

LOTUS LINES



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EVERGREEN LOTUS CAR CLUB

Spring 2019

From The Chairman's Desktop

By Doug Jackson

Spring has finally sprung here in the Pacific Northwest and I'm glad to see that a number of you have already pulled your Lotus cars out of winter storage and have begun to exercise them out on the roadways around here. A number of you already drove your Lotus cars to the very interesting "Shop Tour/Open House" at Lotus of Bellevue at Park Place Ltd. Of course a bunch of you drove your "other" cars there, but I'm just glad you came, however you got there.

There's lots to see and a lot of enjoyable things to do with your small English cars around here.

By looking at the Calendar of Events somewhere else in this newsletter, you'll see that our corner of the country offers lots of interesting car events and activities to take part in.

One of the ELCC activities that is coming up just two weeks from the time I'm putting this little column together will be a special "Shop Tour" at ELCC-member Randall Fehr's Horton Restorations. This is an activity organized by ELCC-member Mark Gleason, and it will have a bit of a Lotus Elan focus. For the few of you who don't already know, Randall is one of the local experts in fiberglass repair work, and he has an emphasis on the older Lotus cars. However, Horton Restorations will actually work on almost any type of car... and they do a beautiful job! Because the future Lotus Lines newsletters will be coming to you digitally, by e-mail, rather than as a paper "hard" copy, you might even see this current one in time to read it before this "Shop Tour" occurs on Saturday, April 13th.

The next interesting activity will be the SOVREN "Spring Sprints" vintage racing at Pacific Raceways, April 26th-28th. At the same time the pretty fun "Tulip

Rally", hosted by the local MG Car Club, will be held up in Skagit County on April 27th.

The next ELCC event coming up will be another of our "First Thursday" get-togethers, on May 2nd. Following this will be an interesting "Shop Tour" at Adam's Garage on May 4th, an activity organized by ELCC-member Alan Perry. Shortly after this will be the Vancouver, BC All British Field Meet which will be held on May 18th. You'll see a picture accompanying this column of my Lotus Elite (the white car) sandwiched



between a bright yellow Lotus Europa and a silver-blue Lotus Elan Plus 2. This picture was taken in 2012 and I'm already planning to attend this year's ABFM up there, which I haven't been able to do for several years because one of my grand kid's birthday party is quite often held on the same day... luckily this year that isn't going to be the case. I may not be driving my Lotus up there this year, but I'm really looking forward to walking around among lots of beautiful British cars, trucks and motorcycles in the gorgeous setting that the VanDusen Botanical Garden provides, and it's always nice to have a good excuse to visit our favorite Canadian city to the north and chat with members of the Lotus Car Club of British Columbia.

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Membership in the ELCC is \$25/year, with the Membership year starting in January, and is prorated in three months increments. Membership includes a Club Roster and a subscription to *Lotus Lines*.

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Snow Day, or, God bless limited slip differentials

By Victor Smith

On February 11th a friend called and suggested I take my car out to get some pictures of it in the snow. He didn't have to twist my arm as I learned to drive in Alaska and enjoy win-



ter driving. Besides, it was a beautiful day and I'd been thinking about it anyway.

Most of the roads had way more snow than the one where the pictures were taken, and in many places the snow had formed ruts. Being such a light car, the ruts really tossed the Elan around making it feel even less substantial than it usually does. Times about 4, but this was an experiment and there wasn't that much traffic. Some of the side roads that make up part of my 10-mile route were nearly desert-

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Beyond this, there will still be lots of fun stuff to do with your Lotus cars, including: more "First Thursday" things; the Hemmings Great Race Car Show in June at LeMay-America's Car Museum in Tacoma on June 30th; the Western Washington All British Field Meet on July 20th (Registration is open, BTW!); etc. Heck, we might even have multi-day "Fall Drive" this year.

More detailed information to come.

Hope to see you "on the road" soon.


dave bean engineering

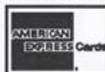


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A New Caterham

By M. D. Harting

My association with the 7 and Beachman Racing started in 2013. I was on my way to Seattle and wanted to stop at Beachman Racing to see a 7, as I had never seen one. I called Bruce and he was kind enough to come get me and lead me to his shop and introduce me to the 7. Well needless to say I was impressed.

Shortly after that encounter, I was called to go to North Dakota to work in the Bakken oil fields, which I did for 3 years. The 7 got placed on hold during that phase of life.

The oil price collapsed, and I returned to my home in Dayton, WA in March of 2016 and began inquiring of Bruce about buying a 7 shortly after. On Saturday, September 10 of 2018 I met Bruce at his shop in Woodinville and we



worked out the order. Note that Bruce accommodated me by coming in on a Saturday, very kind! I placed the order, paid \$3500 to get into the line up and was on my way. After Caterham reviews the order and the car works it's

way towards getting produced one makes two additional payments one of which is paid just before the car ships. When it ships one receives a web address which tracks the ship on it's journey across the pond.



Bruce received the car in November of 2018 and really didn't start building it till December, which was fine because that is the time I would have the car down anyway. He did feature my 7 and one other at his open house in mid December. That is a very nice show with many good people attending and if one can get an invitation to that show it is possible to see 7's in various stages of build, and many other exotic cars driven there by their owners. It was interesting to me to note that all these people driving European super cars and exotics were brought together by this simple, little, lightweight sports car! That is quite a statement about the 7.

I took delivery of my car on Thursday March 21 this year, but there were problems. I had hired a roll off transport to haul it home to Dayton as Bruce had wisely advised. The

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roads this time of year are choked with sand and grit from winter snow plow activity and it would be a shame to chew up the paint and stone guards on that.

Well, my friend with the transporter blew his engine up the night before I was to go pick up the car!

I called Bruce and told him that I would simply have to drive a car over, leave it and drive the 7 home. He said, no way, and promptly offered to use his van trailer and

loan me his son Blaise to drive the car over to me. That was what we did and it was absolutely Above and beyond of Bruce to do that for me!

I have had a couple of days to enjoy the 7 and love it. This



is the most precise handling car I have driven, loads of power, lateral grip which will take some time to test as the grip is off the charts!

The only complaint I have about the 7, and to me it is glaring, is that Caterham needs to offer a lightweight, removable, hard top with tip up roof panels like the DAX7 by Rich Howlett. He may be the only hope for a top like that, and his is beautiful. Contact rich@richhowlett.couk. It won't make your 7 the Wagon Queen Family Truckster, but it certainly would go a long way to improving it's utility.

So, if one wants to buy a 7, Bruce Beachman is your man.

His workmanship is above reproach, his dealings completely honest, and he is a true enthusiast with a thorough knowledge of the car.

Event Schedule

April

13—Randall Fehr Restorations Shop Tour 10:00 AM

26, 27—SOVREN Spring Sprints —Pacific Raceways

April 27—The Tulip Rally in Skagit County

May

2—ELCC "First Thursday" at Smarty Pants in Georgetown

4—"Shop Tour" at Adam's Garage in South Seattle

18 All British Field Meet in Vancouver, BC, Canada

June

6— ELCC "First Thursday" at The Market Arms in Ballard

7-9—SOVREN "Spokane Festival of Speed" in Spokane

29—Greenwood Car Show

30—Hemmings "Great Race" Car Show at LeMay-America's Car Museum in Tacoma

July

4—ELCC "First Thursday" at the Three Lions Pub

5-7—SOVREN "Pacific NW Historics" Pacific Raceways

20—Western Washington All British Field Meet at St. Edward State Park

August

1—ELCC "First Thursday" at Smarty Pants in Georgetown

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Elan Progress

By: Gary Wood

Quite a few years ago I trailered my freshly painted 1972 Elan Sprint body and several other pieces down to Tacoma for the ELCC meeting at Griots Garage. I was quite happy with the body restoration, paint and improvements that had been completed and wanted to share my progress with the club. It was just body parts and a frame, not even near being a roller. By the way, mine wasn't the only Lotus on a trailer at that meeting. Lots of club members were interested in what had been done, such as the safety related FRP reinforcement work in the floor and door areas.



"It was like driving in an egg shell!" was the comment that came from one of our members at the March Shop Tour at Park Place. He was referring to his first experience driving an Elan. I have experienced that 'driving in an egg shell' feeling since the 1980s when I brought my Elan home. Every time I shut the door on the Elan I would think egg shell, smile and shift my thoughts to the pleasure of driving the thing. When life allowed, I began planning a total restoration for my Elan. Besides the regular restoration things for a project like this, that nagging "egg shell feeling" also entered into the planning.

Time to address the egg shell started when I discovered the rusted out truss around the passenger door. Apparently the joint between the flat floor, the steel truss, and the rocker panel was failing. Water had wicked into the joint and rust did a major job destroying the truss. I always wondered why the passenger carpets were wet. After re-

moving the truss damage, the floor to rocker panel joint failure was exposed. It appeared the joint failed from excessive flexing of the FRP floor. I recall that floor flex issue becoming more obvious when I removed the floor carpets and pad for an autocross event. Every time I got in the car,



I could see the bare floor flexing. My solution to the flex problem was to use the existing Lotus FRP floor as shape and core material for the reinforcement Carbon fiber layers on both the inside and outside of the car. I also ran the interior carbon fiber layer beyond the joint and around the inside of the door frame for side impact strengthening. The reason for using Carbon fiber was strength and light



weight. The reinforcement work was validated the day Victor Smith came by my shop and pounded his fist on the flat floor. Nothing moved. It was solid. Victor gave his ap-

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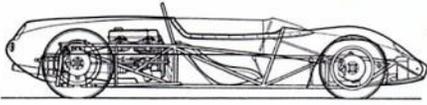
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proval. He had done something similar to his car.

Egg shell concerns still lingered, especially with the doors. I recall one of the cautions on closing an Elan door was to be gentle to prevent cracking of the FRP door skin.

What?!! Since I had reinforced the door frames I thought the flimsy doors needed something. I designed a composite side impact door beam that exceeds the SAE requirements for door beams, and it fits inside the door along with all the other stuff that is in the door. The beam added less than 3 pounds of weight to each door.

Fast forward to today. While not drivable, the Elan does roll around, the body has been mated to the frame, engine has been test run, and I'm approaching the wiring, dashboard, windscreen, installing the doors, and interior. I hope the photographs give you some idea of what is going on.

Cheers as they say,

Gary Wood

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Car Stacker

By Dan Morrison

I have been looking for a way to store two cars in the space of one in one of the bays of my home garage.

I looked at commercial lifts, but they were all too large. I didn't need a lift that was over nine feet wide and fourteen feet long to store cars that were only 48-54 inches wide and 12-13 feet long. I did find one company that makes a 'Recreational Lift'. It was smaller and capable of lifting a small car (it was made for ATVs and golf carts), but it was still too large and the price was about \$4000. Too much money for what I wanted to do.

At the Christmas party last year I was talking with fellow club member John Scheidt. He mentioned that he was in a similar situation and needed additional storage space for his newly purchased Honda 600 Coupe. To solve his problem, he purchased a couple of used pallet racks and stood them next to each other. A set of 16 foot aluminum ramps was used to get the Honda on top of the racks. I was intrigued by this installation, so John set me some pictures. It was pretty slick and very economical. I decided to try something similar.

I started planning by looking at what cars I owned that could be 'easily' stored on top. The one that made the most sense and with the greatest amount of ground clearance, was my Lotus Seven Series 4.

I had to work out details for the racks and ramps to ensure:

- Rack height and clearance under the rack beams was enough for my Formula Ford to fit
- There was enough room overall in the garage bay
- The car didn't get high centered on the way up the ramps
- There was enough clearance under the open garage door for the car going up (which was low)
- How to get the car up the ramps onto the racks

I determined that I would use two pallet racks that were 6 feet wide by 2 feet deep and space them so that the center of the rack at each end was at the same distance as the wheelbase of the car. I would then bridge the gap between the two racks for the car to cross over. This would mean extra work fabricating the bridges, but it would give

me more open space in that center area. To get the car up the ramps (not running, of course), I was going to try using a 2500 lb. electric winch from Harbor Freight (which would also require fabrication of a mount on the rack). I knew it would be risky using the HF winch, but it was a clear shot across the cul de sac into my neighbor's yard if it got loose, so I figured it would be ok. Based on my calculations, I determined that the ramps would need to be 16 feet long.

I set about positioning the racks in my garage for the wheelbase and taking measurements for the center pieces. I cut some metal for the bridge ramps and welded them together. I made them the same width as 2—2x6s (or one 2x12) boards. I drilled and bolted them together. I positioned them in between the racks and drilled through the top of the ramps into the top of the pallet rack beam. I placed some bolts in the holes so they would not move



around.

John had purchased two commercial 16 foot aluminum ramps to load his Honda. They were really nice ramps, but I wanted to keep the cost down, so decided to make mine out of wood. I bought two 16 foot 2x12s and an aluminum ramp-end kit. I bolted it all together, but used more bolts with different spacing than came from the factory. Again, I drilled holes through the top of the ramp ends into the rack beams and put bolts in so they couldn't move.

My first attempt at pulling the car up the ramps did not go as planned. The ramps were not supported and started making groaning noises. Clearly the span was too



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great for the car weight. In addition to that, the pallet racks were tilting off the ground at each end under the



weight of the car on the ramps.

I knew then that the racks would need to be secured to the ground. I

bought a couple masonry bits and 'molly' type bolts so I could bolt the racks to the garage floor. I also built supports for the ramps to sup-

port them about midway up. Drilling the concrete was a painful experience. It took almost an hour for each of the four (two per rack) holes that I drilled.



With the racks secured to the ground and the ramp supports in place, the Harbor Freight winch had no problem pulling the Seven up the ramps.

I did have one scare during this project. I had pretty much finished putting every-

thing together and was measuring the height of the Seven. I hadn't had the car in my garage prior to starting this project, so I had relied on published figures for the dimensions. The height of the Seven was given as 42 inches. What I came to find

out, is that measurement is to the top of the windshield. To the top of the roll bar is about 48 inches. That was too high for the car to fit under the open garage door. Luckily, the roll bar is only held in with two bolts (that also hold the top of the rear shock absorber in place). These just happened to already be loose, so the roll bar just lifted out. Problem solved.

All in all, this was a good project and it allows me to store two cars in the space of one. There is limited room work on that side of the garage, but hopefully it will only need to be a temporary solution.

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ed, and they were nice and smooth like in the picture. Not completely deserted though; just a few minutes after the pictures were taken along came the county sheriff.

Most interesting to me was how well the brakes worked. I almost never lock my Elan's brakes on pavement but locking them in the snow they felt very sensitive and balanced. It was easy to keep at least a couple of wheels unlocked and it was balanced side to side and front to rear. With antilock brakes on every new car we tend to forget what threshold braking is about; this was a good reminder. In snow I test a cars grip by periodically hitting the brakes a little to see how much it takes to lock them, sometimes in the rain too. It was nice to just feel the road rather than the frantic pulsing of the brake pedal like on my daily driver. But not to get carried too far away; as nice as Elan's brakes are, they are no match for antilock brakes on modern cars.

The car got around in the snow fine (mild understeer unless provoked) thanks to a Spyder chassis, Quaife limited slip differential and all-season Michelin mini-van tires. I expect it would have been an order better in these conditions with narrower 155 series tires instead of the 175's.

