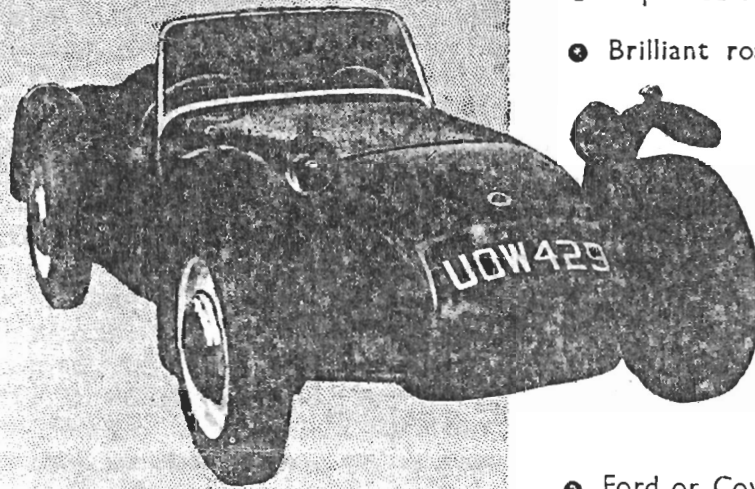


LOTUS lines

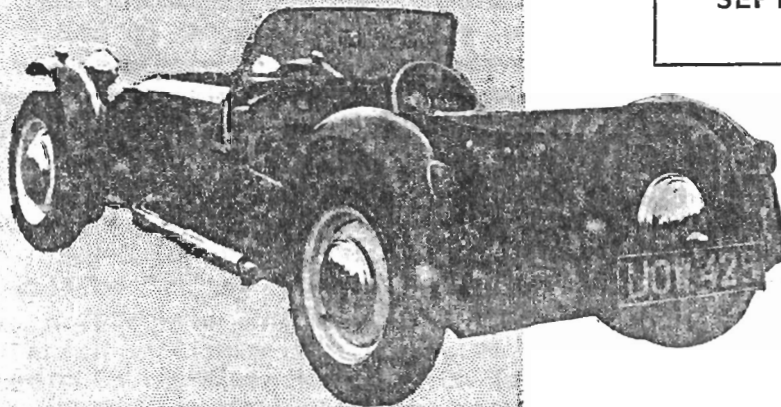
NEWSLETTER NUMBER ONE FOR 1985
January-February 1985

EVERGREEN LOTUS Car Club
3010 132nd Ave. SE
Snohomish, WA 98290

LOTUS



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SPECIFICATION

Multi-tubular space frame with integral light weight aluminium panels. Independent front suspension by wishbone and combined damper-helical spring units.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Terry Elmore

Well, what can I say? I was actually hoping to have this issue out early, before the January 1st deadline I'd set, but instead I'm over three weeks late. Various things, like our busy season at work (for those of you that don't know, I'm a UPS driver), a fall resulting in a couple broken ribs, and the purchase of yet another non-running Lotus, have combined to all but eliminate any spare time to sit down and get an issue written and in the mail. But, I'm getting some time off, in that I've got jury duty for the month of February, so maybe we can get an issue out on time, i.e. the next issue is due out by the First of March, so if you have any submissions please get them to me no later than the third week in February.

My latest acquisition is Alan Orr's Elan. Alan unfortunately suffered a garage fire in early December, which destroyed five cars and two motorcycles in the garage, and a fair amount of damage to the rest of the house as well. Alan called me a few weeks after the fire to ask for some help on determining the possible salvage value of the parts that remained, so I went down to look at it and wound up buying it. The body was pretty much gone, but I've been able to salvage a surprising number of pieces- engine, and complete drivetrain; front and rear suspension pieces, including near-new Koni struts in rear that I hope are all right; seat frames, steering rack (RHD like my Elan), four knock-off wheels, radiator, and various and sundry other bits. The doors and rear bumper are a bit singed on the outside, but may be salvageable after the outer layer of glass is stripped off. In addition he had a number of spare parts stored elsewhere, like donuts, which I'll be getting, so actually I got quite a bit which I might be able to use on my Elan project, or to hold on to for spares.

Time spent in partly dismantling this hulk, and then hauling it home, and then finishing the stripping-down here has left no time to work on "Emma", but my current project in the repair of the sideframes around the door openings- see my tech article on this subject later in this issue. Once that is completed, I'll be finishing the glass work, which up to now has been done mostly by Bill Reynolds (thanks, Bill, for all your help), and also tearing down one of my engines to rebuild (it'll be nice to have a spare engine, too)- then it's time to start putting everything back together, hopefully in time to get some driving in this year, but definitely no later than Labor Day and Portland.

We have picked up several new members lately, and I'm hopeful we will gain quite a few more in the next few months- I'm starting now to do a bit more publicizing than we have up to now, and if we can get a few events planned to this Spring and Lotus weather, perhaps this will bring a few more Lotus out in the open, that are now hiding out in garages.

LCCBC (the Lotus Car Club of BC) is planning another Swap Meet in a few months' time- I am driving up for their February meeting (Wed. the 6th) and will be finding out something more specific then, as they haven't picked a date yet. They've asked that I provide them with our mailing list, which I'll take up with me, so they can mail notices on the Swap directly to our members, so watch for this, as these are always fun events to go to. If anyone would like to ride up to Vancouver with me on the 6th let me know.

The latest issue of the Club Elite newsletter contained a recommendation for a paint remover that is supposed to be perfect for use on fiberglass (it's made for stripping paint off fiberglass boats)- it's called Fiberglass Pintoff Interlux Paint Remover. I bought a gallon at a marine supply store in Everett, but haven't had a chance to try it yet- will let you know how it works in the next issue.

Lynn Brown of the MG Car Club supplied me with a copy of the price list/order form from a firm called Russell & Son Embroidery, which makes custom emblems and patches. The prices are very reasonable, and the quality, judging by the MG Club's emblem, is very good, so if we can come up with a suitable design I'd like to go ahead on this; or, if you know of another company, perhaps one locally that does these let me know. Start thinking of what you would like to see appear in our club emblem, and maybe draw a little sketch- we'll come up with something as a suitable prize for the winning design.

We have the 25-minimum needed for our club T-shirt order to Gran Prints; I delayed this a bit longer than I should have, as our past couple meetings haven't been too well attended, and I wanted to give everyone that was interested a chance to get in on the order, as it may be quite a while before we can get together enough for a second order. So, for those of you who placed your order with me several months, sorry for the delay, but no more waiting, the order will be sent in immediately after the January meeting (one last chance for the slow people).

We've lost a few members, gone south to California- Mike Dornheim and his yellow Plus 2, and Janis Eckstein and her red Elan, both have moved to the LA area- sorry to lose you both, although they'll continue to receive our newsletters, and do stop in and see us if you're ever back in this area.

I'm waiting to hear back from Aeroquip, on their catalogs of fittings for use on Lotus- when I receive this info, I'm hoping we can set up a tech session on using Aeroquip-type braided hoses, and fittings as upgrades to the original-equipment to our cars, which in some areas is unfortunately of marginal quality, specifically the plastic fuel lines and Tees, which are prone to deteriorate and crack with age, with potentially incendiary results. Carl Zahler, who works for Aeroquip and wrote the letter that appeared in Lotus Ltd.s publication ReMarque mentioning the catalogs Aeroquip has available, just wrote back to me this week, and is interested in joining Evergreen Lotus. He described his Elan, and the circumstances of how he obtained it in '78, in running condition but without seats, for \$500. Maybe I should try buying one that run, for a change.

Seven months and counting- All-British Field Meet, Portland, August 31/September 1 Honored Marque- Lotus

Please do try and attend our meetings in the next few months- we're going to be trying a few places out as possible meeting sites, and so need your response to pick one as a more permanent site; and, we have some ideas for possible events for the coming months, for which we need both your input and you help. As I mentioned, the past few meetings have been rather poorly attended- it's only once a month, do try and make it if you can.

One of the great advantages of a fibreglass-bodied car like the Lotus Elan (or so we we claim) is its immunity to corrosion, which proves fatal to so many other British sports cars.

However, as so many Elan owners have discovered, the metal frame of this car is very prone to rust damage- Lotus Cars did not take the necessary steps, and applied only what they refer to as a "bitumastic" coating to the frame prior to assembly, which has proved to be woefully inadequate in rust-prevention. As a result, estimates are that one-third to one-half of all Elans today are running on a replacement chassis. Lotus Cars at least learned from their mistake, and now galvanise all their replacement chassis (which thus carry a six-year factory warranty), and a replacement chassis is still relatively inexpensive if obtained from England, the lowest recent price being from Christopher Neil at 275 pounds. So, if you make the determination that your frame must be replaced, and you obtain a new, galvanised and warrantied chassis from your favorite source, your corrosion problems in your Elan are over, right?

Wrong.

While the chassis corrosion problem has become common knowledge with most Elan owners (I wish I'd known it before I bought Emma, though) there is another area of concern which I have never seen addressed in any of the Lotus literature. This is the metal side frames, bonded into the body shell itself.

As the Lotus Elan Workshop Manual states, "The body door apertures are reinforced by welded mild steel frames which ensure longitudinal box section to carry the outboard weight of the seats as well as the seat belt loads, pedal mountings, trim panel and wiper motor, etc." See figure one on the following page for the layout of these items. Note that, from the description, these were made from mild steel, with no consideration made of corrosion prevention, and that they, following the Chapman Philosophy that every item in his cars should, wherever possible, fulfill more than one purpose, provide a number of support functions which can be quite important from a safety standpoint; namely supporting the outboard weight of the seats, and serving as one of the locating points for the seatbelts.

The problem arises from the fact that water, if allowed to get inside the car from one of a number of sources, will collect along the bottom bar of this steel framework, and either partially corrode the thinner-gauge interlacing pieces, or in more extreme cases will corrode them away completely and attack the thicker bar along the bottom as well.

This water can enter the car from several avenues. If your car is a drop-head (either S.1 or S.2 roadster, or S.3/S.4 convertible) water can enter if your top isn't water-tight. Besides this obvious entry, other means could include a leak around the door seal, or the windshield, or via the airintake and plenum chamber to the heater. One final means for ingress of water can be a crack along the bottom of the car, where the join between the top and bottom body half molds was originally bolted- if this bond has separated, as it has on my car, then any time the car is driven in the rain water will be thrown up inside through this crack and collect along the bottom of the side frames in question.

Is this a common problem in Elan, or an isolated case? I don't know, since as I stated above I have never seen any other mention of it, but since I have checked two Elans now for this problem, and it was in both cars, I believe it would be well worth the time spent in removing the side trim panels of your car, to inspect these frames for yourself.

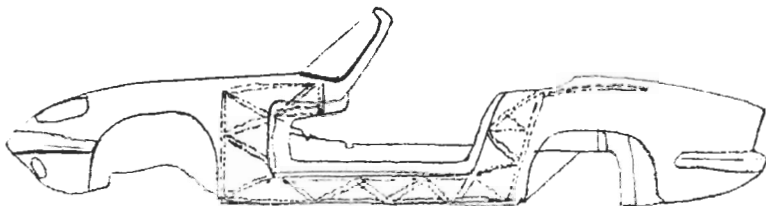


FIGURE ONE

metal side frames denoted by dashed lines

What does the Workshop Manual say about repairing these, in the event they are damaged? "Side Frames- Where the body has suffered a broadside impact and the metal sideframe has been damaged it will be necessary to affect a repair. As the sideframes are constructed of mild steel it will be found possible to straighten these cold in less severe instances by using a wringing iron. The frames may be welded provided certain elementary precautions are undertaken to obviate fire risk. Damp rag and asbestos dough must be placed around the effected area.

Before any attempt is undertaken to weld or apply a flame to bend or straighten the frame it is advisable that a fire extinguisher be to hand and ready to use.

Where the frame is damaged at its attachment points to the body the bonding laminates must be chipped or ground away and after straightening be re-laminated as per chapter 4."

Obviously the problem of corrosion repair was not considered, and the discussion of repair by welding, in light of the fact that the pieces which need to be replaced are along the bottom of the body and could not be adequately isolated by wet rags or asbestos to prevent an unacceptable fire hazard, would I believe rule out welding in place as a viable plan of attack. Having just finished dismantling a burned Elan for parts, would make me extremely hesitant to get anywhere near my own car with a torch!

So, I have decide that what I must do is, by cutting and/or grinding, physically remove these metal frames from the fiberglass body, and then either repair them, or replace them; the latter leaves two possibilities, either obtain a new set, or use the old ones as patterns and fabricate a new set. I have written to Lotus Cars Ltd. to try and find out if a new set would be available from them, and at what cost- as Lotus still produces at least some body sections as replacement parts, I am assuming that they still can produce a complete body shell; if so, they would still have a need for a supply of these side frames as well. I'm now waiting to hear back from them, so which course of action I will take will have to wait until Part II- in the meantime, let's approach the question of removing the old side frames.

Once the trim panels have been removed (or in the case of my car, once the entire interior of the bodyshell has been gutted) you can inspect the frames, and see that they are laminated into the shell in differing ways. along the top bar that runs just under the door opening, the heavier horizontal bar fits into a notch molded into the bodyshell, and is then glassed over so as to give a smooth finished surface, as this area is directly behind the trim panel and any roughness here might show inside the car. the remainder of the frame, in concealed areas, is simply attached by strips of glass mat slapped over the bars and extending a few inches beyond. Unfortunately, these strips don't totally enclose the metal framework, and allow a fair amount of space underneath for water to get in and corrode the bars away (see figure two for a sketch of what I mean).

So, removal will entail cutting away the glass holding in the metal- for this I purchsed several Dremel bits. #194 is good for attacking straight-on, and #199 for the majority of the cutting work. These can be easily put in a regular drill (I bought the cheapest model Black & Decker 1/4" drill, for doing my fiberglass grinding work, and this works fine. You don't

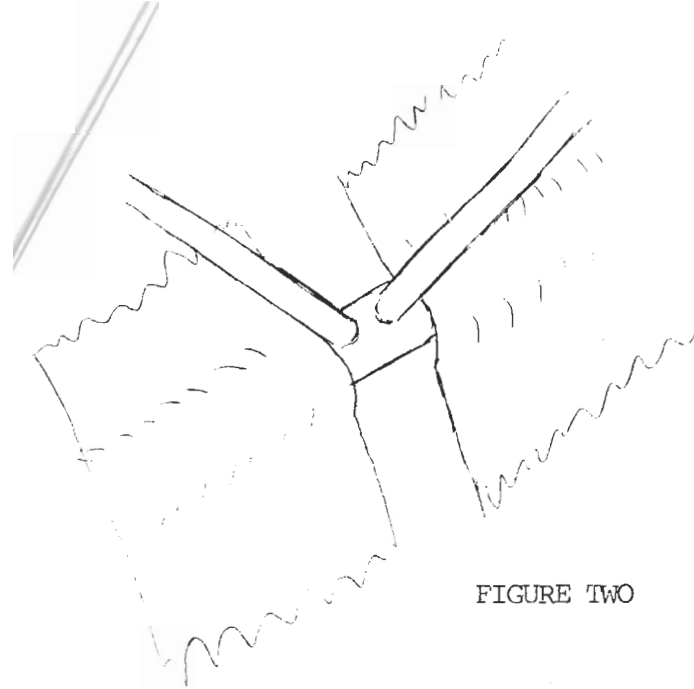
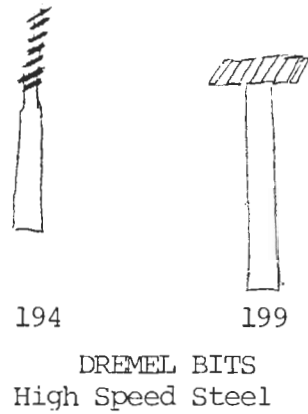


FIGURE TWO



DREMEL BITS
High Speed Steel

need a variable-speed drill. In addition, a tool like a Dremel Moto-Tool will be very handy, in getting into the tight spots- the one I'm using is a Sears Lil' Crafty; again, variable-speed is not needed. What is very much needed, though, is suitable protection. A mask, either a paper type or a respirator will prevent inhalation of the tiny particles of glass fibers and resin chips you'll be producing, and goggles will keep them out of your eyes. In the tight quarters you'll be working in, both are essential.

I had hopes, when I bought Alan Orr's burned car, that the side frames from his car would be in good condition, and I could simply use them, but I've found them to be corroded too, albeit not to the extent that they were in my car.

My thought right now, is that the best and most permanent solution to this problem, would be to fabricate some new frames, either of galvanised steel or, even better, of stainless stock; your comments and suggestions are welcome, before I go on to Part II, next issue.

Please welcome these new members to EVERGREEN LOTUS:

Ron and Karen Babb
13111 SE Maple Valley Hwy
Renton, WA 98055
h 226-1053
w (R)344-5525 (K)237-2753
'67 Elan S3

Richard Goranson
418 79th Ave. SE
Everett, WA 98205
h 334-9590
w
Elan

John A. Mengedoht
1237 NE 90th
Seattle, WA 98115
h 525-2274
w 623-4646
'77 Esprit S1

Carl H. Zahler
3118 Dorothy Lane
Spring Arbor, MI 49283
h
w
'67 Elan SE coupe

and new addresses for our members who've gone south:

Mike Dornheim
323 S. Commonwealth
Los Angeles, CA 90020

Janis Eckstein
118 8th St. #2
Seal Beach, CA 90740
(213) 598-2766

LOTUS CLUBS and PUBLICATIONS- A Review

The Lotus enthusiast is well-served with a number of Lotus groups, on a local or national level, each of which puts out a newsletter of some sort, with a considerable range of quality and usefulness, as I'll describe below. I hasten to point out that the opinions I'm expressing on these various groups and publications are my own, and if you disagree with any of my comments don't hesitate to voice your own opinions.

There are two "national" groups in the US, Lotus Ltd. based on the East Coast, and Lotus/West, based in the LA area. I say "national" reservedly, as they groups were originally founded as local Lotus clubs in their respective areas (Washington DC, and LA) and only became national in the sense that Lotus owners in other parts of the country, starved for tech information, parts sources, the need for parts interchange information, and so on, joined these groups in order to receive their newsletters as a source for this info; so for most activities, such as meetings, tech sessions, race activities, etc these groups remain local clubs for the most part, and the remote members' sole benefit of membership is primarily the newsletter. So, my review of these groups will emphasize the publications you will receive in return for your membership investment.

Lotus Ltd PO Box L, College Park, MD 20740

newsletter ReMarque 8 pages, published monthly

Lotus Ltd. was formed in 1973, and is now in Volume 12 of their newsletter, which I consider to be the best of all the Lotus club publications, both in production quality (typeset, on good quality paper, with very good photo reproduction) and in the type and mix of articles- a good balance of news articles on Lotus happenings and info on present and future Lotus cars, tech articles on maintaining and improving out own "classic" Loti, reports on new products, dealers and parts sources, interchangeable parts, etc. and a good selection of want ads for cars and parts that are always interesting to read (unfortunately the best-sounding cars are always at least 3000 miles away). The executive staff of Lotus Ltd., in recognition of the fact that so many of their remote members are unable to take part actively in club events, is now making a concerted effort, in the form of a questionnaire recently issued, to try and determine what directions the club should take, and what changes should be made to better serve more of the membership. I will report more on this in future issues of our own Lotus Lines, as the results of the questionnaire are released, but one thing the questionnaire asked about was the idea of local chapters. See my separate article on this subject elsewhere in this issue. Membership in Lotus Ltd. is \$15.00 initially, and then \$12.00 for renewals, and I highly recommend that you join this group.

Lotus/West PO Box 75972, Los Angeles, CA 90005

newsletter Stress Cracks generally 8 pages, sometimes less; monthly
This group was formed in the mid- to late-60's, and their newsletter is currently in Volume 17. This group puts out what I would have to in all honesty describe as the poorest of the newsletters- the printing, and paper quality are not very good, and there frankly isn't much of interest in the average issue (at least to me- again, these are my opinions). There have been very few tech articles published in the past couple of years, so the average issue consists of a photo or two, a report on a race or other event, some words on recent meetings, and a half-dozen ads. The photos and much of the other material is printed rather large, and one gets the impression that this is done more to fill up space rather than anything else- if the material was condensed to the amount of space it merits, they would be hard-pressed some months to fill 3

or 4 pages. I don't want to sound overly harsh, and I do want to state that they are aware of the fact that they've been a bit lacking, and are making an effort to improve- part of the problem was that, before a new president was elected last year, and just re-elected this year, one person was stuck with both the presidency of the group, and serving as editor of the newsletter (and, apparently, answering the mail and just about every other job as well) and as a result was over-extended and wasn't able to do any of the jobs very well. With more people now taking over the burden of the various jobs that need to be done, I think they can make good on their promises to improve, but for now I would have to say that a membership in Lotus/West is not too good an investment compared to other groups. I'll keep you advised of their progress and whether they show any improvement. Current membership is \$15.00 for singles, or \$20.00 for couples.

In terms now of local clubs, there are a couple I would like to bring to your attention- both produce very good newsletters, and I recommend a membership in either or both of them.

Lotus Car Club of British Columbia 1357 W. 7th Ave. Vancouver BC V6H 1B8
newsletter Cam Journal 16 to 24 pages, bimonthly

Those of you that have been up to one or more of the LCCBC's events, such as their swap meets, know what a friendly group this is- as this is the only other Lotus club within reasonable driving distance of us, I anticipate that we will be having a lot of joint participation in each others' activities in the years to come, and I'm really looking forward to it. This group was formed by Kim Spencer five years ago, and grew quite rapidly- they currently have over 50 members, and (because of the turnover all car clubs have with people moving, selling their car etc) they have had now over 100 members. Their newsletter is very well done, and always makes very good reading- for example the latest issue I have, for Sept/Oct has as its special theme "Fire Safety Issue" and contains some good info on fireproofing your Lotus, with materials sources (and a photo of a member's '78 Esprit with the back half fully engulfed in flames to emphasize the theme). This is one group where we can gain something besides a newsletter for our membership fee, and I'll keep you informed throughout the year on their events, and I hope we can actively support their events as a group, and put on some events of our own so we can invite them down.

Golden Gate Lotus Club 40509 Ambar Place, Fremont CA 94538
newsletter The Chapman Report 8-10 pages monthly

A very active and large group, with some 250 members- they have an event of some sort every month, with something virtually every weekend in the summer months. Their newsletter always makes for interesting reading (one aggravating point though, at least to me- virtually every sentence has a typo in it, e.g. Lotus is consistently spelled LOUTS!) I was able to meet a number of their members when Lezlee and I went down to the All British Car Meet in Palo Alto a few months ago, and we were most impressed with their friendliness and enthusiasm- as you may recall from my report on this event, they were able to turn out 58 cars to win the trophy again for best turnout by a marque club, and they were disappointed that they didn't have more, as they were shooting for as many as 100 cars to show up. A membership in the GGLC is \$15.00.

Club Elite 23999 Box Canyon Road, Canoga Park, CA 91304 \$20.00/year
This one -model Lotus club is devoted almost entirely to (as the name would suggest) the Lotus Mk. 14 (or "early" Elite, or Climax Elite- whatever you prefer to distinguish it from the later Lotus of the same name, and vastly different appearance). I say almost entirely, as some of the earlier issues had a fair amount of information on Sevens, and Elevens, and a few other Lotus sports/recers as well, such as some

production lists and parts numbers listings. If you own, or would someday like to own an Elite, membership in this group would I think be a necessity (right behind buying a copy of Dennis Ortensburger's bible on the car). They produce a newsletter as and when a member gets one put together, so there can be long gaps between issues, or you can get two issues in one month, as happened this past month which was a pleasant surprise. It's impossible for me to be objective about this club and newsletter, as I read every new issue from cover to cover immediately, and then several more times the next few days. Always interesting reading, and essential if you're going to give one a home.

Club Elite GB c/o David Jinks Birchen, Venton Cross, Hatherleigh,
Devon EX20 3LZ ENGLAND

I've just heard back from the British branch of Club Elite, and have never seen any issues of their newsletter, but I'm joining now, and ordering several years' worth of back issues, and when I receive something I'll report on it.

Evergreen Lotus
Terry A. Elmore
3010 132nd Avenue S.E.
Snohomish, Washington 98290