



# Lotus Lines

August 1992

8th Year of the Club.. 42nd Year of the Marque

## ELCC Events for August

There are two Autocrosses at the Boeing lot in Kent, one on the 9th (Solo II) and one on the 16th (WWSCC). There is an autocross at the Bremerton Airport (BSCC) on the 9th as well.

### ELCC Annual Picnic -

The place: Terry and Lezlee Elmore's home (address and map on the cover page). The time: show up anytime after 11:00am. The purpose: Cars, Fun and Food.

The Annual picnic is a great place to see Lotus cars and ELCC members. We usually have both in abundance. We will have a separate Club business meeting at 1:30 for those interested (we'll try not to disturb the rest of the festivities). We will also have examples of the hats, shirts and jackets that are available through our Club. There will be some hats and shirts for sale at the picnic. Jackets are only available on a prepaid order basis. Susan Hagaman will be on hand to take any additional orders. Terry has invited the Portland and BC Lotus clubs, so we may have a few out-of-towners joining us. Bring food and/or drinks as this is a potluck affair. We will have the popular car swap and drive for those wanting to participate. Dave Larson will be bringing his model collection to auction/sell. Ken Richins and Susan Hagaman are going to try and bring their Europa race car to the picnic, but that depends on if they can get it ready on time (not a sure thing where Lotus are concerned).

Maury and John Montag are running a rallye this year which will end at the Elmore's house. The starting point is the clinic of one of our members, John Hunholz. Be at 18122 Highway 9 in Clearview between 10:30 and 11:00am to receive your instructions. The rallye starts at 11:00 sharp and will take about 60 to 90 minutes to complete.  
by Bob Crichton

Well we've made it to the middle of the summer, the highlight of it being the Western Washington All British Field Meet. The activities began with the Friday potluck dinner in Issaquah. By the number of people that attended, it had to have been a major success. I didn't count but the hall was full and spilling out onto the grounds around. The weather was perfect for sitting in the grass and enjoying the food. The major clubs were asked to supply food and an

interesting display. The Lotus Club decided to honor Lotus and Jimmy Clark for his 1967 victory in the Mexican Grand Prix. We did this with a cake and Mexican food. A race track and Jimmy's winning Lotus 49 were put on the cake. When I say we, I mean Shirley Urquhart, Nikki Daniels, Shari Crichton and Jim Taylor. The food was a hit and was the first to go.

## Chairman Bob Writes

Our display didn't win the prize for the best display. So next year we'll just try harder. At our table, though, we did win an unprecedented four door prizes. So we all went home with something. Saturday brought us to the meet itself. I'd like to thank John and Nikki Daniels for volunteering to help direct parking of the cars. They worked from 8:00am to 11:00am without complaint. Also I'd like to thank Dwaine & Shirley Urquhart for being the first ones there and the last ones to leave. They worked full time for us and part time for the Mini Club. Thanks also to Eric Wyss for helping set up our display.

I should also thank Terry for his Elite body and Jim Taylor for his Europa body and chassis. And a thanks to all the people who brought their cars and answered questions from the spectators that our display brought in. I thought our display was the best but not in the eyes of the Judges.

For me the biggest surprise was that we had two bright red brand new Elans on display. And even better than that the owners of both of them joined our club that very day. So a big welcome to Eddie and Jess Marker. They are previous Lotus owners in the form of a 1967 Lotus Elan. Also welcome Bruce and Marge Bradburn. I hope they can make it to the Lotus picnic in August.

Speaking of the picnic I hope to see a lot of you at the Picnic. It has become a great affair, usually drawing more Lotus's than any event north of San Francisco.

Western Washington ABFM -

On Friday the 24th the Potluck dinner was held and those that pre-registered were able to pick up their Meet shirts, plaques, etc. The weather had been questionable all week, but on Saturday, it cleared up and we had lots of sunshine. Bob hit all the high points of the day, so I'll just add the Lotus that showed up. We had one Esprit, two new Elans, four (I think) older Elans, two

Europas, one older Elite, two newer Elites, one Westfield Eleven and two Sevens. Then, of course, the display cars (older Elite body and Europa chassis and body).

by Jim Taylor

The 16th Annual Portland ABFM, is being held on September 4th through the 6th at Portland International Raceway. I haven't received any official information, but this is what I was able to find out. The Meet will have themes and events similar to last year's ABFM. Friday will be registration and Meet information packet pickup. There will also be dinner and cocktails. Saturday will be the ABFM car show and concours judging (Lotus having its own category), with a barbecue in the evening. On Sunday, there is a swap meet, a road rallye in the morning and an autocross/slalom in the afternoon. Jaguar is the honored marque this year.

The entry fee for your first car is \$30 (don't know about cost of additional cars) and the concours judging will cost an extra \$10. The barbecue at PIR on Saturday night will cost \$25. If you have any questions, please call (503) 246-8477 and after August 15th call (503) 223-1815. More discussion about the Portland ABFM will be done at the ELCC Picnic on August 15th. by Kiyoshi Hamai, reprinted from The Chapman Report, newsletter of the Golden Gate Lotus Club, July 1992

*Editor's note: Some of you may have already read or heard of the demise of the new Elan through other publications, but I thought this article newsworthy*

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## **Recap of Past Events**

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*enough to print (just in case you hadn't heard). According to the Lotus Cars Ltd, Elan production ceased after building 3,857 cars, of which only 545 were built for the US market.*

Mark June 16, 1992 on your dates to remember Lotus calendar because after 14 months after the US introduction of the new Elan M100, Lotus Cars announced that the production of the new Elan would stop after the completion of the remaining parts for UK cars. Only the Esprit will remain and built in limited numbers.

Why the Elan failed to capture the required market share (sales) will be a subject that will be argued in early morning hours by Lotus enthusiasts around the world.

Any new cars coming from Lotus Cars will certainly be fast, expensive, high-tech and built at a rate

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## **Portland ABFM Info**

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that will bring a profit. That's the key, with heavy discounting of the new Elan here in the US, Lotus was loosing money on every car that was sold. How much? A quick recap... At the original announced retail price of \$39,995, dealers were paying about \$34,000. Lotus was just barely breaking even at that price. The rate of sales for the new car stabilized at about 30 to 40 cars per month in the US and then dipped last summer. What has been called the worst new car market in 50 years has had its toll on car makers in the high end sports car arena, witness Porsche. So, by late summer of '91 Lotus announced a \$5000 dealer rebate. The dealers responded by offering cars for \$32,000 or less and sales jumped to the 30 to 40 per month level. By early November sales slowed again due in part to winter. In February, Lotus added to the dealer rebate for a total of \$7000. Dealers were now paying around \$27,000 and selling them for under \$30,000. the rate of sales again rose and stabilized at the 30 to 40 per month level.

But, Lotus' original plan, penned by Ron Foster, called for 1000 cars per year, yet Lotus sold just a bit over 300 in the nine months of selling in '91. The business plan called for 1000 and there was a 700 car shortage. At \$34,000 (dealer cost) that's a cool \$23.8 million!!! For a \$15 million company like Lotus Cars USA, that's a SIZEABLE difference!

Add to this scenario GM Europe Chief, Bob Eaton (a great Lotus fan) resigning to go to Chrysler as CEO and you have GM now taking a serious look into the matters of Group Lotus.

What's this mean? There were 545 '91 Elans imported to the US. Some 300 plus have been sold to customers. Currently Lotus Cars USA has about 50

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## **No More Elan M100's**

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Elans available for sale to dealers, none of the 50 cars are California certified. That leaves a dealer inventory of about 150 cars.

Recessions are never friendly. Typically the weak die and the strong survive and become stronger. Lotus will benefit from these times. Their R&D and Engineering continues to attract clients and with a concentration on building special cars, Lotus Cars will profit.

by Jim Taylor

The September meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held during AutoGear's annual car show which they sponsor, but apparently the show won't be held this year due to not having a location available. So, it was decided that Bob and Shari Crichton will host the

September meeting at their house on the 19th. Please show up by 1:00pm, there will be a business meeting at 1:30.

The Evergreen Lotus Car Club has been invited to a track day sponsored by Brian Gordon at SIR on one of the following days: September 9th, 10th, 16th or 17th. As of the *Lotus Lines* being mailed out, the date hadn't been set in stone. We will know for sure by August 10th, so you can call, come to the picnic or find out by reading September's *Lotus Lines*. The track will be open from 9:00am until 4:00 or 5:00pm. I'm not sure of the cost, but it has been minimal for past track days (\$20 to \$40). Please tech your own car before coming and pump some extra air into the tires too. Those wanting to help with setup, please get there by 8:00am. If you've got any questions, please call Rob Roberts at (206) 629-2730, he will have more details as the day draws closer and there will be more info in the September *Lotus Lines*.

On September the 27th, the 1992 Snohomish Vintage Car Display will be held from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Registration is \$12 before September 18th and \$15 thereafter. For more info, contact the Snohomish Chamber of Commerce at (206) 568-2526.  
by Steve Shipley

When I scheduled a class in San Francisco, I realized that I might have an opportunity to gather information about the correct specification for my 1965 Lotus Super Seven which I bought and disassembled 5 years ago. I had called Mike Ostrov a few years ago and as I was bragging about my derelict Seven and my plans to bring it back to its original specifications he mentioned that he had a Seven with 13 thousand original miles. So when I realized that I would be in San Francisco, I called Mike and he agreed that I would be able to view the car.

Although I predictably became lost searching for Mike's house when I arrived in the Richmond area, the cellular phone in the rental car was used to arrange a rendezvous and in five minutes the rental car was parked and I was riding with Mike in his raspberry Elite #1523. This car was freshly restored with a Climax FWM (Feather Weight Marine) and a Datsun five-speed. I was impressed with how tight the car seemed but Mike could hear a little noise in the rear end.

We decided to visit Fantasy Junction to peruse the current stock of collectible cars. These cars are privately owned and FJ sells them on consignment. I don't believe I have ever been so close to such valuable machinery. The owner was with a couple of guys with German accents who were showing interest in \$850K of Mercedes-Benz. I saw this trio the next day at the Behring Museum, I hope he made the sale!

*What is fantasy when compared to reality???*

Earl drove up as we were unlocking the shop. Mike's shop was a real treat for me. A concrete block building holding 3 Sevens and another Elite. Everywhere you turned, there was another item to die for. Reproductions of original Lotus advertising on the wall, bits and pieces of Coventry Climax engines, and all those cars. I was able to see the Seven as it would have looked when it left Cheshunt. Yes, I do have the correct hubcaps, I saw the originals. Yep, the tie rods are black, the wishbones are grey. Just as I suspected. The story that came with the car was that when the car was ordered, the original owner was asked if he would like the car prepared, and imagining this being dealer prep, agreed. He was apparently surprised when the car was delivered, when the car was 'prepared'....for racing!

*Then the reality starts resembling fantasy...*

I'm to be allowed to drive the Seven. Remember, this is a low mileage, unrestored, original car. Although I'm trying to be cool, I feel like a shark who's just spotted a swimmer.

After being fitted to the car and a quick buzz up and down the street to see if I can drive, I follow Mike and Earl up to the San Pablo Reservoir. It's a beautiful day, the exhaust sounds like music, and I'm enjoying the altered perspective offered by driving a right-hand drive car. I haven't been in an open car for years and the long sweeping curves on the way up, and tighter ones on the way down were better than any dreams. As the drive

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progresses we keep going a little faster, the turns becoming more challenging, the suspensions working a little harder.

When we return to the shop and I'm offered the Elite, I don't know what to say. I'm trying to mumble something polite, and my mind says I don't deserve this, while I'm pushing people out of the way to get into the kind of car that you generally look at, peek in the window, and wonder "what would it be like if..."

Earl is giving me instructions as we return to the hills. I don't have to worry about where I'm going or whether my speed is appropriate. I am certainly no expert, so the student listens carefully as the dark red Elite sings through the countryside. I find that if I straighten my legs so that my heels are anchored firmly to the floor I can quickly move my feet from pedal to pedal. Even though I doubt the Elite thinks highly of my abilities, it feels like dancing to me.

And when we return, #1841 is ready to go. This is the sweetheart of the bunch. A freer revving FWE, a ZF four-speed with a very short throw, and a much

tighter road to enjoy. Never much faster than 25 or 30 mph but working a little harder this trip. Yes, I probably shouldn't have, but I put my foot into it just a little to see what one of the best examples of Colin Chapman's genius would do.

*Reality is a whole lot better than fantasy!!!*

I know these cars are meant to be driven, but shouldn't at least a few be put away in museums where they would remain unspoiled by the passing of time?  
by David Phipps and Mike Davis,  
reprinted from Sports Car Illustrated, June 1960

Most people think of a Lotus as a sleek, aerodynamic missile like the Eleven, the Fifteen, or the Elite. But for two years Lotus has been building - in ever-increasing numbers - a small, inexpensive, all-around sports car called the "Seven", which is just beginning to arrive in the States. Lotus has reverted to a one-number designation (at a time when the new rear-engined Formula car is called the Mark 18) to use the name that was saved for the successor to the square-cut Mark Six, the car that really put Lotus on the map as builders of competition machines. When written up by SCI in June, 1957, Lotus' Colin Chapman ascribed the

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## Reality or Fantasy?

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omission of "Mark Seven" to the fact that this was already being used by Jaguar, a fairly transparent ruse.

The original Seven followed closely the basic layout of the Mark Six, having simple body panels wrapped around its sturdy space frame, cycle-type front fenders and negligible weather protection. Now a special variant has been produced for the U.S. market and dubbed the "Seven America". To adapt it to North American needs it has flared fiberglass front fenders that powerfully recall classic sports car lines. Less obvious are redesigned rear fenders, a thermostatically-controlled radiator fan, Elite-type windshield wipers, and the fitting of directional signals and big stop/tail lights. Several engines are fitted to the Seven in England, but the America comes standard with the full Healey Sprite engine, for which parts and service are readily available here. In our test car its power was transmitted by a Sprint clutch and gearbox to a BMC axle having a 4.875:1 ratio; other cogs are available to choice.

Like all other open Lotuses, the Seven has a Chapman-designed space frame. The front suspension is the now-standard Lotus parallel-wishbone layout, with the anti-roll bar forming one leg of the upper wishbone, while the live back axle is guided by parallel radius rods and a diagonal member. Springing is by coaxial spring/damper units at all four corners, and

steering is by rack and pinion. The two-leading-shoe brakes work in eight-inch drums, bathed in a plentiful supply of cool air. Seen overall, this collection of time-proven machinery resembles a hybrid of an MG TC, a K-2 Allard and a California dragster. It's a basic vehicle, purely sporting, with an epidermis of red-painted aluminum encasing a businesslike mechanism. It makes no pretense to Detroit's - or, for that matter Coventry's or Turin's - creature comforts. It's as spartan and unadorned as a rowboat.

Even before the engine is started it's obvious that this is an enthusiast's car. Since there are no doors, you step over the low cockpit side and shoehorn yourself into the non-adjustable seats. These have only an inch or two of padding atop a very firm surface and are a mere 16 inches wide, so they're a very snug fit. You're so low that you can press a palm flat against the pavement from the cockpit, and you're braced firmly in place by the prop shaft tunnel and the side of the body. In spite of the lack of adjustment, the seat position seems to accommodate varying heights efficiently, and the sparse cushioning is surprisingly comfortable. There's a carpet on the floor with rubber mats under the driver's heels, but this is the only concession to comfort. Everything else is intended for just one thing: driving.

Set at arm's length, the steering wheel is pleasant to use but its ivory plastic design seems out of keeping with the rest of the Seven. Its diameter is good; in fact it couldn't be larger or even a skinny driver couldn't get in the car, except through a trap door in the bottom. Neatly grouped on the dash are the speedometer, oil pressure gauge, water temperature gauge and ammeter, a tach being optional either in place of or in addition to the speedometer. The short shift lever is ideally placed within a few inches of the wheel - though its shift pattern was felt to be too lengthy - and the handbrake is hard to get at, being away on the passenger side of the car. The view out over the long hood is inspiring, even taking in the brightly twirling knock-off nuts that stand out from the Lotus' narrow fenders.

The pedals are less inspiring. We'd suggest following the ancient Chinese custom of binding your feet for a few years before tackling this particular car. With skill it's possible to get a 9C shoe on the necessary controls, which feel about the size of a half-dollar. You find that your right foot just about covers both the brake and accelerator, so you control by rolling your foot to one side and the other instead of actually moving it sideways. This of course makes "heel-and-toe" work a cinch, but it can lead to application of the wrong pedal at the wrong time.

When the engine was fired up and the car put on the road, we found that the Seven cleverly combines a traditional sports car feel with the most modern techniques of frame design and suspension. It has

amazing cornering power, thanks mainly to its extremely stiff space-framed chassis.

In this day and age, the use of a live rear axle causes raised eyebrows in some quarters, but in the Seven this heavy assembly is so well located that you're seldom if ever aware that it's there. Whenever the tail can be broken loose - which is really only on wet roads - it does so very smoothly and controllably.

Light weight is as helpful for braking as it is for acceleration and handling, and on the Lotus Seven fantastic retardation is provided by very modest pedal pressures. The standard linings show no tendency to fade in normal road use, and even after a series of panic stops from speed they continued to halt the car squarely without any increase in pedal travel.

With its 4.875 axle ration, the test car was obviously set up for acceleration rather than maximum speed, and it certainly did deliver far more sparkling performance than the Sprint engine provides in its original resting place. In top gear the most this engine will pull in the Lotus is 5500 rpm, which corresponds to only 81 mph - about what most Sprites will do, but the Lotus gets there a whole lot quicker.

For road use, however, extra speed is worth little unless you're willing to tangle with the police, and the Lotus provides all the exhilaration at 60 that some more lavishly equipped sports cars supply at 100. In fact, on a cold, dark winter's night 70 mph can feel like 140! There's nothing like it for blowing away the cobwebs of a city office.

The weather protection of the Seven can be summed up by saying that it would impress a motorcyclist but not a Jaguar owner. The simple canvas top is held in place by tubular supports and is clipped down all around by Dot fasteners. When not in use it's stowed behind the seats, and it's fairly easy and quick to put up or down. When it's up, the Seven looks much better than do most roadsters with their canvas flying. But

getting in and out under these conditions requires considerable agility, practice and a slender frame as well. If you weigh much more than 180 pounds your might as well forget it; you couldn't get your thighs past the steering wheel. It's like climbing into a frozen sleeping bag with a wooden leg. The best way to manage it is to leave the three right-hand windshield snaps unfastened, then reach up and hook them to the pegs after you get behind the wheel.

Despite all the shortcomings mentioned, the Lotus Seven has a remarkable attraction for enthusiastic drivers because it's far less of a compromise than are most sports cars today. Basically it's a racing car which can be used on the road without any of the snags normally associated with sports-racing machinery. Yet roadholding, steering and braking are right up to racing car standards, and the instant steering and speedy gear shift all contribute to sheer driving pleasure. There are a lot of standard parts built into the Lotus Seven, but the chassis they're all attached to makes them seem a lot more desirable than they were in their parent vehicles. With the emphasis on competitive performance, it's hard to view this as a true all-purpose sports car unless you're a dedicated enthusiast - a *small*

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## **Road Test: Lotus Seven**

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dedicated enthusiast. The Seven America is a genuine male automobile; tough, muscular and utilitarian.







## More on Single Seat Lotus Registry

reprinted from a recent issue of AutoWeek

Inside the production facility at Hethel, where '92 Esprits, Elans and Carltons are assembled, the first things a visitor sees are old Lotuses, not new ones.

A white Lotus Cortina Mk I with 3800 miles on its odometer heads the display. This particular Cortina was used as the getaway vehicle in Britain's Great Train Robbery. Group Lotus rescued it when it appeared at auction a few years ago.

"Of course, we're not proud of its past," says Lotus' director of communications Patrick Peal. "But the robber's didn't steal this car, they *bought it*."

Next to the infamous Cortina sits Colin Chapman's daily driver - a creme-yellow Elite Type 14. The Elite is parked adjacent to the Giugietto Giugiaro Esprit Type 70 prototype - in brilliant red-orange - first displayed at the Earls Court Motor Show in 1973. It has a red/black tartan plaid interior and wears license plate ACBC 001. Next in the line is the white prototype X100 - the Lotus that never was. Finally, there's Ronnie Peterson's Lotus 72 alongside Mario Andretti's Type 79.

How many more vintage Loti are there? "Lots," Peal said. "Chapman didn't throw anything away, although he hated to live in the past. That's why he was so fascinated with race cars, because they were always changing."

The bulk of the collection is stored in a barn a few miles from Hethel on the Chapman estate. And for years Peal's pet project has been to establish a museum of Lotus history, but not in the static settings most museums provide. "We have reels of old film footage and the original drawings for many of these cars. We could set up displays showing just 'how we did it,' possibly set up a CAD system for people to experiment on, to design their own F1 car, with parts, suspension and the like."

"Right now we're beginning to put a few cars on display in the assembly area. That way we can keep them cleaned up, and we've an excuse to restore the rest."

And now it looks like Peal's idea of a museum is beginning to take shape.

"I guess I've been talking about doing a museum for so long," said Peal, "that Clive finally decided to move on it."

That would be Clive Chapman, Colin's son, who left his job as marketing director at Team Lotus and is in the process of establishing a kind of national trust *vis a vis* all of the machinery currently parked in the barn on

the Chapman estate.

Called the Team Lotus International Register, Chapman's idea is to create a chronicle for all single-seat open-wheel racing Lotuses - from the Type 12 to the Type 102. According to Lotus' records, more than 1200 chassis were produced. His plan is to establish the history of each car "with as much detail as possible."

But much depends on input and support from Lotus owners worldwide. Owners - past and present - are invited to write to the Team Lotus International Register contributing essential details - things like race history, modifications and current chassis condition. The factory will compile a dossier using this info and its records of chassis and engine numbers, even the names of the mechanics who worked on and the drivers who raced particular cars, to create a comprehensive archive.

So single-seat Lotus owners take note: Team Lotus International Register, Potash Lane, Hethel, Wymondham, Norfolk NR14 8EY or you can fax your information to 0953 601626.