



Waterlogged VI!

"I love it when a plan comes together!"

So says television's "A-Team" leader Hannibal Smith, usually with a cigar clamped in a wide grin — and about 30 seconds before every facet of his meticulous scheme starts heading straight into the dumper.

There's a look that often comes over a person's face at a time like that, when the realization strikes that he's beginning to sink fast into deep manure. It's an expression of equal parts aggravation and exasperation, with a dose of panic mixed in. And Scott Stickle, the chairman of the Sixth Annual Lotus, Ltd. Owners Gathering, had that shell-shocked look at about one o'clock in the afternoon last September 20th.

The rain, intermittent all day, had just started to come down heavier and steadier than before, driving the participants from the casual concours area to the shelter of a nearby tent. The cookout was already late getting started, because the group that had volunteered to handle it was nowhere to be found. The first tech session was scheduled to get underway momentarily, but a trailerload of essential demonstration materials had not yet shown up. The banquet speaker was due to arrive — weather permitting — at Rutland Airport in 90 minutes, but a greeting party was still being organized. And, as the rain came down harder, the prospect of holding the banquet in a tent was becoming less and less attractive to more and more of the people huddled under it....

In truth, the club's annual meet had been quite fortunate since its start in 1981, growing to a significant size and featuring increasingly ambitious



agendas, with nary a raindrop spoiling the proceedings. But that was no consolation to the LOG VI committee. After months of preparation had been rewarded with a turnout of over 160 people and 69 Lotuses, all the carefully laid-out plans were now being hit with a "double-whammy": no let-up in the unarranged rain, and major let-downs in the prearranged support.

The rain came — and stayed — at the worst possible time. The formal schedule for LOG VI had been heavily loaded into Saturday, with Sunday (See LOG VI, page 7)

Lotus: Private in the General's Army



Cora Gregorie

The grey clouds hung low, shrouding the mountaintops, as our caravan headed south on Vermont Route 100 through the pouring rain. Club president Dan Miller led the way in his JPS-liveried Europa Twin Cam. Chris Tchorznicki was next in a brand new Caterham Seven — the top-of-the line version, with a five-speed, a de Dion rear and a \$5,000 Cosworth engine. Right behind was your editor, driving a roomy, four-door GM sedan borrowed especially for the occasion (and a clear step up from the rented Chevy Citation he drove to the 1984 meet). Eclat/Sprint tech rep Lee Armstrong, in a nice yellow example, brought up the rear.

Car and Driver has listed Route 100 among its ten best driving roads in the U.S. — and deservedly so. Such a fine road...such fine automotive machinery... such abysmal conditions! One couldn't help feeling...well...especially cursed by the weather gods this time.

Our destination was the Rutland Airport, 20 miles away, where we would be picking up Robert J. Eaton, the recently named deputy chairman of Group Lotus and the man who engineered the Lotus buyout for General Motors. He had kindly agreed, on relatively short notice, to be the banquet speaker at the

Sixth Annual Lotus, Ltd. Owners Gathering. Unfortunately, we couldn't do much about the weather — but we could damn well make sure he got a proper Lotus-enthusiast motorcade from the airport.

Just before the town of Tyson, our caravan passed, of all things, a De Lorean — a vestige of Lotus' past, streaking in the opposite direction, as we headed toward the personification of Lotus' future.

As we motored on through the rain and gloom, a phone conversation with Eaton's secretary several days earlier came to mind more than once. She had said, pointedly, that, if the runway was too short or the weather was too bad, not even the chairman of GM could order his pilots to land in violation of company policy.

The runway had been checked, and was no problem. But, as we neared the airport, it started to rain even harder.

At least, if his flight wasn't waved off at the last minute, Mr. Eaton would have his choice of an appropriate automotive conveyance....

* * *

Bob Eaton, 46, is the vice president and group executive in charge of GM's technical staffs group, a position he assumed last May after four years as vice president in charge of the company's advanced engineering staff. His areas of responsibility include GM's advanced engineering, current engineering, design and research activities, which encompass approximately 10,000 employees. Lotus, obviously, is a rather small part of his domain.

Eaton has spent his whole career with GM, joining the company after receiving his mechanical engineering degree from the University of Kansas in 1963. On his way up through the corporate ranks he worked as an engineer with Chevrolet, a research engineer, a project engineer (including a stint working on the Corvair — which, he says with a chuckle, con-

sisted mostly of preparing for lawsuits), and a design engineer.

Beginning in 1969, he held a series of engineering administration and planning positions. But eventually he returned to Chevrolet as the chief engineer for the small family car project and, subsequently, the chief engineer for corporate car programs. From 1979 to 1982, he worked with the Oldsmobile division, eventually becoming Oldsmobile's director of reliability.

When Eaton was appointed a group vice president, he also was named a member of GM's administration committee. He serves, as well, on the boards of several companies in which GM has an equity interest, including Electronic Data Systems and — as of last May — Group Lotus.

It perhaps goes with the territory that a top GM executive is going to frequently find himself personally measured against a preconceived stereotype — an image of corporate mentality that may or may not be accurate, flattering, or at all applicable to a particular individual. We found ourselves doing a little of that as we sat down for an interview with Bob Eaton an hour before the LOG VI banquet.

In fact, Eaton turned out to be an engaging, friendly, articulate, straightforward man — eager to assure Lotus fans that the unique qualities that attracted them to the marque would be preserved. As Tchorznicki later said from the banquet podium, following Eaton's departure, "Any man who comes out of an airport, and — given a choice between riding in a Europa, an Eclat, a Chevy or a Seven in a driving rainstorm — chooses the Seven, you know is a real enthusiast!"

And, it might be added, if you are what you drive, Lotus enthusiasts can take comfort in the knowledge that Bob Eaton drives a Turbo Esprit.

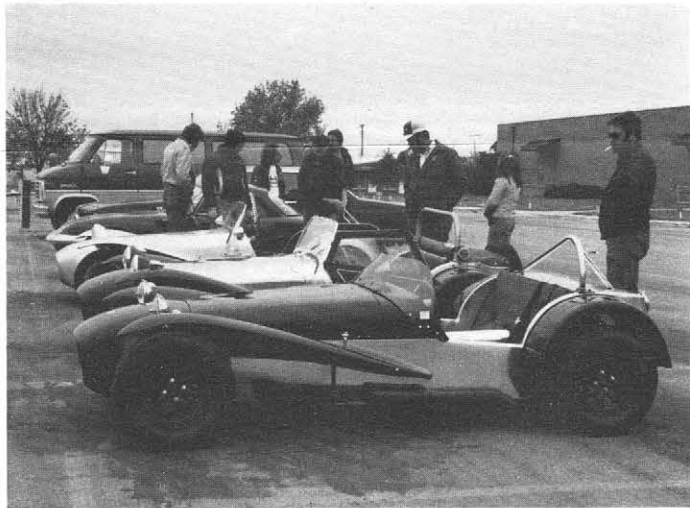
(See EATON, page 4)

COVER: Grey clouds cap the Green Mountains at LOG VI.
(Photo by Gary Visher and Kate Blizzard)

LOCALOTUS

GA. Stephen Tanguay is now serving as the local contact for Georgia members. He is at 4841 Thompson Mill Rd., Lithonia, GA 30058.

Kansas City. Bringing together local Lotus enthusiasts was the goal of a meeting organized to coincide with the last autocross of the season. Nine Lotusphiles turned up at a local eatery, despite temperatures below 40, to exchange ideas, pictures and camaraderie. After breakfast, a group of four Loti made the trip to nearby Olathe for an autocross set up by the Kansas City SCCA. Dick Carlson and Marc Nichols both put up good times in their Sevens. But the highlight had to be an Elan and three Super Sevens cruising through the crisp Midwest morning air — it was all smiles! There are plans to meet again in late January to discuss winter projects and spring plans. For information contact me at (816) 891-1000 days. — *Marc Nichols.*



Local Group Contacts

Cleveland, OH—Dan Miller, (216) 871-6306
Columbus, OH—Roger Sieling, (614) 262-8279
Detroit, MI—Norm Maasshoff, (313) 268-5076
Georgia — Stephen Tanguay, (404) 981-0861
Houston, TX—Kurt Guerdum, (713) 443-6306
Kansas City, MO/KS — Marc Nichols, (816) 891-1000 days
Minneapolis, MN—Tom Schramm, (612) 937-2337
New England—Dave Comeau, (617) 356-7342
New York City/NJ/Philadelphia, PA—Pat Dennis, (201) 334-6649
North Carolina — Mark Underwood, (919) 834-2096
Orlando, FL—Tom Gerry, (305) 862-0318
Tucson, AZ—Jeff LaVigne, (602) 795-1807
Washington, DC—Phil Mitchell, (301) 942-6059

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LOTUS reMARQUE STAFF: MARK WINSTON editor, CHUCK SIEBER photography, PHIL CANNON illustrations.

FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE, CONTACT YOUR TECH REP: JOHN GRIFFIN elan, (513) 434-4223; ROGER SIELING elan, (614) 262-8279; TERRY GAHL plus 2, (404) 928-9116; JIM SCHERER europa S1, (201) 584-1250; BOB MURRAY europa S2, (804) 276-0296; GLENN DAVIS europa S2, (703) 671-0924; LLOYD CAYES europa TC, (703) 560-4169; NORM MAASSHOFF europa TC, (313) 268-5076; DAVE PAINTER seven, (703) 690-2005; CLARK LINCOLN seven, (313) 752-6819; STAN MURAWSKI elite (new), (408) 275-1035; LEE ARMSTRONG eclat/sprint, (617) 965-1345; STANLEY BISHOP esprit, (714) 875-6800 work; CHARLIE SEABROOK esprit turbo, (609) 455-8080 work, TOM CARTER cortina, (301) 229-8386; DON SCHAEFER lotus 23, (203) 677-8453; MIKE OSTROV elite (old), (415) 232-7764; GLENN DAVIS electrics, (703) 671-0924; DAVE PAINTER fiberglass, (703) 690-2005.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

I have a 1967 Europa S1 (#306) and am interested in hearing from anyone who has successfully taken off and replaced the body on an S1. Also, the supply of rear chrome taillight bezels for the S1 (Carello 12.450.580 and 12.451.580) has apparently dried up. If someone knows of a source, there are several people who would like to know it. — *John Ernst, 2 Ellen Drive, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2W 2J8, Canada.*

THE LOTUS DOCTOR

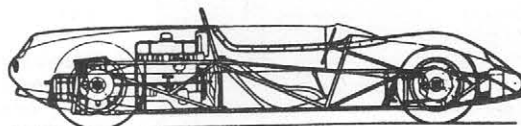
Q: I noticed the comment in the July '85 reMARQUE regarding the lubrication of the steering trunnions with oil, rather than grease. My Elan has had grease in the trunnions for 47,000 miles, under the presumption that 90-wt. was only a good idea in the UK, or some similarly cool climate, and that the desert Southwest required something a little more substantial. Has this been total folly on my part?

A: According to Chris Tchorznicki, the manual specifies oil and should be followed. He points out the trunnion operates on a gear principle, and oil—not grease—is used to lubricate gears.

Q: I am trying to find out who else, other than BBS or Gotti, makes wheels for a 1977 Esprit. Depending on the price, I still haven't determined whether or not to go to 15", although I would like to. Can you help? Panasports for a Europa would not work, would they?

A: The Europa Panasports will not work, but there are some other alternatives that will. Compatible fronts are easy to find, since the Esprit has a 100mm four-bolt circle. The rears, however, with opposite offset 20mm wider, are another matter.

Two wheels that fit the Esprit, besides BBS and Gotti, are Epsilon and Compomotive. All four of these brands are three-piece modulars, which are fine for the rear, but may not be as true as a one-piece wheel on the front. Campagnola makes an excellent one-piece wheel for the front, but a Campagnola for the rear would have to be specially made up. Another alternative, of course, would be to mix brands, if that does not offend you aesthetically.



Happy Holidays

Id. Enterprises
parts for Lotus

p.o. box 239
5090 durham road
gardenville, pa. 18926
(215) 766-0460

PARTS & TECH

"Tri-cornered" Lucas lights. Club member Foster Cooperstein passes word that Lucas P700 and PL700 headlamps, as used in the Sixties, can now be obtained from The Vintage and Classic Car Spares Co., Unit 43, Martlebury Trading Estate, Martlebury, Worcestershire DY10 4JB, England, phone (0299) 251353. Price: about £30 each.

Rain-X. If you haven't tried it yet, this product is well worth the money. Applied to a clean windshield, it causes rain to bead up and run off. Bugs and frost come off more easily, too. One member has claimed he can drive fast with it in a heavy rain at night without using his wipers. (He did not explain why he, or anyone else, would want to do that.)

CD ignitions. One member with a '72 Elan Sprint installed a Speedotron CD with ignition cutout because of problems with misfiring, rough running in winter, the expense of a distributor rotor with ignition cutout, and having to frequently adjust the points in a difficult location. The Speedotron had an ignition cutout, which allowed him to use a standard Lucas rotor in the distributor. It still used the points, but with no further problem—4-1/2 years and 35,000 miles on the same set. The point spring has to have weakened some, although he hasn't had any point float. (Dave Painter notes that the same comments apply to many other units besides the Speedotron.)



At the Sixth Annual Lotus, Ltd. Owners Gathering, General Motors group vice president Robert Eaton, who is also the deputy chairman of Group Lotus, recounted how the Lotus buyout came about.

GM's involvement with Lotus started in 1982, according to Eaton, when it became the first car company to sign on with Lotus' active suspension development program. That project has continued since then, and the GM-Lotus relationship has expanded substantially into additional areas over the years.

"We were very enthused with those people we met and worked with on active suspension, on composites, on engines, on all the areas we were doing business in," said Eaton. But that is not what galvanized the buyout plan.

Eaton met Lotus managing director Mike Kimberley for the first time in 1983. The meeting was set up by a man named Bill Milliken, a former head of Cornell Aeronautical Laboratories and an authority on vehicle dynamics, who was helping Lotus line up engineering consultancy business.

"Mike tried to interest me in purchasing some equity," Eaton recalled, "but I told him that, really, I wasn't interested." He added, "[Lotus] obviously was very anxious to do business with us, and there wasn't anything obvious we could gain by having [a minority] equity position that we couldn't gain by just being a good customer. So we just said no." Although Kimberley did not identify the seller of the shares in question at the time, it turned out he was trying to help Hazel Chapman liquidate her interest in the company.

"Sometime later," Eaton said, "Mike came back again. He was in town, and just dropped by for a courtesy call. Again, I told him that there really wasn't any interest [in purchasing Lotus equity], but that, if it ever got to the point that there was a substantial portion of the stock for sale, or that they had problems, that we were very interested in the company and we'd at least consider it."

A big chunk of Group Lotus stock did indeed eventually come up for sale. The Lotus shares controlled by David Wickins and J.C. Bamford, amounting to more than 48% of the company's stock, became available in late 1985. And, by this time, GM was accounting for fully half of Lotus' engineering consultancy business.

"Because of the conversations I'd had with

Mike," Eaton said, "they didn't really come to us first. I got the first call that the stock might be available on a portable car phone, sitting in a parking lot in Detroit, in the snow, three days before Christmas."

The call was from Alan Curtis, who was then Lotus' deputy chairman. "From what he was telling me," said Eaton, "there was going to be almost a majority position in the stock, and therefore we might lose the availability of [Lotus as a] resource if it went the wrong way. So I said I'd like to think about it."

The next day, Eaton happened to run into GM chairman Roger Smith, and asked him what he thought. Smith said to go ahead, so Eaton called Curtis back and said he'd like to sit down and talk.

It was no-go. Curtis told him that he was no longer free to talk, that another company had been given an exclusive agreement to try to conclude a deal by January 6th. If no deal was concluded by that date, he told Eaton, he'd be happy to reopen the discussion.

"So I went ahead on Christmas holiday and forgot about it," said Eaton.

About January 6th, Curtis was on the phone again to say that a deal wasn't yet completed, but that the deadline had been extended. He told Eaton he could talk to him on January 12th. Eaton said he would plan to be there.

"When we called to make the arrangements," recalled Eaton, "[Curtis] wanted to put us in a certain hotel. But, right at the last minute, he changed the hotel. Well, they had two or three different people in town at the same time, and they were shuffling them from hotel to hotel."

At the point Eaton flew to England, he had never met Curtis, Wickins or Bamford. But, when the meeting came, he was ready to deal.

"We told them right off that we would be talking seriously; if we made a commitment, we expected that they would stick to any commitment they made in return — that we did not want to get into any kind of bidding war," Eaton said. "Within hours after we met with them, we agreed on price and we signed an agreement right then, subject to due diligence." (Due diligence is the process of confirming a company's condition by checking its status with respect to such things as the books, taxes and lawsuits.)

"The other companies that were involved had the opportunity," Eaton declared. "They just didn't quite get their acts together fast enough."

Before the deal was announced and the papers were signed, Eaton met with Hazel Chapman. "She was [no longer] a substantial shareholder at that time," Eaton said, "but she and Colin [had been] the heart of the company. We wanted to make sure she knew what was going on, and that she, to the extent possible, agreed with that. We have kept in touch since." He added, "A number of important things had occurred, such as taking ACBC out of the Lotus logo; I told her we were going to restore that, and also restore Colin's picture to the lobby and the boardroom. She was very, very pleased about that."

By January 21st, arrangements had been concluded far enough to hold a wrap-up session and schedule an announcement. Eaton had prearranged to have the money wired directly into the shareholders' accounts. The deal was signed and sealed.

Eaton said, "What allowed General Motors to do it, and kept the other companies from doing it, was that we did it in a very short amount of time — something people would probably not have expected from GM and our reputation."

GM was able to pick up another 10% shareholding from a London investment banker at the time of the buyout, for an initial 58% stake. Under British law, a company that acquires more than 29% of another must extend an offer to purchase the remaining outstanding shares under the same terms, so GM did that in February. With the acquisition of shares from the public, and with Toyota subsequently tendering its 21% shareholding, General Motors steadily increased its position over the following months. By the end of August, GM owned 90%, and the rest of the shares could legally be called in.

"As long as [Lotus] was going to remain a separate, independent company, and its services were available to us, we had absolutely no interest in getting involved," Eaton reiterated. "But once it became clear to us that it was going to change hands, and at least 48% of the stock was going to end up [with] another automobile manufacturer, we didn't want that to happen."

(EATON, from page 1)

LOTUS reMARQUE: Let's begin with a basic question in the minds of many Lotus enthusiasts. If General Motors bought Group Lotus primarily for its engineering expertise, how committed is GM to Lotus as a maker of unique enthusiast cars?

ROBERT EATON: We're totally committed to that. We believe very strongly that Lotus' background is what has attracted the people who are there now. We want to continue that same tradition — not only because we have a great respect for it, but because it will be the basis for an expansion of the operation. The way I said it, when we made the purchase, is that the purchase really insures that. The direction the company was going, due to the lack of availability of capital, was in the direction of becoming an engineering company. They were — and are, in fact — losing money on cars. The previous owner — specifically J.C. Bamford and David Wickins — simply were not ready to put in the capital necessary to do new product, and that's the fundamental reason their shares were put on the market. Had we — or somebody else — not come in, in fact they would have become an engineering company over time. We bought Lotus with the idea that we would have to put a substantial amount of money into it; we are doing that; we are totally dedicated; and their future as an enthusiast car builder is assured.

LR: In terms of capital investment, Lotus historically has been able to get a model in production for very, very little money, compared to what it would take for GM to do the same thing. Is Lotus going to be able to continue to operate that way, or is that unrealistic? Will the scale of operations change?

RE: Oh, no! The scale doesn't change, the money required hasn't changed, the management doesn't change, the people don't change. Nothing changes — except now, they have the capital available to do it the way they want to do it, which they absolutely didn't have before.

LR: We're thinking, for example, of the X100 project, which has been back and forth to the drawing boards and kicked around for quite awhile. At one time, Lotus was talking about putting that car into production for on the order of \$6-9 million. When they come to you, now, are they talking in terms of that kind of money, or are there even more basic kinds of capital investment they need before they can produce that kind of model — or any other model?

RE: Both. They are putting money into building expansions, which were started before we purchased Lotus, and those will be continued. Buildings, engineering facilities and the fundamental tools and equipment to build cars — all of them require investment.

LR: With the tooling Lotus has had and the way they have been producing cars, we're told that they would really have to go to a whole different standard of machinery to up the standard of their product.

RE: To some extent, that's true. When you're doing things by hand, which they really are, there is a limitation on the quality — if you're going to do it at a cost you can afford. Despite what we think about things being hand-crafted, when you're talking about things as complex as automobiles, additional tooling can without question increase the quality and reliability. But Lotus recognizes that. If [CEO] Mike Kimberley were here today, he would be saying that's the biggest thing they've got to do. We're well aware that that's not really the heritage of Lotus — that Colin Chapman was an innovator, an engineer, and once an idea got into produc-

tion he lost a lot of the interest. And quality and reliability were among those things not at the top of his list, as opposed to going on to the next new idea. Mike has made significant gains in that area. For example, in 1985 the warranty costs went down about 25%; they're still absolutely horrendous, when you look at it from the standpoint of a large-scale manufacturer. But getting that down is a high priority of his, and in some cases that will mean more tooling and investment. Still, we're not talking about any order-of-magnitude difference.

LR: The arrangement between GM and Lotus has been characterized as one of minimal reporting. Do they come to you, say what they want to do, and, if you like it, you give them the go-ahead and the money? How does it work in reality?

RE: The reality is probably exactly the opposite of what people may think is happening — and even what Mike expected. When he calls and says, "What about this?", my most common answer to him is, "What the hell are you asking me for? If you think you've got to do it, go do it!"

Mike and I have gotten to the point where he's not coming to me with very many things. Initially — and it was just a part of getting accustomed to each other — he was calling me every day, at least. Now I don't talk to him very often. We have established a line of credit for him, in England — which, of course, he didn't have before — so he can go get money when he needs it to operate the business. He's obviously operating to a business plan, but I have to say this: At this point, he's beating the plan. He's doing better than we projected when we made the purchase. Why would we want to interfere?

I'm going over [September 29th] for the first board meeting. I expect we'll have two board meetings a year; liking to go to auto shows, I think one of them will probably be timed to the Paris or Frankfurt show, the other to the Geneva or Turin show. That's how often I'm going to go, and I don't expect to be over there any more often than that.

There is *nobody* from GM there — and there won't be. We have no intentions of putting anybody into the organization. Originally, we felt we were going to — I had full intentions of putting a financial guy over there. But the relationship works such that we don't have anybody over there and we don't intend to put anybody over there. I get a two-page monthly report, and that is all the reporting that I or General Motors require — two pages a month. It's got sales and cash flow and profits and how much he's borrowed. It's got four columns: last month, plan and actual; year-to-date, plan and actual. That's all the reporting going on — a very straightforward, simple sort of deal.

LR: How big can you envision Lotus eventually becoming?

RE: Not very big. I've given Mike only a couple of directions. One of them is, I've put a limitation on growth. He's a pretty aggressive guy. He's got all this business coming to him, and he wants to do it. But I've told him, "Hell, no, turn it away." We bought a company with a strong engineering heritage and a very dedicated, creative bunch of guys. And if you expand and lose that, you've absolutely destroyed what you've bought — and, therefore, the investment. We can go buy an engineering house anywhere in the world we want; there are all kinds of them in Detroit, in London, in Frankfurt — all over the world. That's not what we wanted. We wanted those people and that heritage, and what brought that whole thing

together over a lot of years. If we expand the thing too much, we'll lose that.

We don't intend to ever go into volume production, either. In our wildest thoughts, we've talked as high as 5,250 vehicles — some day. That's seven times what they're doing today.

LR: If that's so, then, compared to the other things they do, vehicles are not going to be regarded as a particularly big moneymaker for Lotus. Will car building have to justify itself as a profit center — or will building vehicles be regarded as something that keeps them on the cutting edge, technologically, and if they happen to make money, fine?

RE: I guarantee you we didn't buy Lotus to make money. No matter how you look at it, a company of that size, you lose it in the round-off when you look at GM's sales and profits. You can't even find it. So that's absolutely not significant. That's not one of the objectives.

Now, we don't intend to pump money in forever, either. Mike clearly understands, by golly, that he's got to make the operation pay for itself. But, if it turns out that we can't make any significant money on the vehicles, but the engineering gives us a half-decent return, we'll be more than happy.

I don't believe that the company can survive as strictly an engineering company. The car part of it is an absolutely key part of what we felt we were buying and what I think is there.

LP: What kind of capital are you thinking of putting into the company over the next few years?

RE: Mike's five-year plan will be discussed and probably approved at the upcoming board meeting, and that's one of the issues that will be discussed. It's not going to be major, on the one hand, but it's going to be on the order of magnitude of what we paid. [GM paid about \$33 million for Lotus. — Ed.]

LR: When you looked at the Lotus business plan as it existed when you came to the company, what did you see as its strengths and weaknesses? Were there any situations where the management and the ownership were pulling in the same — or different — directions, and you, as the new owner, had to come in and tell them to do something a certain way?

RE: There were absolutely no significant changes in the direction of the company. The difference is, they had a bunch of plans, but absolutely no way to accomplish them. There wasn't ever going to be an X100 until somebody came in there with lots of money. There wasn't ever going to be an Etna. There wasn't ever going to be any of those vehicles. Now, that's not to say that the management team wasn't doing everything that they could possibly do to get the capital; it was real in their minds, but there was no way to accomplish it. And that's really what caused the shares to come up for sale. The owners of the shares were perfectly happy to let it become an engineering company. The management of Lotus absolutely didn't want to do that; they continually were pressing to do the X100, they were announcing things they were trying to accomplish — but nobody was coming forth with the money, and there was no way they could accomplish them. Finally, Wickins and Bamford, in lieu of putting all that money in, decided to sell their shares.

LR: They certainly did have deep enough pockets, if they really had wanted to do it...

RE: They did.

LR: ...but, obviously, they had gone as far as they wanted to go.

RE: They'd gone as far as they wanted to go, and they'd about tripled their money. So why

take all that profit and plow it back into the company when they weren't sure?

LR: We've heard one version of how the buyout came about...

RE: It's almost a little bit of an intrigue. [See separate story. — Ed.]

LR: Who did you outbid? We heard Chrysler was a bidder. Who was the other?

RE: Well...we didn't outbid anybody.

LR: Supposedly, the first duty of management is to maximize shareholder value. If you didn't outbid anybody, that includes Toyota — which reportedly wasn't even aware of the sale until after the fact. Maybe the bottom line was that Lotus didn't want to be owned by a Japanese firm, period. But why did that situation evolve the way it did, regarding Toyota? Or is that the reason?

RE: That's the reason. They didn't want to be owned by a Japanese company. That's a fact.

LR: How many of the Lotus shares, at this point, does GM have?

RE: One hundred percent.

LR: Does that mean we never again get to see a public report of how Lotus is doing?

RE: That's what it means! It's no longer a public company at all.

LR: Are you GM's link to Lotus? With Lotus seemingly such a small speck in the GM universe, can you do what you want, or do you have to turn around and justify to someone else what you're doing?

RE: Well, anything substantial, from the financial standpoint, has to go through the financial staff. If it's big enough, it goes to our executive committee and finance committee. But, basically, it doesn't go beyond me. We're making sure we don't get Lotus involved in any of the GM systems — that's why two pages a month are all the reporting we require of them. They're not into the GM budget system, they're not under GM's benefits, they're not under GM's payroll system, they're not under GM's anything. Autonomy is the name of the game. Nobody can even go over there without checking with my office. We really are trying to keep them isolated.

LR: What are the prospects of Lotus doing manufacturing in Holland or elsewhere outside Hethel?

RE: Mike's got some pretty aggressive plans for the next five years. He's a keen businessman, and he'd like to get as much of that covered with outside money as he can. So he's talked with the Irish government, he's talked with The Netherlands, and he's talked to the U.K. They've all made proposals to him as to what they'd be willing to do if he would locate in their area — not that we'd ever expect to move what we've got from Hethel, but some of his expansion plans might put some of the new stuff there. Neither I, nor anyone else over here, has been any part of that at all — that's strictly Mike, on his own. If I had to bet, I'd bet he'll remain in the U.K., and not too far from Hethel.

LR: Obviously, given the shape of England's economy, you'd think those would be the kind of jobs they'd really want to keep.

RE: Absolutely correct. Part of the problem is that the U.K. government would like very much to give Mike all kinds of incentives to go into places like Brighton, where they've got all kinds of bad unemployment. But he's got a very, very good relationship with his workforce — much, much different than the average English company. He has no unions; he's got an association of employees within the plant, but they have no ties outside whatsoever. He hasn't had any kind of work stoppage since

1969; they've gotten over that years ago. That's just not true in the traditionally heavy-industry portion of the UK — and the GM plants over there. We're a lot better off than we used to be, but we had as many as 13 different unions in one plant; there was always one of them on strike. So, Mike has very good relationships, and he is kind of reluctant to go into some of the areas they'd like him to go into.

LR: Are you satisfied with the Lotus distribution network as it exists in the U.S.? Or will it have to change in some way — perhaps be integrated with the GM dealer network?

RE: The current level of sales in this country is a significant concern. To design and certify and tool a vehicle for this market is very expensive. We are quite concerned with being able to continue that with the current level of sales, but we're working with the current distributor to try to attack that. We have no plans to align Lotus with any of GM's U.S. divisions. We expect Lotus to remain independently distributed.

LR: Aside from the capital standpoint, the X100 project, quite uncharacteristically for Lotus, has gone around the track three or four times over the past few years. For them, it's taken a rather long time to come to fruition. Obviously, the company has had to weather severe problems during that time, but there's the impression, also, that the car has been almost "committed" to death and redesigned several different times, to the point where perhaps they're not sure what they want or what they're doing anymore.

RE: I don't think that's correct at all. It's really the lack of capital that you see. If you or I had something sitting around — a design for a car or a house or anything else that you can't afford to go forth with — you're going to continue to dabble with it and make some changes. That's exactly what's been happening, and nothing really beyond that.

LR: So you're saying the delays have been purely the direct result of a lack of capital?

RE: Sure.

LR: Then why has the car recently been delayed once again? Are they going back to the drawing board for another redesign? At the point you came in, did you want to take another fresh look?

RE: We haven't asked that they change one single thing, other than we felt they ought to update the appearance a little bit — simply because the appearance was getting a little dated, because it had been sitting there waiting for capital, and that hadn't come along. Mike's also looking at the powertrain. Other than that, the car's going right along. The overall concept, the overall design, the chassis, the suspension — there aren't any changes at all, that I'm aware of.

LR: If there's a change of powertrain, would that mean a change from Toyota to something from GM?

RE: Mike's got total freedom to go anywhere in the world and get any powerplant he wants. We would be perfectly happy for him to continue with the Toyota engine. They're a rather significant partner of ours, and we're selling a heck of a lot of Toyota powerplants right now!

LR: If Mike makes a decision to go a different way on the powertrain, would that put the car back even beyond the announced 1989 launch date?

RE: The critical path item is getting the appearance settled, so they can get going on the body. The powertrain is not the critical path item.

LR: Is Toyota still interested in selling Lotus

the engine?

RE: A little noncommittal.

LR: They might not be too happy, with the way things have developed.

RE: I think there's no question about that.

LR: Is Lotus going to have to go to some new kind of tooling they don't presently have to get the X100 into production?

RE: There are some new things in it, yes.

LR: The Turbo Esprit is currently the only U.S. Lotus model, while the X100 is slated for 1989 and the Etna "supercar" is farther down the road. What is the likelihood of seeing significant additions or changes to the Lotus model range, in addition to those — and particularly before those, given that the Turbo Esprit has been around for quite a while now? When the current distributor was formed, they were promised a normally aspirated Esprit that they never got...

RE: Well, they promised substantially more volume than they ever delivered, too!

LR: ...and, we've been told, the Excel is not an economically viable proposition for the U.S. market. Is Lotus going to continue basically with what they've got until the X100 comes along, or have they got more things they hope to produce?

RE: They've got more things they hope to produce.

LR: Anything you can tell us about?

RE: No.

LR: Anything you can hint about?

RE: No.

LR: Group Lotus and Team Lotus have always been separate entities, but the two have obviously cross-fertilized over time. Do you see your Lotus tie-in evolving into some sort of GM participation and support on the racing front?

RE: I would hope so.

LR: How do you feel about the Honda engine being used by Team Lotus next year?

RE: (laughing) That hurt! But, on the other hand, it's the best engine — and, well, it's pretty hard to argue against it, from that standpoint. I believe there's absolutely no question they have the best chassis, and they've got the best driver. Maybe [Ayrton Senna] needs just a little more experience, compared to some of the other guys, but he's getting there. They've been way, way short on engines; on consumption, they've had to turn the turbo power down to get it to finish. I think they're going to be damn near unbeatable.

LR: The fact that Team Lotus carries the same name as the car company, regardless of whether there's actually any cross-involvement or not, is bound to reflect on GM. Given GM's historic — though recently less — ambivalence about being openly identified with racing activities, what is the attitude of the people in GM as to what happens there? You just said, for example, that Team Lotus' choice of the Honda engine "hurt".

RE: Sure it did, obviously. GM upper management — chairman Roger Smith, and our president, Jim McDonald — have been over at Team Lotus. We might well have been involved in sponsorship, had it not been for the Honda engine. I guess the way I want to put it is that they are completely open; I have discussed it with them, and they're completely open to future sponsorship at some later time.

LR: If, all of a sudden, Lotus' major sponsor, John Player, weren't around, and Honda pulled out, and Team Lotus were really starting to look around for heavy-duty dollars in near-term sponsorship and support, would GM be an obvious possibility?

RE: We'd sure look at it awfully seriously. ●

LOG VI

CASUAL CONCOURS D'ÉLÉGANCE

Best in Show:

Dick & Sandy Wilson (1960 Elite S2)

Esprit:

1st—Robert Cattle (1985 Turbo Esprit)
2nd—Mark Terlecky (1983 Turbo Esprit)

Eclat/Elite:

1st—Phil & Ruth Connaught (1980 Elite)
2nd—Bob & Ann Bandera (1976 Eclat)

Europa:

1st—Tom Smith (1971 Europa S2)
2nd—Pierre Belhumeur (1970 Europa S2)
3rd—Peter Marie (1973 Europa Twin Cam)

Elan:

1st—Janice Ferretti (1971 Elan S4)
2nd—Dave & Terry Lebrun (1969 Elan S4)
3rd—Greg & Francoise Webber (1967 Elan S3 SE)

Plus 2:

1st—Russell Newton (1971 Plus 2)
2nd—Geoffrey & Sharon Stein (1967 Plus 2)

Seven:

1st—Karl Darby (1962 Seven S2)
2nd—Michael & Rose Snowden (Super Seven)

Miscellaneous:

1st — Dick & Sandy Wilson (1960 Elite S2)

AUTOCROSS

Fastest Time of Day: Will Burnham (43.14 sec.)

Fastest Damsel of Day: Bobbi Windham (56.52)

Fastest Stock Lotus: Ken Sherman (43.60)

Fastest Prepared Lotus: Dave Watson (44.93)

Fastest Modified Lotus: Glenn Grainger (46.10)

Fastest Novice Elan: Gary Windham (48.10)

Fastest Novice Europa: Rosti Sorochnyskyj (48.27)

OTHER AWARDS

Best Color Lotus Photo: Will Burnham

Best Black-and-white Lotus Photo: Sue Smith

Liar's Essay Contest: Scott Stickle and Kurt von Leyser (tie)

Longest Distance: Ken Sherman (Palm Beach, FL)

Hard Luck: Claude Gagne

...AND ATTABOYS/ATTAGIRLS/ ATTAPERSONS TO...

the following people who helped LOG VI chairman Scott Stickle with various aspects of the event: Dan Miller, Rae Hatin and her family, Cora Gregorie, Sue and Jacques Smith, Bill Colom, Lee Armstrong, Chris Tchorznicki, Gary Visser, Kate Blizzard, Will Burnham, Kathy von Leyser, Ray Psulkowski, Jason Marchaux and his autocross colleagues, Carl Meade, Nigel Halliday, Roger Sieling, Vic Moore, Lee Baker, Bob Eaton, Mark Winston, and everyone else who helped out here and there during the weekend.



Salt Ash provided great lodging in a rustic setting.



A flying pylon cost Dan Miller the autocross FTD.



Ken Sherman drove 1700 miles to attend — and garnered two trophies.



Raindrops keep fallin' on my...Lotus garden?

Gary Visser/Kate Blizzard

Gary Visser/Kate Blizzard

Gary Visser/Kate Blizzard

Gary Visser/Kate Blizzard

(LOG VI, from page 1)

left largely unstructured, so that participants could enjoy the various attractions of Vermont's Green Mountains. But the rain started before the end of the Saturday morning autocross, and the sun was not really seen again until people started heading home Sunday afternoon.

The weather, not surprisingly, tended to magnify the glitches that inevitably accompany an event of this size and complexity, but most people (not all, unfortunately) tried to make the best of the situation. People renewed acquaintances from annual meets past, and made new ones. When the rain let up slightly from time to time, many folks grabbed wet-weather gear and dodged raindrops to return to view the Lotus lineup. Rae Hatin's family, who had dropped by to see her and were not involved with the club at all, graciously let themselves be pressed into service, and the cookout finally got underway. After some schedule reshuffling, several seminars were held through the afternoon — under cover or indoors — and drew considerable interest: Nigel Halliday from England's Club Lotus gave the British perspective of the marque, Chris Tchorznicki of Sevens and Elans presented a history of the Lotus Seven, Elan tech rep Roger Sieling showed how to adjust the valves on a twin cam engine, Scott Stickle and Lee Baker demonstrated fiberglass repair techniques, and Vic Moore of Spyder gave a talk on Lotus suspensions.

At the autocross in Rutland, the rain, which started before the third run, turned a rather slick, treated-asphalt surface into a near-impossible challenge. There were a couple of spinouts, with Gary Visser executing a particular crowd-pleaser. Although Will Burnham in a Seven took FTD, Ken Sherman did a noteworthy job of throwing his relatively big Turbo Esprit around the tight course at the redline to take Fastest Stock.

Unfortunately, the rain was not the only major, first-time problem to strike LOG VI. The hassles with the weather and the no-show volunteers were compounded by numerous shortcomings in Salt Ash Resort's support of the event, most notably with respect to the Saturday night banquet.

As club president Dan Miller stated in a stinging, postevent letter to the facility's management, "The banquet was a big disappointment to all....We were shown pictures of tents...and assured by you that [we] 'won't even know it's a tent'. We talked of hanging flowers, chandeliers, flooring (or at least astroturf) and heating. What we received was 'construction-site,' decor, complete with 'trouble lights' strung around the inside — and the damn thing leaked like a sieve!" Miller also cited significant problems with the cocktail hour, the menu and the service, and concluded, "We expected a first-class presentation and received a mediocre banquet made worse by the tent and the weather." The resort subsequently agreed to a \$467 adjustment in the club's bill, which, according to Miller, "hardly compensate[d] for the poor service."

One presentation at the banquet that was first-class was made by Bob Eaton, the deputy chairman of Group Lotus, who flew in from Detroit for the casual concours and the dinner. The rain had dissipated the concours turnout substantially by the time Eaton arrived, but it did lighten up enough for him to slog around and inspect the cars that remained. Later, by all accounts, the banquet setting and the weather did not dampen the enthusiasm with which his message of fervent support for Lotus was received.

The problems of LOG VI also apparently did not dampen the enthusiasm for next year's annual meet. As we go to press, three proposals have already been received from groups wishing to stage the event, which portends well for its success.

In looking back on 1986, however, while those who were there largely appreciated the autocross, the cars, the seminars, the speech, the setting, the scenery, the fine lodging and the camaraderie, what they'll remember most is: the deluge.

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WANTED: 1973 Elan Sprint, convertible/coupe, any condition considered. Paul Pellerin, (203) 673-1467 eves (CT).

FOR SALE: 1965 Elan S2 and 1971 Elan coupe (Weber head). Jim Donnelly, (312) 635-8833 home, (312) 372-3215 work.

FOR SALE: 1960 Elite, series II, stage II. Excellent condition, many new items. \$12,900. Bob Pennell, 2496 Timothy Knoll, Poland, OH 44514, (216) 757-2234.

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WANTED: Project formula car, such as Lotus 41, 51 or 61. More interested in complete cars, even if disassembled, but also looking for various engine and suspension pieces, gauges, wheels. Bill Kenney, 9625 King George Drive, Manassas, VA 22110, (703) 335-1469.

FOR SALE: 1970 Europa S2, runs and looks good. \$4,995 O.B.O. Kirk, (216) 456-2126 (OH).

FOR SALE: Westfield Eleven, built 1984 with factory-assembled chassis, less than 500 mi. on rebuilt 1225. Weber, special headers, cam, red/grey/polished aluminum. Fully adjustable suspension with coil-over Spax, new Minilite lookalikes and Semperits. *LOTUS reMARQUE* cover car. \$5,500. Chuck, (703) 734-9420 or Larry, (703) 448-7455 (VA).

FOR SALE: Lotus twin cam engine, Webers, 6-bolt, new water pump and timing chain, stock and solid, \$1,500; sintered metallic clutch and ultralightweight flywheel, F3 type to suit twin cam, \$120. Chuck, (703) 734-9420 (VA).

FOR SALE: 1963 Lotus Super Seven, 1340cc Cosworth, close-ratio gearbox, suspension upgrades. Ex-road race car with street equipment, all hydraulics rebuilt, needs cosmetics. \$5,500. Jerry Fink, (215) 566-3891 (PA).

FOR SALE: Lotus semiclose-ratio gearbox with Elan bellhousing, rebuilt, \$350 or possible exchange. Jerry Fink, (215) 566-3891 (PA).

WANTED: Lotus 61M Formula Ford original body part. Looking for the section that goes over the rear and covers the engine and finishes off the wedge look. James Petrocik, 1678 Hickory Hill Rd., Petersburg, VA 23803.

FOR SALE: 1969 Elan Plus 2, white, body newly stripped and painted, 6,200 mi. on rebuilt engine, Weber carbs. Ten years of receipts and shop manual. David, (519) 735-6816 (ON).

FOR SALE: Eclat, #76040134E, 41,000 mi., excellent cosmetics inside and out, red with flat black spoilers, louvers. Second in class at LOG VI concours. Chassis has no rust, all rebushed, new u-joints and bearings at rear, zero play up front, alloy wheels, two new P6s. Engine strong, with Cosworth pistons, E cams, Webers, lightened flywheel, Stebro exhaust, 4-speed trans. Also has A/C, Blaupunkt Berliner, cover, shop manual, spares. \$13,500. Bob and Ann Bandera, (203) 285-4230 days, (203) 763-1589 eves (CT).

FOR SALE: 1960 Elite S2 parts—Rogalite transmission tunnel cover, battery cover, single carb intake, exhaust manifolds. Bob Pennell, 2496 Timothy Knoll, Poland, OH 44514, (216) 757-2234 (leave message) or (216) 757-0372.

FOR SALE: 1972 Europa TC, #2044R, 3,500 mi. on engine rebuild. Becker radio, new Michelins, adjustable rear link, rebuilt Strombergs, all-new ignition. Needs shocks, minor body work, repainting, inner and outer hub bearings on both rear wheels, may need master cylinder. Has been garaged since 1983, started and serviced regularly. \$3,000. Paul Marini, 25 Millstone, Marlborough, CT 06447, (203) 295-0195 or 633-4681.

WANTED: For Europa Special — rear luggage insert, all air cleaner parts except airbox. Rob Dillon, 955 Milton St., Pittsburgh, PA 15218, (412) 243-0326.

WANTED: Dead Esprit, trashed or crashed, wrecked, burned or otherwise. Will travel anywhere for low-budget project. Russ, (401) 723-9132 eves, (401) 438-8250 days (RI).

WANTED: One cylinder sleeve from J-H or 907 Lotus engine in good condition; also one Weber 40DCOE with linkage for R-16 Europa. Brian LaMoure, 708 - 8th Ave., Helena, MT 59601, (406) 443-4308 eves.

FOR SALE: Used 1500cc push-rod engine from 1962 Lotus Seven, has scored cylinder wall and needs one piston, one connecting rod and camshaft. Includes manifold for twin Webers. Will sell whole for \$1,500 or part out. Tom, (201) 529-5253 eves (NJ).

FOR SALE: Lotus alloy wheels for Caterham Seven or other cars with 4-1/4" bolt circle. Will not fit Europa or Lotus Sevens. Best offer. Tom, (201) 529-5253 eves (NJ).

FOR SALE: Used parts for S2 Europa, in good condition unless otherwise noted — seat belt, \$5; two interior door panels, with speaker cutouts, \$10 ea.; two face-level vents, \$5 ea.; front bumper, small dent but usable, \$15; rear bumper, \$20; front wire mesh grille, \$5; custom sun roof, blue plexiglass, two halves to maintain structural integrity, \$50; two sun visors, \$1 ea.; ash tray, \$3; defroster nozzle trim, two, \$0.50 ea.; door handle trim, four, \$0.25 ea.; instrument binnacle, fair, \$1; Ambla seat insert cover, only for bottom section, \$4; rear window trim, \$4; upper windshield trim, inside, \$0.50; throttle cable, \$1; choke cable, \$1; clutch and brake pedal pads, like new, \$0.50 ea.; large front frame access grommet, \$0.50; exhaust downpipe, \$2; washer fluid bag, \$1; driver's-side taillight lens, \$3; passenger's-side taillight lens, without clear reverse, \$1; '63-'72 world championship constructor badge and holder, \$2; complete lock set (2 doors, hood, trunk and ignition), \$15; L-O-T-U-S letter set, \$1; two front amber lenses, \$1 ea.; two red side marker lamp assemblies, \$5/pair; two amber side marker lamp assemblies, \$5/pair; right front nose section, new, \$300; driver's-side window frame, \$20. All shipping extra. Tom, (201) 529-5253 eves (NJ).

FOR SALE: Elan S2/S3 outboard drive shafts, \$100/pair; S1/S2 screen rubber, \$10; S3 wiring harness, \$50; two Stromberg carbs, \$80/pair; set of head bolts, \$50; S1/S2 door hardware; Cortina 1600 engine. Brice Faller, 19-P Scenic Dr., Croton, NY 10520, (914) 332-0222 x 236 days, 271-6256 eves.

FOR SALE: 1977 Esprit, yellow/beige, low miles, E cams, twin Webers, Euro-T/As. \$14,000. Bruce Hill, (614) 451-5393.

WANTED: One Cosmic alloy wheel for 1972 Europa. C. Phillips, 12008 Greenwalk, Creve Coeur, MO 63146, (314) 432-8454.

WANTED: Original single 40DCOE Weber intake manifold for Lotus 1500 cc Super Seven. Woody Adams, (605) 578-3526.

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