sunday night – mad or what !

Photos by David Holland





Lotus Line up



Lotus Pack



More lotus'



David's Elan



Tigermoth





Mclean's Bridge Classic Car Display 10th May.

by a 'special' correspondent.

What a great day! Fabulous weather and row after row of 'eye candy', as the owners of some of the more desirable vehicles showed off their charges. We had a good spot among the trees, and attracted many enthusiasts and 'wanna be' Lotus owners. We may pick up a couple of new members, as there were at least two Caterham owners who came out of the woodwork.

Our (LCQ) numbers were down a bit on previous years despite the excellent trophies up for grabs. Those present were, Graeme Feeney with his early 007 Spirit, Gordon Moore and Carsten Jensen in their Excels, John Lungren in his Seven, Peter and Anne Yeomans with their Caterham and George Row who favoured his Seven replica over the gorgeous Eleven he displayed last year. Russ and Leigh Carter brought out their Carlton and S2 Elise, Geoff Noble had his Honda powered Elise and was joined later in

the morning by Bill Murdoch in another Honda converted example.

Wybe sent down his Elan in the capable hands of his son, and Greg and Chris Bray also brought out their immaculate Elan Coupe, with John and Penny Barram arriving fashionably late in their S1 Elise. Derek Dean was 'Lotus – less', but still brought down an interesting car – a 1991 Nissan Figaro! Bet he could do you a great deal on one too! And how he didn't win the People's Choice award will remain a mystery!

As the show drew to its conclusion, the 'mystery judge' had selected our winners. Congratulations to Greg and Chris Bray, worthy winners of "Most Outstanding Lotus", with Russ and Leigh Carter taking the second prize for their very rare Carlton.

Pics by Graeme Feeney and Chris Bray





Greg & Chris Bray's Elan



Greg & Geoff



Graeme Freaney's Esprit



Greg & Russ Winners



George Row's Replica Seven





Winner - Rus & Leigh Carter's Carlton



John Lungren's Seven



Winners are Grinners



Geoff's Elise by Honda



Under the Bridge and down-hill into Hungry.

Photo source : Boostcruising.com.



Lakeside “Street Sprints”

3 May 2009 By John Bona

The Lakeside Street-car Sprint Series is open to road registered cars only. For race cars, Lakeside offers the Top Gear weekends and an Open Sprint Series, among other events. The field for the May round was testament to the universal appeal and accessibility that Queensland Raceway’s CEO, John Tetley, strives for at Lakeside. Exotics and performance icons (Aston Martin Vantage V8, Audi R8, Ferrari 308 GTB, Nissan GTR) mixed it with stock to heavily-modified and track-spec. sports cars (clubmans, Honda Civic Type R, Mazda MX5 and RX7, MGF, Mini Cooper S, Nissan Skyline and Silvia, Toyota Supra and Celica, Renault Mégane Sport, Volkswagen R32), all pitting alongside an eclectic mix of

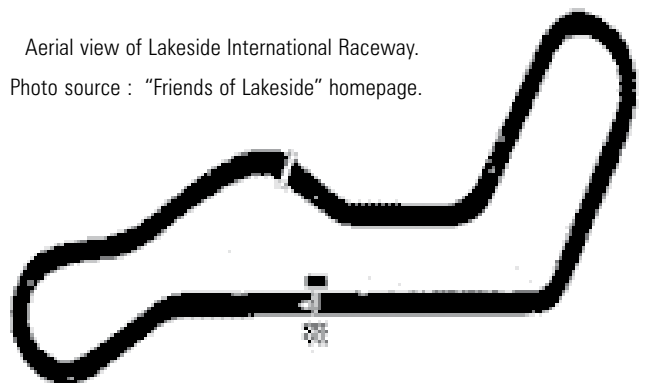
everyday drivers (from Corollas to Commodores, even a couple of utes and a delivery van!). Many competitors entered on the day itself; a notion inconceivable at, say, the Morgan Park sprints.

The club’s two-car contingent showed well with the author’s Elise 111R pipping the Aston to win Group 1 (a group made up of all drivers at Lakeside for the first time) with a best time of 1:04.59 and Geoff Noble’s S2 (Honda) Elise going very close to best time outright at 1:00.13. This, despite the fact that both of us needed to short-shift into sixth gear half way up the front straight to avoid black flags for exceeding the strict (and strictly, but sensibly, enforced), 95 dB noise limit!



Aerial view of Lakeside International Raceway.

Photo source : “Friends of Lakeside” homepage.





*The exit from pit-lane onto the front straight.
Photo source : Boostcruising.com.*

However, the competition on the day was something of a sideshow. In the pit lane and during the drivers' briefing, even among seasoned campaigners who had driven the "old" Lakeside, there was a palpable sense of occasion and reverence bordering on awe that transcended the race-meet. The real star of the show was unquestionably the track itself.

The Lakeside International Raceway was the first purpose-designed motor racing circuit in Queensland and is situated 30 km north of Brisbane. Built by volunteers using borrowed machinery, it lies adjacent to Lake

Kurwongbah in a natural setting nestled among rolling, green hills. The circuit is laid out so as to give the public a good view of almost the whole track.

Lakeside is rich in motor-sport history. After opening on the 19th March 1961, the track hosted two Australian Formula One Grand Prix, the International Tasman Series (which boasted several Formula One World Champions) and some 40 years of National Championship events. In 2001, with Lakeside's owners in receivership, the local council assumed control

The fourth gear exit from Hungry, so named because "it eats cars". Photo source : Boostcruising.com



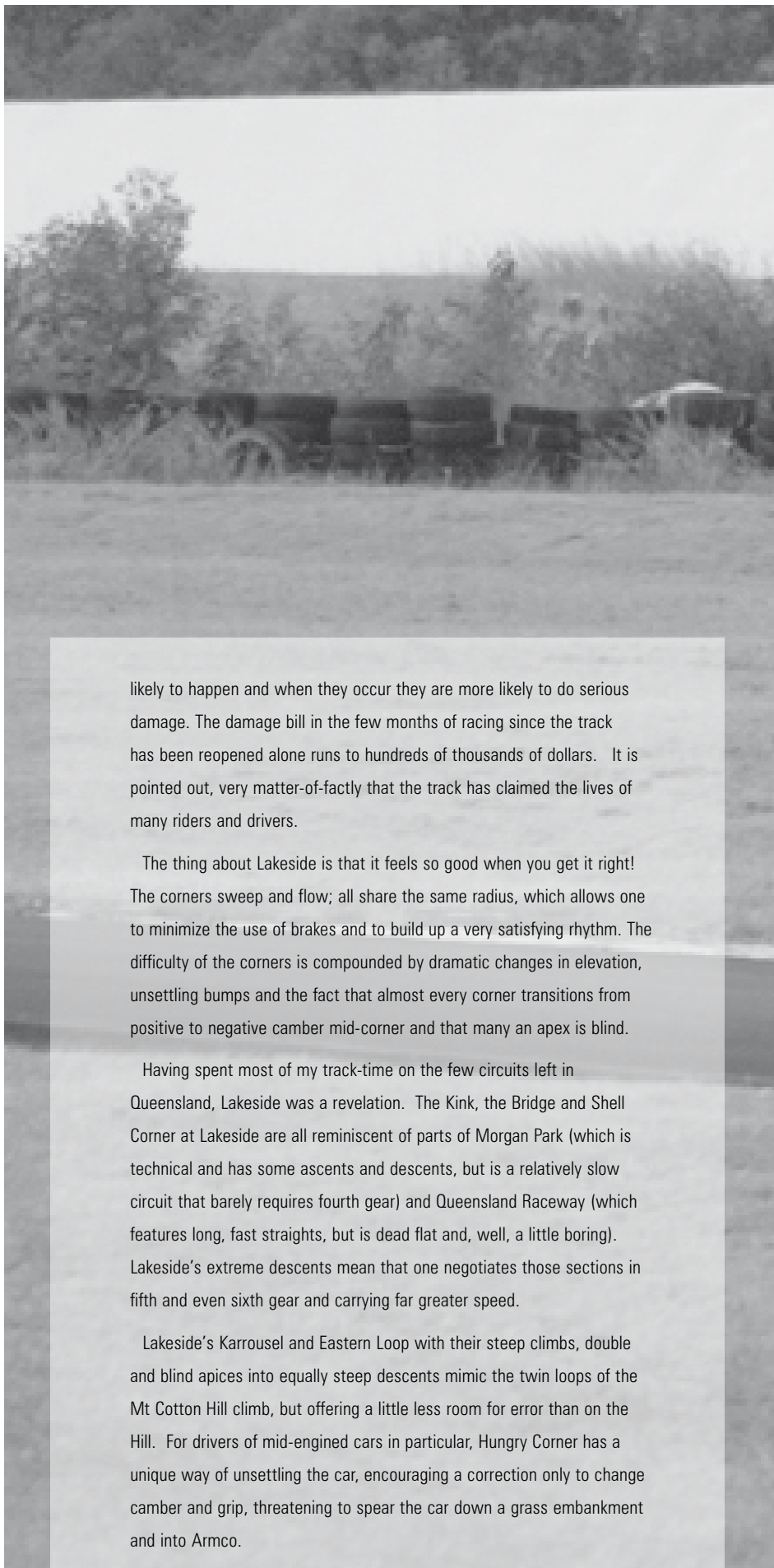
and closed the track to motoring. The circuit lay in quiet decay for almost a decade; a white elephant mired in controversy, political lobbying, legal battles and administrative procedure.

It was thus a red letter day for motor-sport in Queensland (and indeed Australia) when the circuit (still with its original surface) reopened on the 6th April 2008 under the management of Queensland Raceway's CEO John Tetley. The circuit and facilities underwent extensive restoration and redevelopment over 2008 and early 2009, giving shape to John's vision of a venue where motor-sport (spanning the spectrum from professional racing to club activities and "run-what-you-brung" days), driver training, corporate involvement and social/leisure activities can co-exist in a way that is at once sustainable and accessible. The redeveloped and resurfaced track was finally ready for use in April of this year.

According to Dick Johnson, "Lakeside is a real driver's circuit, one of the few left in the country outside of Bathurst". Mick Doohan has said that, "If you can learn to race ... at Lakeside you can compete at any track in the world". The track itself is 2.41 km in length, the direction of racing is clockwise and average speed is very high. However, no track diagram, aerial photo or video footage can prepare one for the physical reality of a first drive of Lakeside.

Much of the drivers' briefing is dedicated to reminding driver's that run-off space is at a premium (or is non-existent) at most critical points and that large drop-offs, Armco and concrete walls conspire with the high speeds reached to make even minor excursions from the tarmac dangerous and expensive. John Tetley points out that Lakeside was designed in another era and for cars of that time, and consequently "has all the stuff we're not allowed to build anymore".

The briefing emphasizes that whilst redevelopment has seen some improvements in safety (for example, a deeper, more effective gravel pit and widening and realignment of the track at some points to improve the likely impact angles), Lakeside remains far more dangerous than its modern counterparts like Queensland Raceway and Morgan Park. Accidents are more



likely to happen and when they occur they are more likely to do serious damage. The damage bill in the few months of racing since the track has been reopened alone runs to hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is pointed out, very matter-of-factly that the track has claimed the lives of many riders and drivers.

The thing about Lakeside is that it feels so good when you get it right! The corners sweep and flow; all share the same radius, which allows one to minimize the use of brakes and to build up a very satisfying rhythm. The difficulty of the corners is compounded by dramatic changes in elevation, unsettling bumps and the fact that almost every corner transitions from positive to negative camber mid-corner and that many an apex is blind.

Having spent most of my track-time on the few circuits left in Queensland, Lakeside was a revelation. The Kink, the Bridge and Shell Corner at Lakeside are all reminiscent of parts of Morgan Park (which is technical and has some ascents and descents, but is a relatively slow circuit that barely requires fourth gear) and Queensland Raceway (which features long, fast straights, but is dead flat and, well, a little boring). Lakeside's extreme descents mean that one negotiates those sections in fifth and even sixth gear and carrying far greater speed.

Lakeside's Karrousel and Eastern Loop with their steep climbs, double and blind apices into equally steep descents mimic the twin loops of the Mt Cotton Hill climb, but offering a little less room for error than on the Hill. For drivers of mid-engined cars in particular, Hungry Corner has a unique way of unsettling the car, encouraging a correction only to change camber and grip, threatening to spear the car down a grass embankment and into Armco.



The down-hill, fourth gear Shell Corner leading onto the front straight.

Photo source : Boostcruising.com



All that said, no-one should feel intimidated by Lakeside and the track is without doubt a “must” for those who’ve never driven it. Indeed my first taste of “the spiritual home of Queensland motorsport” was so addictive, that I was back only two weeks later for a motorcycle track day!

As one becomes familiar with the circuit and starts to get it right, Lakeside becomes as exhilarating and as rewarding to drive as it is technically demanding and unforgiving. Not only that, Lakeside is close to Brisbane, and offers top class facilities paired with competent and enthusiastic management who operate (from entry procedures and formulation of regulations to administering and officiating events and

competition) with common sense and flexibility.

The reopening of Lakeside to competition is truly a refreshing shot in the arm to Queensland motorsport, and the best way to support it is to get out on track and enjoy it.

