

ACROSS THE POND

By Gordon Morris

This July was the hottest since records began, but, as frequently happens here in hot weather, it was interspersed with sudden, short notice torrential downpours. The month started well with the Historic Lotus Register's visit to Classic Le Mans – the subject of an earlier ATP.

I'd planned to take my Seven to Le Mans, but it returned from Denmark in poor fettle, with increased tappet noise and a low oil pressure. Lack of time meant that the car was covered over and pushed to the back of the garage for a month or so. Then removal of the engine revealed that the camshaft and its bearings were badly worn and there had clearly been a lack of lubrication in that area. This accounted for the tappet noise and low oil pressure.

So now I'm left with a major engine rebuild – new cam, bearing & followers – and while the engine's apart, I'll replace the main and con rod bearings as well. That's already under way, so I hope to have SB1688 back together again in a few weeks.

So the Elan has been pressed into more use than usual; each time I drive it, I remind myself what a brilliant design it is; no bigger or heavier than it needs to be, powerful and with handling that set the example for sports cars for decades and is still regarded as a benchmark car in terms of steering, ride, comfort and sheer joy to drive and own. If,

god forbid, I could only have one car, it would have to be the lovely Elan.

The Elan and I took part in the Historic Lotus Register's display at the Silverstone Historic Festival at the end of July. I'd just parked when an immaculate red early Elan, with a silver hardtop, drew up alongside. Its registration – 997 NUR – revealed it to be Jimmy Clark's first Elan and the car that features in advertisements with a kilted Jimmy sitting on the front wing outside his farm in the Borders and announcing that he drives his Elan for pleasure, not because he has to. The car belongs to a successful Lotus historic racer and had just emerged from a thorough restoration. It looks wonderful – just as it would have done 43 years ago – and drew much attention from visitors to the stand.

This landmark car – one of the first handful built and badged as an Elan 1500 – features in Brian Buckland's *magnum opus* on the Elan that has recently been published in the UK and should be available in North America in time for LOG 26. My Review of this work should have appeared in reMarque before you read this. Brian goes into amazing detail on all things Elan – and this detail proved particularly useful when I set about preparing the Elan for its annual vehicle inspection – the dreaded MoT test.

Recent changes in legislation have resulted in much confusion amongst testers about the criteria to be used for testing older cars, and stories about failed tests

were rife. So I set about a thorough check of the Elan before presenting it for inspection. The Elan's awful handbrake is a common reason for failure, so I took it all to pieces,

cleaned it up and set the levers and cables as Brian tells you to do in his book, complete with pictures. The result was – for a while at least – a good firm handbrake and a successful pass in the test. In order to keep the tiny (and expensive) handbrake pads away from the disc, thereby preventing unnecessary wear, I fitted small springs to the cross rod that sets the clearance for the pads. Read how to do it in the book!

There are now three Lotuses in our collection. Jan has been talking about a replacement for her early Mazda MX5 (Miata to you) for some time and encountered a couple with an M100 at a show a few months ago. She seemed to like it, so we sold the MX5 and replaced it with a white 1991 M100, with 58,000 miles on the clock, a month ago. The car needed a service, new brakes and a new cam sensor as well as a really good clean. Having had all of that, it goes really well and sits in my garage beside the Seven and the Elan. I've never really had much to do with the M100 – it's a bit modern for my style – but I'm pleasantly surprised at how well it performs, how much room it has and how comfortable it is. My only reservation is that I wish that they'd found another name for it – to me, there's only one Elan and that's the one closest to my heart. In the UK, we refer to the FWD car as the M100, so it seems that others share my view.

As I write, LOG 26 is three weeks away. Flights, car hire, hotel reservations and registration have all been fixed – some with assistance from my good CALL friends – so I look forward to being reunited with the North American clan of the international Lotus family for what will be my sixteenth consecutive LOG.

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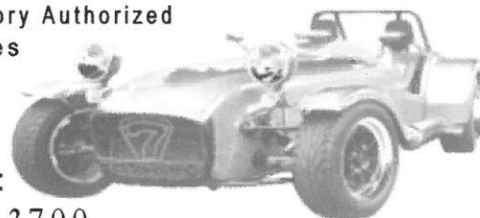
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"Who We Are"

My Suspicions of Police Officers Confirmed

Article and Photos by Mark V. Pfeffer

Have you been pulled over for no reason while driving your Lotus? It's happened to me twice. I've always had a suspicion the "Boys in Blue" are auto buffs assigned to do less than glamorous duty some times. Namely, writing traffic violations. By the way, both times the officers chatted about the Esprit and sent me on my way, sans a ticket.



Dominick Munifo is one of those police officers. He's been protecting the streets in Wood Ridge, New Jersey in Bergen County for over ten years and relates this story of his Esprit S4s purchase.

"After doing research for years, I had always had my heart set on an S4s, which was considered the "Holy Grail" of the 4-bangers. While on duty and patrolling in my local hometown, I was on the main boulevard and had seen this bright yellow Lotus coming at me three blocks away. I immediately knew it was an Esprit and it was the first one I had seen in years locally. I then got behind the car and actually pulled it over on a side street to get a closer look. The owner thought he had done something wrong, but I just wanted to talk to him more about his car. After seeing that it was an S4s my eyes lit up. I started to rattle off the vehicle specs to him, and he was amazed. I asked him if he knew of anyone selling a used Lotus, and his reply was "I have been thinking about selling this car for some time now, but was never really serious". We had exchanged phone numbers, and it was at this point that I contacted fellow LEO member Atwell Haines. Almost a year went by while I was going through negotiations with the owner. Since I never drove one before, I needed an expert opinion and was put in touch with David Nagler. Since David had an S4s I figured that he would be the best critic. I finally setup up a meeting with the owner

to where David Nagler and Joe Saturnia assisted in checking out the car for me. After getting 2 thumbs up after Nagler's test drive, the car went to Ralph Stechow at RS Motorsports for a pre inspection and compression test. With all green lights, I finally got my Esprit."

Quite possibly the best buying story I've ever heard, but it goes much deeper than just this, Dom, like many of us, was hooked at an early age. Not like some of our senior (Ahem!) members who saw Jim Clark or Jochen Rindt race, but rather an innocent moment with his mom at age twelve.

"When I was around twelve years old I remember coming out of the grocery store with my mom, and saw a blue Turbo Esprit parked in the back corner of the lot. After gawking at the car for a while, the owner came over and showed me the car inside and out, and even let me sit in the cockpit. It was from that day forward that I swore that someday I would own my dream car. I went so far as to buy an exotic car calendar back in 1994 (which featured an Esprit S4) and left it up in my bedroom until I purchased my Lotus. Almost 10 years went by before I was able to acquire my Esprit to where I then threw out the calendar, which had been staring at me every time I walked into my room. Needless to say that calendar has been gone for two years now."

Dom's notorious sense of humor is evident with the fire-breathing dragon tattoo on his back, probably from his days of sporting a mullet and an earring. One of his many loves includes music. He played guitar for 14 years including his high school and college bands. Prior to this involvement with music, he spent time going fast (Ironic huh?) on his wave runner on the Jersey shore. Water and speed can be a fantastic combination. Dom soothes his water itch today by washing his Esprit after a spirited drive with other LEO members on the winding back roads of The Garden State; his ideal Lotus activity. In addition Dom also loves spending his down time working on his or a fellow LEO's Lotus over at Atwell Haines or Jim Cumming's garage.

His perspective on life is probably quite a bit different than many of us, having seen the best and the worst of society. Dom, through his police training (he once did 92 push ups in one minute at the police academy), actually brought a woman back to life with CPR but admits, "At the end of the day the only thing that matters is going home to the people in your life that you love." ●

Request for LOG 28 Proposals

LOG 26 in Ft. Worth is in the books and LOG 27 in Aspen, August 24-27, 2007, is already set and well into the planning stages. Now is the time to start thinking about LOG 28. Is your local group just yearning to host the 2008 event in your neck of the woods? It's a big job, but a well-organized, dedicated local group can accomplish this even if you've never hosted a LOG before. Listed below are the basic components of a Lotus Owners Gathering.

Basic LOG Proposal Components

- Location
- Hotel options - available sleeping rooms & approx. room costs, banquet facilities & costs for Friday Reception, Saturday Banquet, Sunday Buffet
- Saturday Concours & Lunch
- Speaker - ideas usually to fit a theme
- Sunday scenic drive, fun rally or another activity for those not interested in the autocross
- Autocross - location
- Track day - track name, professionally managed or handled with local members
- Sponsors/Vendors
- Logo, event guide, signs, awards
- someone to do all the creative work
- PR/Communications
- Budget

While this may seem daunting at first glance, Lotus, Ltd. will work with your group, providing guidance and help where needed.

LOG has traveled many places in its 27 years and Lotus, Ltd. members have had the pleasure of sampling many parts of the country. Think about something special your group can add to the event that might influence Lotus, Ltd. to choose your proposal.

Contact Lotus, Ltd. LOG Advisor Sandy David (LotusSandy@aol.com) or call (330) 467-1074 for a LOG Proposal Template if you are interested in submitting a proposal.

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT A
PROPOSAL FOR LOG 28 IS
JANUARY 31, 2007.**