

18/10 NOVEMBER 2012 [\$8]



LOTUS & Clubman Notes



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF • LOTUS CLUB VICTORIA • LOTUS CLUB QUEENSLAND

FEATURES

- Kiwi Korrespondence
- Winton AROCA 6 Hour Relay
- September Sprint at Warwick
- Another Favourite Road
- Tell Me I'm Wrong - My Elise Experience

2012



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November 2012

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COVER IMAGE:

"Bruce Mansell in the thick of it"

Photo by Eric Sawyer Photography UK
(www.historicracecarpics.com)

See page 12 for story



LOTUS & Clubman Notes

I had to work my way back through a large pile of Lotus & Clubman Notes to find the last issue that had my name under the editorial. It was September 2002. There was a Lotus 7 S2 on the cover, in black and white. The magazine has come a long way since then and has had a string of worthy editors, so it was a pleasure to accept an invitation to be editor once again, albeit for a single issue, while Jon is off gallivanting somewhere.

In my last editorial I asked members to support the incoming editor (Andrea Johnston) by sending lots of articles. This time around Peter Murray has briefly come out of retirement to help with the planning and to rustle up photos and stories from anyone who owed us a favour or whom we could blackmail. The response has been staggering and we have been overwhelmed with contributions (apologies to those whose material has been held over – but Jon will appreciate it for the December issue).

The results are in the following pages – articles from regulars like Mike Richards and Michael Hipperson; a Kiwi update from ex-President Guy Stevens; great stories and photos from Queensland (check out Craig Wilson's story and photos from the All British Day); plus wonderful reports of adventures from home and abroad: Elite aficionado Bruce Mansell racing at Silverstone and Giles Cooper's final episode of his wonderfully crazy trip to Alaska in his Elise. For me Giles' stories have been the highlight of recent issues.

For a profile piece I managed to get time with Iain Palmer, LCV's first President, to find out about the club's birth and his love of Lotus. It makes interesting reading.

The magazine is very important for our club members. For many it may be the only benefit that they choose to avail themselves of for their membership fee. Members enjoy reading what other members have been doing (even if it's not necessarily as wild as driving to Alaska) or the opinions they share about their cars or anything Lotus. So join the fun, jot down some notes, send your stories and photos, they are what makes the magazine a success.

Peter R Hill



President's pleasantries

By **CRAIG CHALMERS, President, LCV**

Not surprisingly getting back into the swing of things at work is less fun than being on holiday. However getting back into the Lotus scene and charging up the flat battery on the Europa after I forgot to disconnect it during the trip is more entertaining. It wasn't up and running in time for the club night but is now all happy and motoring along again.

The club night at Ken Horner Equipment was an entertaining evening with Ken explaining the challenges of running his replica Vincent racing motorcycles and his trip to Goodwood. He also fired up some of the bikes to entertain our members and the group of engineers sharing the night with us. Our thanks to Dennis Hogan for organising the night with his wrap contained later in the magazine.

October has also been a very busy month for our motorsport fraternity. We have had 13 members competing in various teams at the Winton six hour with their exploits covered in more detail in reports later in the magazine. We also had another seven members competing on the same day at the second compulsory LCV championship event at the Rob Roy Hillclimb. Due to this unfortunate clash of dates the committee determined that those competing at the heavily promoted Winton six hour would each receive 3 points towards the LCV championship and qualification. We apologise for this confusion however we had already locked into the Hillclimb as our second of one of the two compulsory events before the date was changed. Zagame will also have held a driver training and track day by the time you read this with a number of new cars available for track 'demonstration' drives.

Unfortunately due to a lack of entries our annual Goldfields weekend away had to be scaled back to a lower scale Goldfields rendezvous organised by Kyran Meldrum. Thanks Kyran for all your work in organising the weekend and I'm sure it will be enjoyable.

November has a number of club events planned including the club night at Zagame Lotus with a number of the new models on display. Our hosts will also have a vehicle on the hoist for some quick service and maintenance tips for those keen on DIY. John King has organised a special EMR for the 50th anniversary of the Elan with a visit to the Elan winery. In a variation to the usual arrangements it is byo food and soft drink for lunch but wines will be available for purchase. Sunday 18th November also features the final event in the LCV championship being the MSCA sprints at Phillip Island. The following Sunday the 25th November is the LCV Christmas party and concours at Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Gardens so start the spit and polishing now, especially for those who only give their cars an annual 'birthday'. It will also be good to see some cars that we don't see very often and perhaps a number of our DeLorean owning members will make a display of cars with their gullwing doors.

Don't forget our annual AGM and awards at the start of December at Elfin Heritage Centre with a BBQ to start the evening. If you are interested in joining the committee please contact a committee member for more details.



With cricket season indicating the start of the warmer months, the time has also come for me to finally sell the clubbie. The Leitch is up for sale as I simply don't have the time to use it, so for those looking for a well sorted, factory chassis car with the Toyota 2 litre engine on full registration and ready to drive away, please contact me or check out the details and pictures online.

I look forward to catching up with everyone soon at some of these upcoming events and hope to see another huge turnout for the Christmas party, so don't forget to RSVP in plenty of time.

In the meantime travel fast and travel safe,

Craig



WELCOME NEW LCV MEMBERS:

Keith Marriner [1986 Caterham Seven]
Brendan Blott [2012 Evora S]
Ktishnan Pasupathi [2006 Exige]

Next LCV Club Meeting

TUESDAY 13th November – 7.30 pm

Zagame Lotus
362 Swan Street, Richmond.
Contact Craig Chalmers 0412 983 818.

A "spear" of Sevens. Mine's the nice one!

President's prologue

By **DICK REYNOLDS, President, LCQ**

I am in deep depression. A friend of mine emailed during the week to tell me he may place an order for a McLaren MP4 SC in a few weeks. He has the money and certainly knows how to punt a quick car. All he needs is the splash of lunacy to fork out the deposit. Given that we only live once (I think!) why wouldn't you? And there in lies the secret to all this.

"Life's too short to drive a rubbish car".

On that very subject, the next DTC is coming soon, and we all get to drive our "non-rubbish" cars around a circuit in relative safety. Going by the chat at the last meeting, the Elise guys are going all out to go as quick as possible. Good oh, bring it on, is all I can say. Jason McGarry's re-built push rod 1700 Caterham is back on the tarmac and should give the boys a run for their money. Bit of Dyno action as well I'm told!

Quote of the year would have to be Gary Stewart's blackboard in his Dynamometer Shed.

"I don't have opinions – I have a flow bench and dynamometer."

Gary also has a nice S4 Elan drop top for sale. Give us a call if you are interested.

Mt Cotton Hillclimb is soon, and Noosa Hillclimb is in early November. It always interests me how the Circuit thing and the Hillclimb thing differ. Lap after lap after lap of refinement to achieve an outrageous turn of speed, or one go at a quick time and you're done. Personally I prefer the Hills, but I am definitely not in a majority there!

The DTC is an interesting mix of the two, as circuit people seem to enjoy it as well as the Hillclimbers. In the end though, it is still just a "Horizontal Hillclimb".

The last meeting was a quick one, with little of earth shattering interest. We are lucky now to have Rob Stevens representing the Elise in the Club. Thanks Rob.

Mal Kelson is well on the way to finalising our Christmas do. It's a great opportunity to catch up with everyone at this festive time of year.

Don't forget Lotus 2013. I know you won't.

See: <http://www.lotus2013.com.au/>



The Ploughman's lunch went off with a bang, with 15,000 people turning up to hear The Rolling Stones and Abba perform on Tim Moores 2,000 acre "Woodstock" property. The event, MC'd by Colin Chapman – OKAY – SO I'M TELLING FIBS!

But it was a great success, and with a bit of sorting will be repeated next year to everyone's delight.

See you at the next event.

Next meeting on Tuesday 6th November, at Shannons.

Bye for now.

Dick



Next LCQ Club Meeting

TUESDAY 6th November – 7.30 pm

Shannons Insurance

Unit 5B, West End Corporate Park,

305-313 Montague Road, West End.

Contact: Dick Reynolds 0419 791 326



2012

LOTUS 2012 CALENDER OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER	VICTORIA	QUEENSLAND
Tuesday 6th		LCQ Monthly Meeting - 7:30 pm Shannons Insurance Unit 5B, West End Corporate Park, 305-313 Montague Road, West End. Contact: Dick Reynolds 0419 791 326
Sunday 11th	LCV EMR – Picnic (BYO food & soft drinks, wine available for purchase) at Elan Winery to celebrate the Elan's 50th Anniversary. Assemble at McDonalds cnr Elanora Road & Princes Highway, Noble Park (80H12) at 8.30 for 9.00 start. (See website for more details) Contact John King 9819 9819	
Tuesday 13th	LCV Club Night. Zagame Lotus, 362 Swan Street, Richmond. Contact Craig Chalmers 0412 983 818.	
Sunday 18th	LCV Championship Event. MSCA Sprints, Phillip Island	
Saturday 24th		Christmas Dinner. Manly Yacht Club. Details TBA
Saturday 24th Sunday 25th		Mt Cotton Hill Climb – Round 6 Tighe Cams Series 1753 to 1799 Mt Cotton Road, Mt Cotton
Sunday 25th	LCV Christmas Party & Concours. Ferny Creek Horticultural Society Gardens, 100 Hilton Road, Sassafras (http://www.fchs.org.au) from 10.00am. Lunch 12 noon. BYO drinks. Contact Peter McConnell 0402 076 107.	
DECEMBER		
Tuesday 4th		LCQ Monthly Meeting – 7:30 pm Motorman Imports, Pacific Highway, Slacks Creek Contact: Dick Reynolds 0419 791 326
Tuesday 11th	LCV AGM Elfin Heritage Centre 7:30 pm BBQ provided.	
2013		
JANUARY		
Sunday 20th	The Great Australian Rally Enquiries Phone 9739 4829 Email: mailto:colin.brown@hotmail.net.au	
APRIL		
25th–27th	Lotus 2013 – Canberra Refer www.lotus2013.com.au for further details and booking forms	Lotus 2013 – Canberra Refer www.lotus2013.com.au for further details and booking forms



For any last minute updates check your states website!

www.lotusclubvic.asn.au

www.lotus.org.au

Hard to believe that we have been over here for 18 months – time is flying and before long I'll have to decide whether to extend for another year, or come back to Oz. I haven't left the Lotus fraternity, having joined Club Lotus New Zealand, and while the Esprit is in specialist storage back in Melbourne, my Elise was shipped over. I am still using it as my daily driver for the 10km commute to and from work.

The first 6 months was spent in Wellington, and then the move to Auckland. The weather? I hear you say. A combination of things really, including fear of earthquakes, and lack of a Lotus community and international bands not going to Wellington being three.

The club here does not have monthly meetings, but has an almost monthly get together on a weekend usually for a run in the country to a pub for lunch. A great thing about NZ is the number of twisty roads in just about every direction. There are three ways from Auckland to Thames in the Coromandel – about a 2 hour drive on the motorway, or 2.5 hours by each of two twisty routes.

One thing I have learned whilst here is not to ignore road signs that say "slippery conditions". Plenty of black ice around and moss, moss, moss... or oil? One day driving to work by a different route through a leafy park, a bit damp, about 30kmh. a 20° slope downhill and a mild left hander and a spin in the blink of an eye. Caught it at 180° and was bloody sure I didn't lift off the gas causing the dreaded lift off

oversteer spin as I wasn't travelling fast and the corner wasn't that tight. Fortunately nothing coming the other way, so turn around and continue on down the hill. Not 50 metres more down the road, there were the police looking a Commodore that had gone off the road, down an embankment and into some trees. Appears that driver must have been going faster than me, hit the same patch of moss/oil and then a 360 including jumping the gutter. All good for me then.

Checked my tyres that evening – still plenty of tread but at 6 year old, maybe time for some new ones. Ken Woodburn from KW Historics able to help with the tyres – factory spec Bridgestones, or an alternative of Yokohamas at twice the price all that is available in NZ. Bridgestones please – but still waiting on the fronts – the distributor supplied the wrong size, and apparently there are none to be had in NZ or OZ until the Japanese factory runs another batch.

One club night I missed was at the Ferrari dealer who was considering taking on the Lotus franchise. They had imported two used 2010 Evoras. A supercharged S and an IPS. So one Saturday morning, jump in the Elise for a visit. Looking around the showroom, the salesman offered me a test drive of the S – he hadn't been out in it and wanted a go himself. Whilst no twisties nearby, there was a motorway so we headed there. I was driving through the traffic on the motorway in third, seemed quite

nippy and steering responsive doing about 80. Saw a gap in traffic and put my foot down saying "good, haven't been able to get to 100 yet" The salesman's response – "The car is from England and speedo is in miles per hour!"

No wonder it seemed quick. Back to the showroom and I left without leaving my name, phone number or drivers licence details in case of unwanted pictures. The S is still for sale with 19,000 miles on the clock for the equivalent of AUD91,500. Second hand cars are cheap here compared to Oz – no luxury car tax and plenty of 2nd hand imports from Japan.

I don't think I'll come back from NZ with the Evora as another Lotus to add to the stable, I'm looking for something older. There are enough Steel Brothers Mk 4 Sevens for sale, but they don't do much for me and too pricey just as a means of buying a twin cam engine. I do know of a road going Elan Sprint coupe for sale, but it has been garaged for 30 years and needs a ground up restoration. If it was a drop head – then I could be tempted....

There is a good classic car magazine over here, and one of the editors has a black series 2 Elise. His articles include a caricature of him in the car. A couple of emails, and I have the one above. The artist Steve, takes commissions for all types of cars. If you are interested visit dodgeygnome.com.

'Til next time 'bro

Guy Stevens



» KEN HORNER EQUIPMENT

The Irving Vincent Club Night

by Dennis Hogan



Ken Horner Equipment was the venue for the October Club Night. LCV shared the evening with the Society of Automotive Engineers who outnumbered our members by a factor of two to one!

Ken had organized a 7:00 pm. BBQ with donations for sausages going towards a worthy charity.

Ken Horner's core business is the manufacture of air powered starter motors for use in hazardous environments such as coal mines, petroleum and chemical sites. They are so successful in this field that 50% of their production is exported to China.

When time permits Ken and his team like to spend time and money (lots of both) on their passion, which is developing their Vincent Motor Cycle inspired Irving Vincent Replica Racing Motor Cycles. These cycles are modern re-incarnations of the original British Vincent

motor cycle, and retain the famous Vee Twin cylinder configuration with push rod operated overhead valves. Although the engines look similar to the originals all internal parts are different and include improvements afforded by better materials and state of the art design and manufacturing techniques. Fuel injection together with electronic engine management and modern suspension and braking systems complete the package.

The original Vincent produced 45 HP, whilst the Irving Vincent produces up to 186 HP. Capacity may be 1300 cc or 1600 cc, and both two and four valve per cylinder heads have been developed.

Nine bikes have been hand made to date, one of which is a wicked looking Kneeler Sidecar. All bikes are superbly presented and all bikes achieve their objective of being winners in their respective classes. This success includes wins in the local Formula Extreme Pro Twin class, the

Goodwood Festival of Speed and the pinnacle of historic motor cycle racing: Daytona Battle of the Twins. Both bike and rider achieved success at this event at the first attempt: a truly remarkable achievement.

Ken kept everybody amused and entertained with his recollections of the bikes development and trials and tribulations to get where they are today. To conclude the evening one of the bikes was started and given a bit of a rev, which rattled everybody's ear drums, as the bikes have no silencing whatsoever.

A great night – Many thanks to Ken and his team for putting on such an informative and entertaining show.

P.S. If you want to buy on of these bikes – forget it. They are not for sale. Each bike costs more to manufacture than a Ferrari!

Member Profile

Iain Palmer, LCV's First President

by Peter R Hill

I recently had an opportunity to chat with Iain Palmer about his love of Lotus and his involvement with Lotus Club Victoria. He was the club's first President and has worked tirelessly on and off the committee for many years.

As Iain recounted how he came to choose a Lotus, way back in 1969, I had flashbacks to my chat last year with that other club stalwart, Rohan Hodges. Both young men (as they were then) considered similar cars before opting for a Lotus – E type Jaguars, Alfa Romeos and the like were rejected. Rohan chose an Elan whereas Iain's choice was a Europa. Both men have still got their first Lotus. Both have subsequently purchased other Lotus models.

Iain's Europa journey started when he made a trip to South Australia where Europas were assembled back in 1969. The dealer had an MGB GT which Iain drove first before he took the Europa for a spin. There was no comparison; he had to own a Europa. He returned to Melbourne to place his order with Pitstop Motors. The cost was \$4,600 for a Europa S2. He paid Pitstop for the car and Taylors in SA for the assembly. In those days Lotus were shipped to Australia in kit form. Taylors assembled the cars in SA, Geoghegan's did the same in NSW. The Geoghegan cars tended to have some nice extras fitted which Taylors didn't do. But Iain's extravagance was to have an eight-track stereo fitted, as Taylors told him that they had never got a radio to work in a Europa.

Iain took delivery of his shiny, new, yellow Europa on a Friday evening. On Saturday morning it failed to start – not a good introduction to the marque. It transpired that when the dealer fitted a clock they had contrived to short the battery. With that fixed

Iain had three months of happy motoring until one day, while driving the car to be serviced, an old Renault came through a stop sign and took the front off the Europa. Fortunately no one was hurt, but Iain learned that the guy in the Renault had had so many accidents the insurance company subsequently cancelled his policy. The car was repaired and has lived on through other scrapes and grazes over the last forty-three years.

Iain's introduction to the club, Club Lotus Australia (Victorian Branch) as it was then, came in the 1974 when he was out for a drive in the Dandenongs in his wife's car. He came upon a small group of Lotus owners peering into a ditch. Iain stopped to investigate and discovered the car in the ditch was another yellow Europa. It turned out that this gathering was one of the first Victorian club runs. Iain joined the club, which in those days was very small. He is the only remaining member from that original group.

By the late seventies the club was still quite small; Rohan Hodges, Chris O'Connor, and Peter Fortune had all joined and are still active today but Iain was able to print the small number of club magazines on a copy machine. By then Lotus Club Victoria had been formed and Iain became its President. LCV started to grow when new models came out, like the Esprits, Elites and Excels.

Iain thinks there are about 12 to 15 Europas in the club these days. It's interesting to note that a number of owners have more than one car: Iain has two, Richard Mann has three, Peter Fortune has two and Mike Byrne recently returned to the fold and is preparing a twin cam for racing. As a bit of useful history, Iain noted that only three Series 1 cars came into the country and all the Twin Cams were personal imports. His car is now a cross-flow that puts out about 120hp.



Iain has enjoyed his Europa through 43 years of thick and thin:

"At one stage the Europa was only worth around two thousand dollars, and wasn't worth insuring, but now they are creeping back up again. And the car has had a few hits over the years, the Renault was the first but others have followed including a motorbike and a tram. Remarkably, despite a fairly solid hit, the tram did no damage."

And what about the highlights?

"I was working in Sydney at one stage and I had driven the Europa up from Melbourne. On the return journey I set off on Friday afternoon and took the route through Bathurst and down the middle – no freeways in those days. I sat on ninety mph as often as possible and covered the 630 miles in nine hours – that's a pretty impressive average of seventy mph. Definitely a highlight; also the fun of track days and hillclimbs are another highlight. The car's done almost 300,000 miles now...yes, miles, and I'm still enjoying it."

As if to underline his love affair with the Europa Iain bought another one about five years ago. It is what he calls a "project car" – a wreck acquired from a deceased estate:

"The windscreen's good and there's one good tail light," he quipped.

He suspects it will need a new body.

As we finished our chat I discovered that Iain owns an Elise, in England, a 2001 metallic blue Series 2 with a Rover engine. He and Trish used it to tour through France...but that's another story – one that he can write.





ALL BRITISH DAY and PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH

by Craig Wilson

Well, finally, after the last two years of floods and rain, the All British Car display day was on song under a clear and hot sunny September day.

As we walked around the displays of lovingly restored machinery on the newly refurbished football fields of St Joseph's School Tennyson we were treated to all kinds of British engineering – some cutting edge and some now looking strangely odd, but it is all cherished by their many enthusiast owners.

Around 400 vehicles represented the many marques of British transport with the early vehicles from around 1910.

As in previous years Lotus were well represented with about 22 cars.

We arrived to the stirring rendition of 'God Save the Queen' coming from our Derek's Exige stereo. This was accompanied by lots of great 60's and 70's music and well placed Union Jack Flags – well done old chap.

An interesting new car was an ex NSW police yellow Exige complete with red and blue flashing lights – professional story boards and PR for Lotus.

It was also great to see another addition – a red S2 Elise 111S Motorsport that is the latest addition to the Lotus fleet of our members, Carsten and Diana Jensen. Congratulations guys – we hope you have fun in the new toy.

So once we had all decided it was extremely hot and our cars were even hotter, it was off to the property of our hosts Tim and Carolyn Moore. For the last few years Tim and Carolyn have generously put on an amazing Ploughman's lunch for the Lotus Club members at their beautiful home by the lake. The cars lined up around the lake offered good reflections and camera shots in the bushland setting.

As usual Derek was in the background supplying all the British memorabilia; from umbrellas, cup cake cases, London bus flags for the pies, to dressing his wife Anita in a Union Jack outfit. What a great sporting girl.



Thanks Derek for all the support

Thanks also to Giovanni and all the other helpers who arrived early to set up and organize the fantastic food. We arrived to the smell of the ham smoking in the outdoor oven to go with the imported British pickled onions, cheeses, and all those other wonderful things in a Ploughman's lunch topped off with lots of no calorie deserts.

The judges were quietly searching the crowd for those who had made the best efforts for the red, white and blue theme. Greg Bray, Anita Dean and Derek won the prizes for their outfits – well done guys.

After a gap of two years it was good to see all the lovely restored machinery, Jags, Astons, Lotus, Jensens, MGs, Rolls and Bentley, Riley, and the list goes on – so many other forgotten marques and names.

And once again our thanks go to our generous hosts Carolyn and Tim Moore and their family for the most enjoyable day.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed,

I read the "History" piece in "Notes" 18/09 on the Europas with some nostalgia.

I have had association with several Lotus models before my current Group Sc Super Seven Series 4 Twin-cam, but I saw my first Series 1 Europa (in unprepossessing white) in Tehran. An English local journalist acquaintance had imported it in 1968-9.

He used it all around the country; God knows how it held together over some pretty rough terrain. I immediately fell in love with the design which I don't agree "wasn't beautiful". Although fragile, it was revolutionary in a road car of the time.

I instilled the same enthusiasm in my soon to be long term English partner, in whose Series 2 we toured extensively in Western Europe in 1970. It was supremely comfortable, never more so with the R16 engine behind quietly singing along sweetly on French autoroutes. The only problem we had was a failed rear hub on the Riviera, but after a phone call to the UK, a replacement was readily flown out to Nice the next day. The car did involve me in a physical altercation once when acquaintance Martin Lilley, son of the founder of TVR, rudely walked up the bonnet of the S2 in his Doc Martins when showing off outside a local pub in Lancashire.

The dealer in Blackpool loaned us a Lotus-Ford twin-cam Europa one day, with a view to an upgrade sale, but I wasn't impressed with the dangerous front-end lift under acceleration. I was impressed however, with the power plant and imported an S4 Super Seven (in yellow)

when I was posted in India, with a view to bringing it back to Oz to go clubman racing. Of course, by the time I did, after winning everything, twin-cams were banned from Clubbie racing. All I got to do was run it in a couple of local sprints and climbs in Canberra. We had also imported partner Caroline's S2 from England, so for a time we were a two Lotus (both yellow) household. But we then had to buy a Mini so we could take the dog out with us. The Europa did several trips to and from Sydney and Melbourne, but the Hume Highway was not kind to the Europa's bonded body. Both the S2 and S4 were sold to John Thompson in Parramatta Road after a long afternoon of negotiation. He wanted the rare S4 desperately, but not the Europa. The proceeds however, had to cover the purchase of a new Dino GTS delivered at the factory in late 1972 (a story for another time).

We saw both cars on the road subsequently; the Europa ironically sold back into Canberra, and the S4, which haunted me on the way to and from Sydney airport several times, still wearing its Canberra plates, presumably being unable at the time to satisfy NSW's minimum height requirement.

But the S4's handling, which flatters one's driving so much, eventually lured me into another purchase, and I have progressively developed it for Group Sc. A new Mike Byrne-built dedicated race engine bottom end awaits installation, when I can afford to develop a head recently purchased from fellow air-cooled owner Jim Runciman in WA, then the original engine can go up on the shelf – hopefully before it goes bang.

Regards, Graeme Noonan
Amethyst Lodge, Phillip Island



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Winton AROCA 6 Hour Relay

"The Poor Man's Bathurst"

Part #2



By Tom Bartley

With one notable absence, the drivers, pit crew and usual suspects from LCV, arrived on Saturday at Winton's Motor Raceway. Filled with dreams of podiums, laurels and the spraying of cheap Champagne, "The Poor Man's Bathurst" was on again.

However, the best laid plans of mice and men were conspiring to thwart those lofty ideals, and make this year's event one of the more memorable in LCV's long history at the 6 hour.

Saturday's practice saw an overcast but warm Winton, with 43 Teams of between 4 and 6 drivers ready to hit the track and set their regularity time for Sunday.

LCV was represented by 3 Teams. Team Alfa-Lotus, captained by Petrina "perfect" Ng;

LCV Roaring 50s, headed up by Lee "have a chat" Gardener, and the unfortunately named Team Can't Racing which was supposed to be led by The Redheads Bloke. Unfortunately, he was delayed Saturday morning due to a long and protracted argument over the previous night's bar bill in nearby Violet Town.

Practice soon got under way with the sight of 40 plus cars of all makes, models and sizes snarling and roaring around the tight Winton Track.

Day's end saw a pretty happy bunch of LCV drivers with no major mishaps to report. Decisions as to regularity times were made, then off to our respective accommodations with the thoughts of warm Cocoa or Bonox, and sandwiches filled with little "hundreds and thousands" ...yer, right!

Team Can't Racing, by sheer weight of numbers, had completely taken over the truly amazing Tatong Tavern. Amazing in that (a) they allowed them to stay, and (b) the Tavern is the only hotel restaurant in Victoria to be awarded the coveted Pirelli 5 Star Award. The night passed quietly until a group of delightful young local ladies stumbled upon The Tatong while on a women's pub crawl...otherwise known as a "Hens' Night"...the night did not continue quietly.

Sunday morning. After the previous night's discussions regarding our various strategies,

our enviable talent, and the breathtaking speed of our cars, we were ready to embark on our journey towards fame, fortune and the podium.

However, sometimes things just don't turn out the way you expect them to...

I'm unsure of the sequence of events, however the day began to unfold (or unravel) with a series of mishaps that would make even Glen Seaton appear "lucky".

Bruce Astbury's problems began before he arrived with his Spitfire not making it out of Melbourne. The replacement Honda Civic had been laying somewhere in a shed for four years and performed with results not entirely unexpected. One warm up, 3 laps, bang, say good night, your party's over.

Over at Team Roaring 50s, a timing chain thing finished what could have been a great days racing for "Have a chat" Gardener. Lee had completed only 17 laps in the quick Arrow and in that time had accumulated 5 bonus laps with another bonus lap only 00:00:19 away. Roaring 50s dramas didn't finish there with the fast dual entry Nobes' Birkin unfortunately finding some



Lee Gardner (left), Alan Pettett (right).

of Winton's white concrete. The Nobes boys were doing well with Matt scoring 5 bonus laps and missed another by a bee's dick. (A bee's dick is 00:00:03 sec long).

Fortunately the remaining Clubmans from Roaring 50s – Stokell, Knight, and Littlepage – were circulating trouble free.

As the day progressed the safety car was beginning to do so much work it almost required a service. Excursions, and at one point, the straight leading to, around, and away from Turn 10, resembled a Land Rover's garage floor, displaying enough oil to satisfy the needs of a small African Nation.

However, further drama was still to unfold. Alan Pettett's beautiful Lotus 23b slowly entered the track looking like it was doing 200kph while standing still. Having only driven the car down Charles Haynes driveway, Alan was about to give the 23b it's baptism of fire... so to speak. Having nominated a 1:44:00, Al put in a "cold lap" of 1:48:50 then hit the magic 1:44:57 to score his first bonus lap, then TSHTF.

A fault in the muffler caused the rear end to catch fire ending what should have been an enjoyable, not to mention successful day's racing. Al was fine, the 23b not quite so.

Stewart King and Charles Haynes were lapping in their normal fast and consistent manner with some nice 1:43s by Stewart and 1:44s by Charles.

Meanwhile, Team Can't Racing was operating like a well-oiled Swiss clock. The Walters' Ford V8 Perana was eating whatever was in front of it; Pratt's neck-snapping Maserati Bi Turbo did not become a hand grenade; Hertzberg's Renault was circulating nicely with the air conditioner on full boost and the radio on Classic FM. The Richards' magnificent sounding

Name	Car (Team)	Nom Time	Total Laps	Bonus Laps	Penalty Laps	Net Diff	Diff – Fastest to slowest
Bartley	Birkin (TCR)	1:45	22	7	2	Plus 5	5.42 Sec
Gardener	Arrow (R50s)	1:42	17	5	1	Plus 4	5.21 Sec
Nobes, M	Birkin (R50s)	1:44	30	5	1	Plus 4	8.22 Sec
Nobes, C	Birkin (R50s)	?	4	0	0	0	0.95 Sec
Walters	Perana (TCR)	1:45	21	2	0	Plus 2	6.91 Sec
Pratt	Maserati (TCR)	1:49	17	4	2	Plus 2	11.52 Sec
Pettett	Lotus 23B (TLA)	1:44	2	1	0	Plus 1	1.97 Sec
Hertzberg	Renault (TCR)	1:47	33	1	0	Plus 1	7.17 Sec
King	Westfield (TLA)	1:43	18	1	0	Plus 1	8.82 Sec
Knight	Westfield (R50s)	1:51	26	1	0	Plus 1	13.29 Sec
Littlepage	Caterham (R50s)	?	23	0	0	0	13.62 Sec
Asterbury	Honda (TLA)	?	3	0	0	0	4.02 Sec
Ng, N	PRB (TLA)	1:45	30	6	6	0	8.19 Sec
Stokell	Westfield (TLA)	1:45	21	3	4	Neg 1	7.98 Sec
Walters	MGB V8 (TCR)	2:08	10	3	4	Neg 1	8.99 Sec
Haynes	Haynes (TLA)	1:46	28	3	5	Neg 2	8.20 Sec
Ng, P	PRB (TLA)	1:47	28	5	8	Neg 3	8.41 Sec
Strunin	Lotus (TCR)	1:56	20	2	8	Neg 6	11.28 Sec

Alan Pettett's Lotus 23b



V8 MG was giving the other breathless BMC stuff quite a few surprises. Pressure was on Strunin driving the only Lotus at TCR, however with only one excursion to his name, he was managing to hold his end...or words to that effect. The Redheads bloke was performing surprisingly well, given that all he could think or talk about was that huge bloody bar bill in Violet Town!

And then, Checkered Flag...!

Well, the tumult and the shouting died, the Captains and the Kings departed, leaving only the sight of white coffee cups swirling in the wind, and a car park littered with cable ties of all descriptions...will we be back next year...????...too bloody right we will!!!

2012 Silverstone Classic

RAC Tourist Trophy for pre 63 GT cars

by Bruce Mansell

I had been invited to run at this event in a Pommie friend Barry Davison's 1961 Lotus Elite S2 racer for the last 3 years and this year Marion and I decided to take up the kind offer and also have a bit of a break from work. We had not had a holiday for a few years due to work pressures (SURVIVAL) and last year I had my prostate cancer to conquer, which it seems I have done! So 2012 was the first chance to accept Barry's very kind invitation.

We arrived in England just before the Olympic games crowds started arriving, so we were a bit lucky there. Picked up the hire car and headed to our pre-booked B&B in Princes Risborough, in the Chilterns, a lovely part of England with rolling hills and rich farmland only an hour North West of Heathrow. We'd booked it for the whole 9 days we were there. It was only 10 minutes away from Barry and his wife

Copper's home, so very convenient as we were going to spend a lot of time together.

Barry is a real Lotus nut and had recently purchased another Lotus, an S1 Seven Climax and had given it to Mike Brotherwood to freshen up, as it happened we were at his place when Mike brought the car back from his shop. Wow, what a great car it is and quite rare, Early S1 Seven with Climax power, De Dion rear end, Girling alloy disc calipers all round, wire wheels and polished alloy body work. We took it for a quick spin and it went like a rocket with great braking and acceleration and fantastic handling.

I was jealous as hell, fondly remembering my race S2 Seven Cosworth which is now in new hands in Melbourne. Barry has a very nice collection of Lotus cars: a Six Climax; the Seven S1 Climax; an Eleven Club Climax; an Eleven

Le Mans Climax; and the S2 Elite Climax. All are spotless and he enjoys driving and racing them often. He also has a mental problem in that he loves 3 wheeler Morgans and has 5, I think, including the totally insane brand new one with 170HP going through one wheel!

We did a bit of local sightseeing over the next couple of days and took a trip to Worcestershire to pick up a pair of Elite seats, which I'd bought through Ebay from Bob Heppell, a bit of a character who dabbles in interesting old sports cars. He had bought an Elite from a chap who decided to cut a big channel in the floor and graft an Elan chassis into the Elite, in my view, ruining a perfectly good Elite. Bob had been unable to fit the original seats in it, as the Elan tunnel was much broader than the Elite tunnel. He had fitted a pair of race car seats instead and sold me the newly restored leather seats to put in the Elite I'm currently restoring, chassis 1428A, the Athol Doonan, Harry Cape Australian historic racer. We had lunch with Bob and heard about his many dozens of sports car dealings, quite a guy.

Thursday afternoon we went to Silverstone to sign on and go through scrutineering. I was amazed, we did nothing much, just handed our papers over for ticking off the list of entrants and our team manager, Nicola Danby took our gear to scrutineering for inspection! Amazing how easy it all was with a professional team looking after the car. John and Nicola Danby run a professional race management team looking after Barry's numerous race cars and



doing restorations and preparation of a number of other UK owners' cars.

They had a 6 car transporter with 4 mechanics at the meeting with the 2 Elites in our race, the TT to look after, an Alfa Romeo GTA in the under 2 litre Touring Car race, and an Elan26R in the Masters "Gentleman" Drivers pre 66 GT race. The meeting went off flawlessly for us and the other Elite, owned by Barry's brother-in-law Nick.

Sadly the beautiful little Alfa was unscathed in the qualifying session but not so lucky in it's race, being punted in the rear corner which meant a couple of pit stops to try to prize the guard off the tire, which ruined their chances for an almost certain class podium. The 26R Elan did well too, missing out on a class win by a whisker.

Prior to qualifying I had no chance to get any practice laps, which was a big disappointment, but there was nothing I could do about it. Barry went out first in qualifying and just did three laps getting his time on lap 2. He came in and I jumped in the car got buckled up by the two mechanics and with the butterflies throwing a massive party in my tummy got told to go-go-go onto a hot circuit that I had only seen a map of, in a car I had not turned a wheel in.

I soon realized I had no worry with the little Elite, it was flawlessly prepared and a joy to drive with a nice new set of warmed up Dunlop racing tires and about 25 more HP than my old faithful Elite "Lurch".

The first lap was horrible, the driver's side door mirror had been accidentally knocked by one of the mechanics as I took off, so all I could see behind was the 747s flying into Heathrow – not much use on a race circuit with 60 very fast and very valuable cars all trying hard to get a good spot on the grid, so I spent that lap trying to keep out of the road of the other cars. On lap two I gave that idea up and decided to just get my foot into it and try to learn the circuit as best I could and let overtaking cars get past as best they could. It worked OK and no fists waved at me by faster cars. I did OK and finally qualified the car about 10 second slower than Barry's time. The circuit is 5.8 kilometers in length with 18 corners most of which are pretty much unsighted until you're almost on top of them.

So we were 57th on a grid of 59 cars. The grid was valued at about 50 MILLION bucks worth of tin.

Saturday was a day off for us and Marion and I went to the circuit to just look around the huge display tents with all sorts of trade vendors offering everything from sports clothing to race car parts and accessories. We got to watch a few races and the Grand Prix Masters was awesome. The 3 litre F1 cars were just

wonderful to watch and driven as hard as they were when new. They ranged in age from a 1971 March up to a 1983 Tyrell.

On Sunday we turned up early and I got straight into my race gear before I had a brain wave, hard to believe eh! I said to Marion "I wonder if they will let me travel around the circuit in the course car when they go out to check the circuit before the race meeting starts, which will give me a better idea of where it all goes".

We raced down to the pit office and asked the question of the lady at the desk and she said "good idea, I'll ask the Clerk of Course if it's OK" just as she said that Garry Tanner one of the 5 Clerks of Course came through the door and came over to see if I was OK, I had met him on Friday when he gave the 8 or so new drivers to the circuit a separate briefing, when I said I was not too confident of racing on a pretty much "mystery" circuit he immediately said "mate I think that's very sensible of you, jump in my BMW with your wife and I'll take you for a couple of laps on the racing line and tell you where you need the car to be for a good lap" Wow, what great guy! He did exactly that and I went back to the pits feeling a lot more confident – especially as the "mirror issue" had been fixed by the very embarrassed young mechanic.

Our race was of 50 minutes duration and Barry had decided to do the rolling start and just do the minimum time needed and come in early, so I got a fair go, Thanks Barry!

Our start was at 11.10 track was dry and the day cool, all went well with Barry getting the car down to quite quick laps of 2.54 an average lap speed of about 72mph. It's a fast circuit. He came in to hand over and said the car was fine, just go for it. I got away OK and got into a groove pretty quickly (thanks again to Garry Tanner) and gradually worked my times down as the laps got more familiar. I was just having fun, particularly when dicing with things like the wonderful Aston Martin prototype lightweight – if only for a very short time, and watching the cars in front four wheel drifting through the very fast corners with perfect balance. Beautiful to see close up and most cars were driven very well. I had some good dices with other cars in our class and a few of the slower cars in bigger capacity classes. The Elite was just sensational to drive and I was just getting the hang of the circuit when the bloody checkered flag came out and the fun had to stop.

I came in to a good welcome from the team, as I had brought it back in the same condition I took it out, and we had beaten Barry's brother in law's Elite which had a bit more powerful engine than ours.

My best lap was only 4 seconds slower than Barry and I was really chuffed with that, as Barry had raced the car for a long time and had



L to R Bruce, Bob Dove Climax engine man, Nicola Danby team manager, Barry Davison Elite owner driver. and Nick Atkins, owner of the other Elite in our team.

many laps of Silverstone under his belt. We had worked the car up from 57th to a finishing 33rd and 4th in class of 17 starters, so we were both very happy. Sadly 3 of the 9 Elites that started failed to finish for one reason or another.

Overall impressions:

A great, challenging, fast circuit; wonderful friendly Silverstone staff who treated us with good humor and took great care to see we had a good experience so we would come back.

Car eligibility, all the Poms "cheat" at one level or another and I suspect the Europeans do too! There were cars in our class that had been totally stripped out, some of the Elites had no inner skins on doors, boot or bonnet, the interiors were completely stripped out and the suspension rose jointed all over the place. We heard on the grapevine that one Elite was sporting a cheater engine with over 145 HP. He did not finish by the way – poetic justice. It was also rumoured that another was fitted with 5 speed gearbox but I can't believe it. Group S Eligibility would have kittens! The one thing that is good, is that everybody must run on Dunlop racing tires so at least in the grip department all are equal.

The cost of historic racing in the UK in these high profile historic events is very high. We worked out that the entry for this 1 hour and 10 minutes on the circuit was costing us about 33 dollars a minute, or about 6 times the cost per minute of racing for entry in the Tasman Revival event. We are very lucky to race in Australia.

All in all, a great experience, and I've been invited to go back next year and do the Le Mans Classic in an Elite. If I can manage it that will be something to write about as I am lucky enough to be custodian of the first Elite to win the class there in 1959 – WUU2. I'll keep you posted.

Cheers, Still grinning, Bruce Mansell

(Photographs by Eric Sawyer Photography.
UK (www.historicracecarpics.com)

» ROFGO TOUR

August 4th 2012



by Michael Hipperson

Photos by Gary Bate, Michael Hipperson, James Thorburn and Terry Wills.

Once upon a time (2009 actually) a very wealthy German visited Duncan Hamilton Ltd in Hampshire and purchased a beautiful Ford GT40 (Chassis 1084) resplendent in Gulf colours – blue & orange... let us say it cost him £3 million.

The vendor was Adrian Hamilton (son of Duncan who won Le Mans in 1953 in a C-Type Jaguar). A conversation followed with the suggestion that as many Gulf Liveried racing cars as possible be sourced.

Thirty million pounds later and the German has 22 cars!

The cars were shown publicly for the first time at Retromobile, Paris in 2011. The motorsport world was aghast!

I and 21 other enthusiasts were fortunate to visit the collection in August, prior to their first UK showing at Salon Privé, London in October. On the day we saw 19 cars – the Porsche 917 (Chassis 26) had been damaged at Classic Le Mans by Vern Schuppan and was at the menders! The most valuable was the evolution of the GT40 – the Mirage (Chassis 10002). There are only two in the world...one just sold in the USA for \$10 million, the first GT40 to break the ten million barrier.

More modern racers were represented by the 1997 McLaren GTR F1 and by two Aston Martin DBR9s from 2008 – one unwashed (and never to be cleaned) since Le Mans that year, and looking amazing.

Single seaters, which carried only Gulf decals, were a McLaren F1 M14A from 1970 and a 1969 Brabham F1 BT26.

Since our visit two more cars have been purchased: a 2010 McLaren MP12C GT3 and a 2010 Lamborghini Gallardo GT3.

On a day of many highlights the firing up (on a Sunday morning!) of Denny Hulme's race winning 8 litre Can Am McLaren M20 was memorable.

One of our guests was 1960s racer Sir John Whitmore. John's hearing has suffered since those halcyon days and the blood curdling sound from the M20 had him bolting for cover!

I visited the collection again at Salon Privé and was delighted to see the original 1969 Gulf transporter, which was found in a wreckers yard in the USA and had been restored beautifully for its first showing.

All in all, a lucky German!



GT40 Mirage



Sir John Whitmore



ROFGO Collection



Goodwood Revival 2012





Winton 6 Hour Relay





Geoff Noble's Elise



September Sprint at Warwick

by John Barram

The last round of the Sprint Series for 2012 was at Warwick on 8/9 September. With a bit more heat in the air and track surface than at recent events I, for one, was looking forward to quick times.

There were a couple of regulars missing, with John Flynn out with a suspension rebuild (I think) and Matt Plowman out after a transmission failure. Having his first run in the sprint was Paul Littler in his historic Lotus 51 Formula Ford.

In the Historic Formula Ford class, Greg Bray in his Lotus 61 had a good tussle with Len Don in a Bowin. Over the two days, they were swapping the lead with a fraction of a second between them with Len prevailing on the final run. Running behind these two was Paul Littler with his times coming down steadily with each run until he found his limits with a spin.

In these Sprints, the Elise/Exige group are split into the over 3 Litre cars for those with forced induction and 1500 – 2000c.c. for the others – whether you have a stock Rover motor or a “double the horsepower” Honda or anything in between. In the “big” class Geoff was his usual class act showing a clean pair of heels to the rest and being the quickest car at the meeting. The Ringuet father/son pairing came next and if I am not mistaken I think Mitch has widened the gap on Darryl. The other car in the class was Jeremy Moore in the Europa.



Paul Littler's Lotus 51

Unfortunately, in the third run Jeremy and the Europa left the track on turn 12, ending up backed into the tyre wall with significant damage to the rear of the car. The car was able to be driven onto the trailer for the trip home but there is a big rebuild job required.

In the “small” class, Jason continued his fine form at the front of the field with Garry next. Joe had a temperature problem and pulled out on Sunday morning and Jeff Jackson took third in class.

I was running in the under 2000cc Historic Racing cars with my 1300cc F3 Cheetah and managed a second in class.

Geoff was fastest car of the meeting, and the Lotus club had five cars in the top ten.

A reminder to all this years' drivers, and anyone else wanting to join in, to submit an expression of interest for next year or you will miss out.

Best run time and best lap time are as below:

	Best run time	Best lap
Geoff Noble	3-04.208	1-00.211
Mitchell Ringuet	3-16.237	1-03.809
Jason Patullo	3-19.353	1-05.314
Darryl Ringuet	3-20.349	1-05.144
John Barram	3-21.938	1-05.992
Jeremy Moore	3-26.715	1-07.220
Garry Pitt	3-27.448	1-07.931
Greg Bray	3-28.125	1-07.671
Jeff Jackson	3-30.150	1-08.367
Joe Arico	3-33.643	1-09.691
Clive Wade	3-35.887	1-10.410
Paul Littler	3-54.599	1-16.903
Mike Goodfellow	3-58.077	1-17.645
Malcolm Kelson	3-58.556	1-17.972



by Giles Cooper

» Australia to Alaska in my Lotus Elise

My Whole Trip in Summary – Part 3



12th June 2012. After sorting out our frozen fish shipments the next morning, I set off from Homer to start heading home. To Anchorage and through to Tok was on roads already travelled, but at Tok I turned onto the Taylor Hwy to Chicken, and then the dirt Top of the World Hwy across to Dawson City on the banks of the Yukon River – the real centre of the Yukon Gold Rush. What a great few days – shame about the rain much of the first day. Never the less, the Top of the World Hwy was fantastic, even though the one hundred mile dirt section after Chicken was very, very muddy. I can only imagine how amazing it would be if it were fine. Then we dropped down to a very swollen Yukon River that we had to cross by ferry into Dawson City.

16th June. Found a good campsite in Dawson and had a full day there, walking through the historical town, watching a “Top of the World” Highland Games, and exploring a couple of the local saloons and restaurants. Fascinating city with lots of gold rush history, buildings subsiding due to thawed permafrost, and dirt streets with wooden sidewalks.

17th June. After that, it was really nonstop driving for the next week – Whitehorse, Watson Lake, Fort Nelson, and Dawson Creek down to Jasper on the 22nd June. But it was good weather for most of the way, and the section on the Alaska Highway (which I hadn’t driven previously) from Watson Lake to Fort Nelson was truly amazing. Not only was it a great road to drive on, with the dramatic Munch Pass and Lake, but so much wildlife – more than I had seen anywhere else. Just a wonderful day.

Arriving in Jasper the weather was dry to start with, and I had a day there to try a couple of the hikes, one great one out to Pyramid Lake and Mountain which I really enjoyed even though it was a lot longer than was signposted!! But at the end of the day the rain returned, and it was wet for the run down through the National Park down to Banff. But the run was still spectacular, with the Athabasca Falls swollen by snow melt, the Columbia Icefields glaciers so imposing even in the low cloud, and Lake Louise still looking amazing, although for some reason it has failed to REALLY impress me twice now. Maybe I need to just see it on a beautiful sunny day instead of in the rain!

26th June. I had been told that the weekend that I was in Banff there was a final round of the rodeo / chuck wagon racing circuit prior to the Calgary Stampede round two weeks later, and it was to be held just south of Calgary, in High River. So despite the rain, I drove out through Calgary to High River, and found a very sodden rodeo. The chuck wagon races had been cancelled due to the weather, and the rodeo was very limited for the same reason. Most unfortunate, but nothing I could do about it, so I returned, sadly, to Banff.

As I left Banff to head south, the weather cleared, but it was too late to save me from a long detour caused by mudslides from the heavy rain in the region for the past few days. I was heading to the northern end of the Okanagan Valley, which should have been about a three or four hour 150 mile drive West from Banff. Instead I had to go some 500 miles South, West, and then North through the Okanagan



Valley to get there! And after a wonderful fine evening drive from Banff to Radium Hot Springs (where I overnighted), it then rained for much of the rest of the trip to Blind Bay on the 27th June. Once I finally got there, I had a great evening with Bill and Debra – I had met them in Zion right at the beginning of my trip, and they had followed my blog throughout, so it was great to be able to spend time with them at the other end of my trip.

28th June. My last drive was down through the Okanagan Valley, and the weather was fine initially, which enabled me to see some of the beauty of this area. But after I crossed back into the US at Osoyoos then headed west into the Cascades NP, the rain returned, and the views as I drove through this famously scenic area were severely limited by the low cloud and rain. But it was still a great final drive through a stunning mountain pass. As I came out of the mountains towards Anacortes, and the 15,000 miles total for the trip came close to ticking over, the sun actually came out again, and I took off the roof for the final 100 miles into Anacortes. My mind was full of all the things that had happened, all the places I had been, all the scenery I had seen, and all the people I had met during the last four months – It was a very emotional last couple of hours, I can assure you. Most of all I could now relax because Elsie had made it without missing a beat all the way (apart from squealing brakes!). It had truly been a memorable trip from the bottom to the top of the world in my little Lotus Elise. It had started out just as a (bit of a crazy) drive, but along the way it turned into a truly life changing experience that has not only changed the way I think and feel about many aspects of life, but has also left me wanting more! So where to next?

2nd July . Elsie was taken down to the Tacoma docks, and sailed for Brisbane on 17th July. She is due to arrive in Brisbane around August 27, and I plan to be there to collect her.

Thank you ALL for sharing my journey with me and being a part of it, and for sending me emails and comments of support and of things you particularly enjoyed. Please do keep in touch, and I look forward to sharing my next journey with you all.

As far as Alaska goes, I feel I am no longer a Cheechako, but have now graduated to being a Sourdough! (Google that if you don't understand it.)

Some lessons learned:

Make more careful notes of people's names and contact details at the time you meet them. Scribbled notes get misunderstood later, or lost.

Make the car/camping system work better in wet weather. While the Elise was the integral

reason for this trip, Elise + small tent makes it very difficult in the rain, and as it WILL rain, you need to make sure that wet weather is not able to put a damper on the trip because you can't cope with it.

Do go out of season where possible. The National Parks in the US get so very crowded in summer, and part of the joy of this trip was being able to see things without the crowds. The penalty is having to cope with possible poor weather (see item immediately above).

Don't travel alone – a large part of the enjoyment of anything is sharing it with others. I have learned that I need someone to travel with – not only to share things with, but also because you often do so much more exploring of things when there are two or more of you egging each other on a little. It also helps to have someone to read the maps and travel guides while the other is driving.

Free camp where possible. Accommodation is the largest expense – keep this down and you can go further and for longer.

Have a secondary purpose behind the trip. For me, the meetings with the various Lotus Clubs around the country made the trip very special. Maybe you want to see art galleries, or motor museums, or follow a history trail in the area, or some other specific thing – if you can find something else to combine with the trip, it makes it even more enjoyable.

Don't try to see/do everything. It just isn't possible. Try to work out the things you really want to see and do, and then target them specifically.

Talk to everyone you can. It makes every day of the trip so special.

Smile. Life is too short.



Bob Stewart's Cortina Stable

To All,

I thought I had a few race cars but Bob has 5 Mk 1 Cortina GTs that he races. Trevor and I went down on Saturday to have a look at one which was for sale with no motor. Trevor has just sold his Group Nb EH Holden race car and is looking for another smaller car to play with. He decided against this one, so I just had to buy it to add to all my junk at home.

Trevor is looking for a good Datsun 1600 to race if anyone has one for sale just reply to this email saundson@bigpond.com and I will pass it on to him.

Bob Stewart is now retired, 65 years old and lives down the Gold Coast in Queensland. He started racing in a 1936 Ford coupe doing hill climbs in Grafton New South Wales 49 years ago at the young age of 16. He also raced in Hillmans and Datsun 1600s before he seen the light and got into Mk1 Cortina's. He is a real talented guy. He does his own roll cages, weber manifolds, extractors, panel beating, painting and anything else that he needs. You can eat your dinner on the floor in his shed it is that clean. The inside of the shed is just like a Cortina Museum.

He has just finished his latest project which is a black 2 door GT Cortina to replace the one he rolled at the Noosa Hill Climb a couple of years ago. It is going to have its first run at Round 5 of the Black Truck Series at Queensland Raceway on the weekend of the 13/10/12.

Allan, Alice and I went down Monday 24th Sept to pick up our new prized possession. Took it home and knocked a few dints out of the body and it is now ready to grind up and bog up. Should come up good.

I am thinking about taking the motor and gearbox out of our 4 door white car and fitting it to the new 2 door and then selling the 4 door as a roller. Anybody interested, may even fit our new Lotus motor into the 2 door when it turns up – see pictures attached.

That's it for now. See ya

Saundo



THE IPSWICH CLASSIC

Queensland Raceway, 13–14 October 2012 – Round 5

Off we go out to the track on Friday with our new exhaust and a few more tweaks on the engine. My mate Trevor does 5 laps and said it is going like a rocket.

Saturday morning qualifying with a 33 car field and Allan qualifies 23rd. Only one race on Saturday for Group N historic cars and it was the last race of the day so we had to sit around till 1530 till they went out. Allan came in 17th and said the car was going a bit quicker than normal.

Sunday we had 3 races, first up in the morning at 0830, midday and last race in the arvo. Allan goes out and came 11th and half way round on the cool down lap it stops and he gets towed in. The electric fuel pump died. We replace it and all was OK until I noticed a broken water pump bolt which we left and I loosened the radiator cap to reduce the pressure. Next I noticed a crack in the front left hand wheel – the one that gets all the flogging on a clockwise track, replaced it with another wheel. All is good.

Out for the next race at lunch time and he does 3 laps and spends the next 7 laps just cruising around and came in 4th last. When Allan came in he said "No clutch dad and it is stuck in 3rd gear" Holy Shit I think, what else can go wrong. The pipe on the slave cylinder had come loose and drained all the fluid out. Tightened up the nut, bleed the clutch and we can drive it again. Can only get it into top gear some times and the diff has a clunking noise in it. That's it, forget about the racing and have a relaxed lunch.

That's not all – I go to start the Falcon after lunch to get the trailer, and one of the interior lights is still on – flat battery and we have to jump start the car. I said to the boys let's get the trailer and get the hell out of here before something else goes wrong. Not a good weekend of racing for us.

Allan had some good close racing with young Chris McIlwan in the orange Datsun 1600 number 153 and his Dad in the red and white one number 41, also with Bob Stewart in the black Cortina number 2

My mate John Blackburn from the Lotus Club was racing his Loter Mistral Peugeot (replica Lotus 11) which is a logged book car from the 1950s. It was out for the second time since it last raced in 1975. He did a fantastic job restoring it and it looked a real treat. The guy driving for him scraped the fence on Sunday but not much damage.

That's it for now, till the next race meeting.

Saundo



Loter Mistral Peugeot (replica Lotus 11) above and below





ANOTHER FAVOURITE ROAD

The back roads to Healesville

by Euan Brown

The Yarra Valley has been a popular destination for Melbournians for decades and Healesville is the economic heart of the Valley.

Healesville is about an hour from the metro area but once there it has a real country feel with good food, good wine and the attraction of Healesville Sanctuary and its fascinating and diverse collection of Australian wildlife.

The boring way to Healesville is to follow the Maroondah Highway. But it means lots of traffic and lots of traffic lights – the very things I try to avoid when going on an excursion.

One of the attractions of living in the inner North as I do is the close proximity to freeways that get me out of town quickly. For example, from the intersection of Springvale Rd and the Eastern Freeway there are only 3 sets of lights to negotiate before you will find yourself unfettered and on country roads.

This month I'd like to offer a round-trip to Healesville which, given many of you will not live in the inner North, I'll start at the old gold mining village of Warrandyte on the Yarra River. There are two choices to make before you leave Warrandyte – which route to take out and which to take back. I suggest you try both and make up your own mind which is best.

ROUTE 1

From the roundabout in Warrandyte Village, turn left on Kangaroo Ground Road, cross the bridge over the Yarra River and head towards Kangaroo Ground. You could follow this road all the way to a roundabout on the Kangaroo Ground / St Andrews Rd (C728) but a much more interesting and exhilarating diversion is to take the 6th road on the right (Pigeon Bank Rd) and follow it as it dips steeply and then rises steeply to a crest which offers wonderful countryside views to the left and the right. But be careful – there are trees close to the road and some sharp bends, so sightseeing is best left to the passenger. At a T junction, turn left into Henley Rd (no signpost) and follow it to a T junction at the Eltham / Yarra Glen Rd.

Here you have another choice – if you're out for a cruise then you could turn right and follow the Eltham / Yarra Glen Rd about 16.5km to Yarra Glen.

Or if you still fancy a few more twists and turns, turn left, pass the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial (which is worth climbing on a clear day) and then turn right into the Kangaroo Ground/St Andrews Rd (C728). Follow this smooth tarmac for about 4.5km until you reach



Alma Rd on the right (also SP "Unicorn Valley Horse Riding School"). Turn into this narrow road and follow its twists and turns until you reach the Eltham / Yarra Glen Rd. Turn left and head towards Yarra Glen.

In about 4km, a pleasant detour can be had by turning right into Simpson Rd and visiting Sugarloaf Reservoir.

But if time is pressing, continue through Christmas Hills (past the Rob Roy Hillclimb turnoff) until you reach the edge of the valley. The reason for coming this way now becomes apparent because you will enjoy fabulous



uninterrupted vistas of the entire Yarra Valley and will I hope get a genuine sense of the fact that it is a valley (although admittedly at this point a very broad one). On the descent into the valley there is one particularly delicious hairpin marked at 30km/h but be careful if gravel has washed across the road because it tightens unexpectedly once you are in the corner.

From this point it is an easy ride into Yarra Glen. At the T-junction with the Melba Hwy, turn left because you will pass another interesting stop – the historic Gulf Station property owned by the National Trust.

After immersing in some local history, continue to the roundabout and proceed straight through onto Old Healesville Rd. This is my preferred route into Healesville, primarily because it is a ridge road for much of the journey and offers more wonderful views on both sides of the road.

At the T junction turn left into Healesville-Yarra Glen Rd (C726) and proceed until you reach a Y junction at Chum Creek Rd (C724). If you turn right instead, it is only a short distance to Tarrawarra, which is well known for its wines and its art gallery – highly recommended.

From the Y junction the rest of the suggested route is at the end of the route 2 description.



ROUTE 2 From the roundabout in Warrandyte village, proceed straight through for about 1.8km until you reach a roundabout. Turn left at the roundabout into Jumping Creek Rd. Be careful along this stretch – this is a 60km/h road and with its undulations it is easy to pick up speed unexpectedly.

Continue until you reach a T junction at Brushy Park Rd. As you approach the intersection, the elevated road gives a lovely view over the surprisingly rural outlook so close to suburbia. Turn left at the T junction and, almost immediately, turn right into Lower Homestead Rd. There's a nice 90° corner almost straight away and the smooth bitumen encourages a spirited exit but you are only in a 60km/h zone so be steady with the accelerator.



The speed limit changes to 80km/h when the road straightens. Continue until you reach the next T junction at Edward Rd. Turn left.

Edward Rd has been recently widened so it no longer feels like the English country lane it once did. There's a couple of blind crests on this road to keep you on your toes but the road is quite straight so the crests do not present any danger.

At the next T junction with Coldstream West Rd, turn right (a left turn will take you nowhere as it is a no thru road). Proceed until you reach the crossroads at Victoria Rd. Turn left into Victoria Rd and in about 2.5km turn right into McIntyre Lane. Follow McIntyre Lane until you reach Melba Hwy and then turn left into Melba Hwy.

You're now on a 100km/h road and Yering Station will soon be on your right. Both the Farmers Market (held on the 3rd Sunday every month) and the winery are worth a visit. Proceed to the outskirts of Yarra Glen and at the roundabout just over the railway line turn right into Healesville-Yarra Glen Rd (C726). You will arrive at another roundabout at the Yarra Glen Bypass. Proceed straight through the roundabout and head towards Healesville. This stretch is notorious for having unmarked camera cars so be mindful of your speed. Continue until you reach the Y junction at Chum Creek Rd (C724).

Now you have yet another choice – if you're keen to reach your destination, turn right and follow your nose into Healesville.



For those who can never get enough curves in their drive, turn left and follow Chum Creek Rd for the 14.5km to Toolangi. We have been up this road at least 4 times this year as part of various EMRs and some of us have been known to return home on this road as well. It is a fabulous road for our cars and tests your skill for rapid but lawful progress. A few warnings. Just after the "end 60km/h" sign at the end of Chum Creek village, there is a nasty bump which can cause you to lose traction in the wet as you accelerate. Also, always be conscious that while there are some nice hairpins through the Toolangi forest section of the road, it is possible that others will be enjoying the road in the opposite direction. Keep left on the right hand bends in particular and be alert for overly enthusiastic drivers in the opposite direction. Finally, I hope you get the road to yourself and don't get stuck behind Sunday tourists.



Once in Toolangi, look for Myers Creek Rd and turn right into it. This is another twisty road but the surface is far lumpier than Chum Creek Rd. You will descend most of the time so your braking skills will be tested. It is also more moist than Chum Creek Rd and in the cooler and wetter months, moss grows in the shade of several bends. Keep an eye out!

You should follow Myers Creek Rd all the way into Healesville where it will deposit you directly opposite Giant Steps Winery. A very worthwhile lunch stop.

When it's time the head home, why not take the route that you didn't follow on the way to Healesville just to enjoy more of the fabulous roads we are fortunate to have access to.

Enjoy!



VARIETY BASH 2012

Phil Mollison



PHIL MOLLISON'S EXPERIENCE

by Phil Mollison

The car

Mk 1 Cortina GT500 replica
It started life as 440 automatic
\$15000.00 later
1600 X Flow rebuilt by Peter Larnar
5 speed Sierra gearbox
Long range tank
Recaro seats
GT instruments
Booster to brakes
Terra Trak Trip Meter
Dunlop Adventurer 4 x4 Tyres. Pressure dropped to 20 psi when ever on the dirt.

A small commercial:

These tyres have now done a trip to Cairns, Byron Bay Yeppoon and return Alice Springs and return, Margaret River WA and a 10 day tour of Tasmania, no punctures and still performing like new (well nearly).

The people:

Phil Mollison, John "The Piper" Houghton
plus fellow Lotus Club Member Les Bone and Ian Bensch in a very well prepared 1977 LX Torana
Plus 80 odd assortment of entrants

Aim:

Variety Bash to Hamilton Island the long way – 4608 kms

DAY 1 Shepparton to Deniliquin 735ks

An easy day spent on the bitumen, and well-formed dirt roads.

Basically it was a tour of the Goulburn Valley and a great way to sort out any problems with cars.



DAY 2 Deniliquin to Broken Hill 692kms

Finally off into the bush, with great recently graded dirt roads.

Three years ago driving this area it was a total desolate dust bowl. Now grass, salt bush and new trees flourishing, the Lakes South of Menindee replenished with water and fabulous bird life everywhere.

Dinner was held in the Royal Exchange Hotel where Priscilla Queen of the Desert was filmed.

DAY 3 Broken Hill to Marree 673 kms

Down the Barrier Hwy for 199ks to Yunta, fuel up and the turn north into the great unknown, our destination Hawker for lunch.

The drive thru the south of the Flinders Ranges was spectacular, again totally regenerated after the breaking of the drought.

Fantastic drive through Soldier settler farms on very well maintained gravel roads.

After lunch there was the compulsory stop at the Prairie Hotel at Parachilna and then off into afternoon sunlight heading north to Leigh Creek and another "pit stop" Lyndhurst, about 80ks south of Marree.

DAY 4 Marree to Birdsville via "the track" 524 kms

Tom Cruse (the original "truckie") would shake his head, it's now like the Hume Hwy without the bitumen, well at least when it hasn't rained, 5th gear, pull 3200rpm and cruising at 130 kph too easy, just beware of oncoming road trains and grey nomads in their 4WDs.

Lunch at Mungeranie Hotel/ Roadhouse, a classic Aussie pub in the middle of nowhere.

Camp the night at Birdsville with a big day in front of us next day, still heading due north.

DAY 5 Birdsville to Mt Isa 680kms

We are now in shorts and T shirts. As the Birdsville Races were on the following weekend the Eyre Development Rd. was in good condition, but care had to be taken with oncoming traffic getting ready for the races.

It was rewarding to see the change in the countryside following the rain and flooding from earlier in the year.

A quick stop at Bedourie to refuel and onto Boulia for a fabulous lunch supplied by the local CWA.

Still heading North next stop a little town Dajarra, completely owned and run by a local Aboriginal group, fantastic to see the job they are doing, they own the hotel/ general store and service station, They are very proud of what they have achieved and so they should be.

155kms to Mt Isa — a great shower and a proper bed.

We had a lay in Mt Isa, to check cars and any maintenance that was needed; All the Corty needed was a wash and 200 ml of oil.

DAY 6 Mt Isa to Richmond 648 kms

OK, we finally turn right and start heading East to the coast, yeah. After about 19 kms turn left and head North again following the Leichardt River to Kajjabbi and then on to Cloncurry, anybody could just drive down the bitumen.

Our only maintenance was required on this leg, had to replace a fuse in the wiring for our flashing dust light. Bugger!!!

DAY 7 Richmond to Charters Tower

Again we could have headed down the bitumen but No, back on the dirt for a 140km loop to Hughenden for lunch.

It was a great drive on well-graded gravel roads BUT with quite a few badly worn cattle grids to keep us concentrating.

The country was covered with knee-high savannah grass and well stocked with Brahma cattle.

After lunch, straight down the highway and into Charters Towers

DAY 9 Charters Towers to Airlie Beach / Hamilton Island

Leaving Charters Towers 47 East we turn right to travel through to the old gold mining town of Ravenswood and then East, down the escarpment of the great Divide and onto the coastal plains covered with sugar cane and vegetables following the Burdekin River to Ayr on the coast.

From there, down the Bruce Hwy to Proserpine and then to Airlie Beach, finally park the car and onto the ferry out to Hamilton Hwy.

Maintenance required 1 fuse 200 ml of oil and approx. 485 litres of petrol.

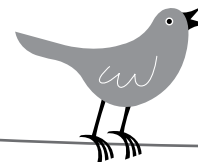
It should be noted that the car has completed 10 Bashes and 2 Royal Flying Doctor treks — approx. 90,000 very hard kms.

The motor has been rebuild once by Peter Lerner (it really only needed a refresh).

It has the original 5 speed Sierra type 9 gear box, same clutch and diff, not bad for a 47 year old car.

Next year we are going to Broome, any other starters for a very long EMR?

\$ 1.2 Million
raised for
special kids in our
Community!



LES BONE'S DIARY

by Les Bone

EARLY NOVEMBER 2011

Ian Bensch asked me yet again if I wanted to add a Variety Bash to our 'Bucket list'.

LATE NOVEMBER

After reading a flyer in Lotus Notes magazine, I called in to Sierra shop to buy a jacket, met Phil Mollison and noticed Variety Bash pictures everywhere. I called Ian to let him know that the Bash just got promoted to Bucket list, priority 1.

DECEMBER 2012

After an extensive search, and healthy price negotiations, we settled on a 1977 LX Torana. It has already done a cystic fibrosis bash so is almost up to Variety standards. An extended roadworthy test (by clubman owner, Lee Warne) listed items that needed to be replaced, not for compliance but for longevity in the face of hard work.

LATE JAN 2012

Problems? The word around traditional Torana owners is that a Holden 202 red motor with twin down draft carbies will suck loads of fuel.



Phil and his lubricant

LATE FEBRUARY 2012

Just got back from our first Variety club pub meeting in Docklands. Fantastic night, met 'Cowboy' the bush mechanic, 'Mum' a veteran of many events and a whole load of great people who do this year after year.

EARLY MAY

Well, that was a learning experience if ever there was one! Ian and I just returned from a weekend driving the Torana on bush trails around Jamison and Eildon. We got stuck in the snow, were covered mud but still managed to bring the car home (and each other) in one piece. We also learned that we can average 13.5ltrs per 100km.

LATE JUNE

Is this the start of our troubles? During a full maintenance service, we decided to change the diff oil. In one way, it's good that we did because we discovered that the Holden LSD was stuffed. Decided the extra expense of a new one was worthwhile.

MID JULY

Had a very interesting time at the formal scrutineering meeting. The electricians and mechanics told us ROOKIES, many horror stories of breakdown failures during past events. I hope they are exaggerating just a little! We were also intrigued to see regular bash drivers dressed in fairy wings, clown noses and/or Hawaiian shirts ... wonder what we are getting ourselves into.

EARLY AUGUST

The final countdown. Our efforts at raising sponsorship or donations have worked out good so far. We've managed to exceed the minimum and are just chasing down the last of the stragglers.



Les and his Torana

AUGUST 22nd

Well, the journey has started. Ian and I drove up from Melbourne to Shepparton ready for the 'real' start tomorrow. We've just come back from the formal welcoming dinner and that was a real eye-opener. Teams that had not seen each other since last year met and chatted as though it was only yesterday and all were very happy to 'Hug a Rookie'.

AUGUST 23rd

Got to see first-hand, the real reason for the Bash, we were visited by a very grateful recipient of a donated wheel chair and we also visited a range of schools to entertain the kids. The drive through Northern Victoria was 'nice' but no challenge for the car or our navigation skills.

AUGUST 24th TO 27th

The past few days have become a blur. Up early, pack the car, big breakfast, last minute route changes and fund raising highlights then it's off to the next stop. Last night we stayed at Birdsville. Hotels in Deniliquin Broken Hill and Marree were as comfortable as what you would expect in these areas but last night we 'slept' in tents on the rockiest ground this side of the black stump! Still, this is what we came for and if the old Torana can take the Birdsville track in its stride then I'll be damned if a few sleepless nights will slow us down.



AUGUST 28th

It's time for a break at last. Today was a rest-day to catch up on a bit of car maintenance and to have a look around Mt Isa. The local tyre outlet did us all proud by repairing and balancing tyres for free. Even the local car wash owner gave a sizable donation to Variety just because he'd never seen so many enthusiastic 'bashers'.

AUGUST 29th and 30th

Yesterday, standing outside the Richmond pub (after a long dusty day on the track) was a night to remember with cold beer, warm night & great laughs. Not only that, the campsite had soft grass and hot showers. Today we arrived at Charters Towers and had our first sign of equipment fatigue. We can put up with a bit of dust and a few more rattles than normal but all of the dash board gauges are reading Zero. We checked the usual things but it found nothing obvious. So, as long as the Torana runs OK we'll drive blind and trust our luck.

AUGUST 31st and SEPTEMBER 1st

We did it!!! Now that we are resting our weary butts on a deckchair on a veranda overlooking Hamilton island with beer in hand we can finally say that we are no longer Bash Rookies. We put the car on a CEVA car transporter this afternoon and will fly back to work with two questions on our mind

"Do we attempt the Melbourne to Broome Bash, next year?"

"If we fitted off-road tyres to the clubbie would it survive the Birdsville track?"

Cheers, Les Bone

by Mike Richards



The Lotus Flower

» TELL ME I'M WRONG

My Elise Experience

I well remember my first sight of the new Elise at City Automobiles in Richmond, the Lotus dealer before Zagame. In 1997 it was a sensational sight, unlike anything we'd seen before in its totality but clearly derived from three cars, the type 26 Elan, the M100 Elan, Ferrari Dino and De Tomaso Guara. The feature I most clearly recall was the two little "winglets" on the front that seemed so utterly incongruous and useless. Lotus assured us that they performed some sort of aerodynamic function, well I've been to a few of those functions fuelled by red wine, finger food and bullshit. I maintain that winglets are stupid.

It was a gorgeous thing, with the Elan front treatment, the Peter Stevens sculpted M100 sides and the faired-in B pillars from the Dino, the radiator cowl of the De Tomaso. The interior design was a world first with the use of alloy extruded sections for the pedals, door hinges and chassis/tub. Sadly, my money was being lavishly gifted to a private school under the mistaken supposition that I was getting my kids



a good education, so the asking price of about \$70,000 was too much. The experience left an itch that didn't go away and was eventually scratched a few years on.

Meanwhile, the Elise sold, as expected, in small numbers to enthusiastic owners who had read the overseas rave reviews and felt quite comfortable repeating the nonsense for the benefit of the Australian motoring community. It was said that this little wonder car went around corners on rails, accelerated like a cheetah and stopped on a sixpence or a 5 cent piece. However, there was one characteristic that no-one could ignore, the damned thing was viciously unpredictable near the limit of its handling ability. Nobody was game enough to say to Lotus that the creature was a total dog and fess up on just what the problem was.

The simple truth is that the car had been put together in record time and true to Lotus tradition it was left to the customers to do the development work. The tinkering with the car, by some people calling themselves engine experts, gave it a largely undeserved reputation which could not have been positive for sales. The Rover engine started life as a one litre unit, radically designed from alloy and moulded plastic in layers held together with through-bolts. As such it was the lightest engine for its size ever designed and seemed to be a success. It was subsequently enlarged to 1400 cc. with success, and some would say its ultimate development.

The further enlargement to 1.8 litres, as used in the Elise, was a step too far. The engine quickly gained a reputation for a fragile bottom, subsequently correctly identified as the result of amateurs mucking around with it, but not before the damage was done to its reputation as a good engine. The other major concern that still haunts the cars is the use of plastic dowels to locate the cylinder head on the block.

The design seems like a good idea, in keeping with the brief to use as many parts made from plastic moulding as possible. Problem is, it just doesn't work in one area around the cooling jacket. Heat/cool cycling in this area causes the cylinder head to move around over the block with the result that the movement destroys part of the head gasket. Head gasket failure is common and an engine rebuild should be factored into the maintenance costs. The replacement of the plastic dowels with steel items seems to solve the design fault. The cooling system is badly designed and under-engineered causing some in our hot climate a bit of grief, most notably at track days.

The engine was rapidly developed into a VHPD unit that should never have been sold to the public and the craziness was installed in the Exige for a brief period. Some developments



The Butter Knife

appeared as the Sport 190 in 1997, produced in small numbers (too small to be recorded in the Elise Story) that was by far the fastest version of the Series 1 Elise with 4.4 sec. 0-102 kph acceleration and a 10.7 sec. get up 'n go to 160 kph versus the standard car's crepuscular 17.4 sec.

Fast forward to 2009 by which time I'd bought an M100, driven a few Elises – both Series 1 and 2, and was still not convinced that the Elise was a good thing, at least not good enough to buy.

Trawling the carsales.com site during a slack time at work I happened on a Series 1 in yellow which seemed to be taking a leisurely time to sell. Something about it urged me to ask the owner whether it was a UK import. You can never predict the reactions of someone you've never seen or heard – this guy reacted badly. He was so offended by my enquiry that he emailed me at least once a day, sometimes more often, on the virtues of this car that was Australian delivered. What to do? Just ignore him, he's bound to run out of steam. What I subsequently found out, that he does this sort of thing for a living, in fact, he's paid megabucks to do this. He is a "spin doctor" to the rich & famous, politically powerful and anyone else who has a barrow to push and can afford his services. After a month or two of this argy-bargy I relented and agreed to view the car at his apartment in the smart end of Chapel St. The first glance convinced me that my resistance had instantly disappeared – it was firmly in the "must-have" category.

Meanwhile this guy is doing a job on me, blathering away nonstop as usual. Every time he surfaced for air, he'd drop the price, so what could I do but say nothing and wait until he finally ran out of oxygen, by which time the price had dropped to the end-of-year run-out, pay no more, unbelievable bargain of \$30k – for an absolutely unmolested, dealer serviced, low mileage, year 2000 model with a few upgrades.

I could tell he'd looked after the car on my test drive, he put scratches on the dash with his finger nails. Well, I didn't think I was driving "enthusiastically". Rapid appearance of cheque book and the deal's done.

Apart from the obvious near new condition the car's overall impression was that of design taken to its logical extreme. The car had been designed to death by a team of three, so the concept had not been seriously compromised by the bean counters or idiot managers. Everything screamed DESIGN. After reading the Elise story about the original concept, I realised that a few reality checks had occurred, mainly around the aerodynamics, the major one being the insertion of the "butter knife" lip at the rear to cure serious lift at speed, a feature that looks out of place and with which the designers were not happy. It really messed up the cute-bum appearance of the original concept.

Features I like are the incorporation of a roll bar over the rear (removable) window with a removable plastic cover, the overall ergonomically perfect interior that had been kept strictly minimalist, the simple design of the front and the placement of the radiator. In fact

the design of the cooling ducts and the crash structure are pure genius. Needless to say the design of the tub and other components from alloy extrusions is also genius, in keeping with the design brief for the engine.

Time to bag the thing, what don't I like? Take the generalities first, the overall kit-car design, for instance the window winder handles which manage to disassemble themselves, the Allen key for the hood fasteners shoved in a hole in the B pillar, the fixed passenger seat, the hood fixing design, the battery location, the mesh covered reversing lights, location of the radiator cowl release handle etc. Toyota would never have signed off on the Elise design. Particular gripes, in no particular order: The strange sit up and beg stance of the car under acceleration which induces the front to bob up and down like some short wheelbase Fiat Bambino; The lack of steering lock that gives the car a large turning circle and prevents it being drifted; The lack of control suddenly appearing on the limit of handling which I experienced first hand – the unmentionable truth not spelled out in motoring press reviews; The total lack of control over noise, vibration & harshness, it's an incredibly noisy car under most driving conditions; Stones hitting the undertray make the experience akin to a washing machine full of nuts and bolts on heavy duty cycle and you're constantly reminded that those stones are also busy gouging chunks of paint and fibreglass from the sides of the car; The engine right behind your ears makes a din; the differential is noisy; and the suspension crashes over anything larger than a lolly wrapper.

The original Koni gas dampers are the most intriguing items I've ever known. They making a high pitched squealing noise over short, abrupt bumps which Lotus must have known was not acceptable, but preferred to tell us that "they are all like that sir." Indeed they were all like that, so why didn't they change them for something better. The Koni dampers were pretty short lived in service and most owners have fitted better after-market units. I'm so fascinated by the simple, crude kit car design of the canvas hood that in a perverse way I'd keep it in a redesign of the car. It's a total PITA to properly fit, the plastic strip across the front invariably snaps in half, it leaks and it's not easily stowed in the minute luggage compartment. And how annoying is the Stack display that tells you how many litres of fuel in the tank but only until it reaches 11 litres, after which it tells you to "Refill". I have run out of fuel through trusting this little liar.

On the subject of fuel, how kit car is the fuel filler cap (Jeep sourced) that self-destructs when the plastic internals break if you're not very careful. Probably the most daft items on the car are the so called security wheel nuts which refuse to loosen and need a special socket. The nuts are covered with a metal shroud that must first be removed with a plastic extractor which breaks. The first thing I did was butcher these items and fit normal wheel nuts available from Elise Parts in UK. There are no jacking points so you are restricted to the use of a workshop jack or hoist at certain marked safe areas. The use of a hoist is fraught with danger since use of the safe areas gives you a car up high that is very delicately balanced and liable

to topple off backwards with little provocation. A bucket of sand attached by a rope to the front towing hook is a necessary precaution!

About time to mention the elephant in the room... despite whatever you've heard about getting in and out of the car, especially with the hood in place, believe me you need training at Cirque du Soleil to accomplish it with any degree of dignity. I refuse to acknowledge that those who use these cars as daily drivers are not black belts in Yoga or Kama Sutra or whatever. It is like living in a letterbox.

The upside is that once you've wriggled inside the ergonomics are perfect for a normal sized chap or chapeau. It's quite "cosy" for two and some couples don't like the claustrophobic ambience.

So, is the Elise a keeper? The answer is a yes in the affirmative. Having owned a Westfield clubman for ten years, the Elise is no real hardship as I appreciate the superior brand of kit car existence, and the sheer bloody luxury of a roof. It's definitely no "race car for the road", more a very accomplished sports car which has a lot of design features only found in modern race cars. Besides, there's nothing else like it, until the new Alfa Romeo look-alike comes onto the market soon. The other pretender, that French contraption, was no match, and the Vauxhall VX220 went up the performance path to outgun the Elise.

Using the published factory performance figures for the Elise it was interesting to note that, excepting for limited run performance specials, the performance of Series 1 and 2 models is similar. The extra power from the Toyota engine was being used to move more weight as the Series 2 became loaded up with all sorts of gimmicks, now approaching a porky 900 Kg. That's an increase of about 180 Kg. in kerb weight!

I'm also seeing the price of Series 1 dropping as they become financial liabilities since there are a few things such as: suspension bushes, steering rack and ball joints, gear change mechanism, clutch, disks, dampers, and cam belt which are essential to replace at their age. Factor in a paint chip repair and respray for any car with a few miles and that bargain buy becomes something else. However, do what's necessary and it'll put a permanent crease in your laughing gear for a few years – that's my plan.



The Letter Box, 516 mm. high



▲ 1967 Lotus Elan S3 FHC – Yellow/Black Interior

Currently on Qld Club Registration – S 12253

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New Springs & Shock Absorbers;

Doughnut/Universal Joint conversion;

Generator/Alternator conversion;

Includes Full Harness seatbelts.

More photos can be sent on request.

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▲ LOTUS ELAN M100 TURBO. V.G.C.

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A delight to drive, easy entry and exit, and tons of luggage space.

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Reason for sale: I'm looking for an Elise.

\$17,500

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Lotus & Clubman Notes is the official magazine of the Lotus Club Victoria (LCV) ABN 75 071 773 306. The views and contents of the articles printed in Lotus & Clubman Notes are those of the authors and do not represent those held by the editor or the committee. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from the LCV committee. Articles for Lotus & Clubman Notes are always welcome.

The magazine deadline is strictly the 21st of each month, except February when it reverts to the 28th. Extensions are possible only by prior arrangement. Print photographs may be sent to Jon Hagger however, a stamped self-addressed envelope must be included if you want them returned.

Please send articles, either in hard copy or in high-resolution (250dpi minimum) electronic format to:
editor@lotusclubvic.asn.au
 or PO Box 601, Mt Waverley, Vic, 3149.

STATE CLUB MEETING PLACES

NSW – Club Lotus Australia

2nd Tuesday each month
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ashton_roskill@hotmail.com
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South Australia – CLA

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LOTUS CLUB VICTORIA

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We have developed a panel of members who can answer queries about particular models for club members and prospective owners.

If you would like to be a "Model Representative" for a type that is not mentioned right, or to replace a committee member on the panel, please advise Iain Palmer on idalpalmer@melbpc.org.au

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Esprit Series 3 onwards	Andre Cezanne	acezanne@synthetek.com
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