



Long-time supporter of the Graduates Racing scene, Graeme Smith, was at Spa for their customary visit last Autumn.

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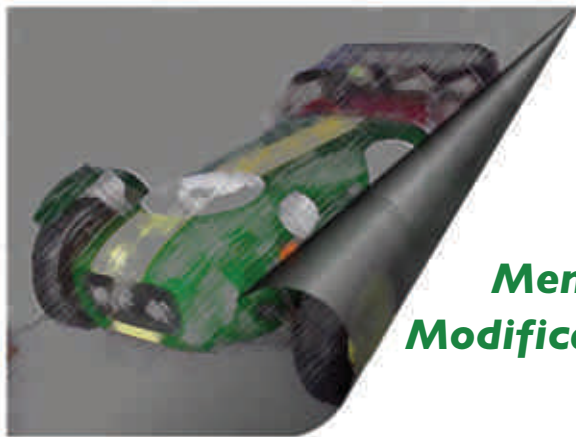
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March 2013

Lowflying

for Caterham and Lotus Seven enthusiasts

Lotus Seven Club

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into Leukaemia

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Long-time Club member and single-seater racer, Dick Dixon is the subject of this month's member profile.

www.lotussevenclub.com

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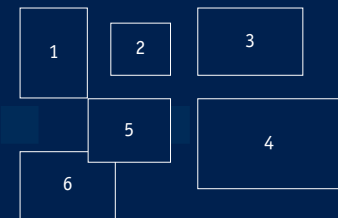
The fridge door



This month we present a selection of pictures from last Autumn's photography competition that didn't make it on to the calendar; we thank again all those who took part - we'll include more of those entries in future issues.

The photographers featured here are:

- 1 Gill Lawes
- 2 Colin Park
- 3 Martin Phipps
- 4 Liz Hole
- 5 Chris Harris
- 6 Paul Head



Our Membership Secretary reports
on life beyond the phone line...

SAM'S BLOG

It's that time of year again which fills me with excitement – event season is about to begin! I have been taking entries for the Speed Championship – our series of timed sprints and hillclimbs taking place at many locations around the country. I have visited the Speed Championship at Llandow and Shelsley Walsh and it is very interesting to watch. There are six different classes, based on power output so that those competing are up against cars with similar performance. I am also on standby for bookings for the Brands Hatch trackday on 22nd August. Further details of the Speed Championship and a booking form for Brands Hatch trackday can be found in this issue.

The AR Meeting in Thame is upon us: I have the Agenda prepared and laptop at the ready to take minutes. Unfortunately I was never taught shorthand, but am a pretty fast typist so as long as I have a computer and know everyone's name, I can usually keep up! The problem with larger meetings is that people tend to talk over each-other and split into smaller groups, talking quietly between themselves. This could have easily have happened at the last Management Team meeting with 20+ people attending and it is down to the Chairman to keep everyone focused and interested in the current Agenda item, without getting everyone's opinion at once; not an easy task! I have been very lucky that all the Chairmen of the L7C whilst I have worked here, have managed the group well and for that I am thankful!

On 18th February, we opened the doors of our new office in Abergavenny town centre. The landlord of our old office went into liquidation over Christmas and so we decided to move as we no longer felt secure in our tenancy. Our new office is based closer to town, in a central location and is a larger office. We offer services to the public like photocopying, binding, typing and laminating; I am confident that we will increase footfall being closer to town. The company is expanding – we have five members of staff now and we were outgrowing our old office anyway, so we feel it is fate! We feel it is a good long-term move and I am very excited about the coming year.

Chairman **Martin Bushaway**



team talk: website redesign project

AS ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH, 2013 will be the 30th year since the Club was founded, a time at which the concept of 'web pages' and 'forums' could not have been imagined. Today, of course, our online presence has grown and developed to the point that over the past year our sites had at least 135,000 visitors, and over 17 million page views. All our IT needs to date have been carried out by our Webmaster, Barry Sweeney, on a purely voluntary basis.

The Club's online set-up has been added to over the years and now encompasses diverse sections such as Blatchat, the lotussevenclub.com homepage, my.lotussevenclub and 7faq. However, there is limited integration between them as they have been developed and introduced as the Club's needs have changed over time.

These wide-ranging sites have a great deal of content, which is invaluable as a source of reference to us all. Our aim is to bring these various aspects together in a new website, with just one log-in needed to reach all parts of the site, with improved layout to enable easy movement and searching throughout all available content.

Of course, websites are now also virtual shop windows and a new site would be designed to show prospective members the advantages of joining up, such as access to Members Benefits, an electronic archive of past copies of *Lowflying* (giving members the ability to search for articles on solutions to problems, upgrades and even just polishing your car).

The Club forums will continue to be free for all to view, although we may consider limiting full functionality to members only. We do need to highlight the many tangible benefits to starting and continuing Club membership and access to our archive of material is a prime example.

The ever popular *BlatChat* will remain, albeit with an improved format. It is a vibrant forum which last year had a total number of site visitors totalling 54 times the Club membership, proving the vitality and value this resource brings the Club.

The large amount of content to migrate and the configuration of the current sites does mean that this process will cost approximately £25,000 although this cost does include the creation, design, testing and training necessary.

We have formed a small working group consisting of Shaun Elwell, Club member and IT Project Manager, Richard Anderson, Club member and IT Developer and Barry Sweeney, our Webmaster. They have produced a tender document, searched for suitable Design Companies and reviewed the returned pricing for suitability for our needs. We now have an agreed route to travel.

We are able to mitigate a proportion of the above costs by carrying out the migration of our existing content ourselves, which Barry and Richard are keen to do. Should any other Club member have the time and skillset to help in this task, their assistance would be much appreciated for what will be a 'challenging' task. Please contact Shaun by email at shaun.elwell@lotus7club.com

I do fully appreciate this is a large sum of money to spend on a single project, however there are many valid reasons to consider this as a beneficial endeavour:

- We will all gain from the improved ease of use and additional features available. With the increasing use of technology in our everyday lives we need our website to work seamlessly.
- The website is our most important shop window and we need to show the Club in all its diverse facets to maximum effect. At the moment, Club members make up only a small percentage of the total viewing figures which does show a huge untapped potential.
- It will show a tangible benefit to becoming a member where the whole site and content will become available. With the advent of 'free to use' social media it is vitally important we offer sufficient benefits to encourage joining the Club, and continuing with membership.
- For the Club's new online presence to achieve the goals we have set, we do need to build the site in its entirety from the outset; should we take a more piecemeal approach and add functions at a later date, we do run the risk of ending up with an inconsistent website.

With our current membership numbers, the Club is 'cost neutral', with income and expenditure being fairly evenly balanced. The cost of developing and implementing this new and integrated website does not significantly eat into the Club's hard earned financial reserves and compares favourably with the annual cost of producing our much-loved Club magazine.

We must look to the future and endeavour to bring in and retain further new members in addition to our current members, projects such as this will aid us in this task. We are not ready to fall into the 'diminishing classic car club' category; Caterham Cars continue to increase the pool of Seven owners globally and this club should be increasing its membership proportionally each year.

I am ever mindful that we are spending money which belongs to us all, so should any member wish to discuss this further please contact either Shaun or me. Also, if anyone has a particular wishlist of features, then please get in touch. ■

News and events

National kit car show Stoneleigh

The event takes place over the Sunday and Monday of the Bank Holiday weekend at the beginning of May. The dates we were supplied with for the this year's show (which we published last month) were incorrect; the show is open on Sunday 5th and Monday 6th.

Stoneleigh Park, the Royal Showground is near Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

General event information can be found at www.nationalkitcarshow.co.uk

No Limits Tour of Mann Friday 14th – Sunday 16th June

With summer on its way, why not come and join us on a trip to the Isle of Man? The No Limits Tour gives you the chance to enjoy the stunning scenery and fantastic roads that the Island has to offer. Most Sevensers will arrive on Friday 14th on the 11.30am fast craft sailing from Liverpool. Return fast craft sailings are on Monday 17th at 7.30am and 3pm.

On Friday evening we'll drive out for a Fish-and-Chip supper. On Saturday will be touring the key sights with an evening get-together. Sunday morning gives you a chance to try out a few laps of the exhilarating TT circuit. After Sunday lunch we'll have a photo shoot in the TT pit lane – and a chance to continue the fun.

We have a combined travel and accommodation package from the ferry company, or you can book each element independently. Look out for further details on *ChitChat*. **Mike**

Scott

For more information, please contact mikeandmary@manx.net

Retro & Classic action day Saturday 29th June

We will have a Club presence at Castle Combe circuit again this year for their Retro & Classic action day. There will be space for up to 60 Sevens to be parked and displayed on the Club's pitch. There are also 60 free admission tickets offer and deals on passes to take your car on track. See the events Diary in this issue for more details.

News and events

Silverstone Classic 26–28 July

The Silverstone Classic takes place on 26–28 July 2013. In common with just about every sports car club you have ever heard of—and several you’ve never heard of—the Lotus Seven Club will have its own dedicated area and the esv will also be in attendance. Provided you are driving a Seven you will be able to park on our stand; its location has not yet been finalised but for the last couple of years has been on the infield, a shortish walk from Village corner.

The event itself is probably the biggest Historic race meeting in the world and features huge (50-plus) grids of saloons, sports and GT cars, Gp C and Formula 1 cars from 50s to 80s. The racing is excellent, but even better is the access-all-areas policy which Silverstone applies—you can walk anywhere you like in the two paddock areas and access to the pit garages is also completely open. Add in scores of trade stands, evening music, terrific

From the top: Sevens and their owners begin to assemble at last year’s event. At the more modern end of historic racing, Group C cars are a big draw. Elegant 1950s sports-racing cars in action with Lotuses in the mix. Photographs by Tom Slatter.

displays of road cars and the company of thousands of like-minded enthusiasts and you have the perfect recipe for a weekend’s motor sport. Practice is on Friday with racing on Saturday and Sunday. Try to make a long weekend of it—you can easily spend a full day just wandering around the paddocks...

TICKETS

Go to silverstoneclassic.com and as long as you book before March 31 you can get a two for one ticket deal, accessed by the car club reference C13202. Club bookings can be made until 31 May but you won’t get the early-bird BOGOF deal after 31 March.

Please note: advanced bookings only—no tickets sold on the day; see Diary for details.

Peter Griffiths will be providing updates on stand location and other news on *BlatChat*. Book now and we’ll see you there! **John Aston**



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Ray checks out a familiar circuit from the other side of the barriers; his Seven is a Superlight with the 150bhp 1600cc Sigma engine and 6-speed gearbox. *Picture by Fresh Orange Photography Ltd.*

SILVERSTONE HELD A 'taster' trackday on a Sunday in February. As a member of the marshalling team at Silverstone and being more used to seeing the track from the other side of the barriers, I thought it would be a good idea to have a go.

My track experience over the decades has been limited; I did get to do a racing driver's school back in the eighties, on the old Club circuit, driving a Formula Ford; and then for my 50th birthday, I went to Thruxton and drove an Aston Martin and a Formula Renault single-seater.

These days, I only get to drive around Donington Park from time to time, but that's at a very modest pace—mainly because the Rescue Unit I'm in has trouble getting moving at all, let alone up to race speed!

Anyway, my trackday started with a briefing and instruction on getting around the corners; I had also chatted to other marshals who do a bit of circuit racing for tips on braking points and suchlike. So, with all this knowledge buzzing around my head, we set off for three laps behind the pace car. The idea was that this would demonstrate the racing line, but when



*Experienced race marshal **Ray Couchman** took his Seven on track for the first time at Silverstone.*

you find yourself six cars back (and the one in front is an Astra) this wasn't that effective. Soon, the pace car pulled in and we were off... I didn't push too hard at first, so I could get used to the handling, and to be fair, I didn't want to do any long lasting damage to my pride and joy. I did see 110mph on the Wellington straight, but having seen all too often what happens when you get it wrong at Brooklands, I erred on the side of caution.

Nevertheless, it was a great experience and I shall certainly be looking for more track time when budget allows.

If you'd like to take your Seven on track for the first time, check out our open pit lane events at Cadwell and Brands Hatch or the Sevens-only sessions arranged at Brands and Oulton Park. You can get some free one-to-one tuition too; see the Diary of events for more details.

Maiden flights: welcome to our new members

Mr C and Mrs L Bowdidge, New Milton

Dr T and Mrs G Carter, Sheerness

Mr David Crockford, Guildford

Mr G Fincham and Ms T Mcgrillen, Sudbury

Mr Blethyn Howfield, Merthyr Tidfil

Mr G and Mrs K Howgill, Huddersfield

Mr Duncan Jones, Basingstoke

Mr Mike Lamplough, Trowbridge

Dr Derek Mariner, Salisbury

Mr James Messham, Milton Keynes

Mr Paul Sharp, Godstone

Mr Nick Smith, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Mr N and Mrs A Wakeling, Trinity, Jersey

Mr Les Wood, Glasgow

and to these former members who have returned to the flock...

Mr Andrew Ashby, West Malling

Mr Graham Baker, Aylesford

Mr Peter Clark, FRANCE

Mr Paul Dangerfield, Douglas, IOM

Mr R and Mrs K El-Asmar, UK

Mr Alan Ferguson, Edinburgh

Mr Jerry and Mrs Celia Parker, Ashburton

Dr A and Mrs R Wong, Burton-on-Trent

We're always pleased to hear from new members: tell us a little about yourself, how you first became aware of the Seven and how you are getting on with the Seven experience (or, maybe, how you tried, but couldn't live without one!).

Restoration

In January we read about the restoration stage of Neil Wakeling's mission to bring an historically interesting Seven back to life. This month we see what happened once the work was complete and the car returned to the track on a huge public stage. Once again Neil was talking to Michael Calvert.

THIS INSTALMENT WILL bring us up to date with the life, so far, of Lotus Seven registration OO 9149. This was the car that gave future Formula One driver Piers Courage his first taste of racing, was sold on to be used for road, track and ultimately sand racing, before falling into complete disrepair. Discovered and purchased by current owner Neil Wakeling, the car was given a complete restoration, a process which was completed in early 2012. Neil's initial intention was to use the Seven both on the road, and for competitive speed events, but the interest sparked by the car was to open some unexpected doors. Neil takes up the story...

OO 9149

Having been a long term fan of F1 and having followed Piers Courage's career from early days, I knew that Frank Williams had been a great influence in Piers' racing career. Frank had been a friend of Piers at the time he first built this car and, of course, Piers was driving for Williams at Zandvoort in 1970 when an accident so tragically took his life. I therefore thought it might be worthwhile contacting Frank to tell him that Piers' Seven was still in existence, and in the process of being restored. To my surprise, he accepted my phone call immediately—he remembered the car well and was extremely enthusiastic about the fact that it was being readied for the road once again. Moreover, he made the kind offer that once the restoration was complete, he wanted to invite its surviving owners and those who had been involved in its restoration to bring it to the Williams headquarters for a reunion.

Towards the end of February 2012, the car was just about complete. James Whiting had given me the latest progress report on the

restoration and Frank Williams had one of his staff put together an itinerary for our visit. It was decided that James and Ruth Whiting would bring the car in a transporter, and Alan Wesson (chassis builder) and John Watson (Lotus Seven historian and archivist) would also attend along with myself and previous owner Don Ginn. Unfortunately, Peter Smart, the third owner was away on a long trip in the Far East.

We were asked to arrive at the Williams HQ just after 1pm and I could barely contain my excitement when I saw the nearly-completed Seven for the first time as it was rolled out of the transporter. The car was unloaded some distance from the museum and conference centre entrance where we were to meet, which gave James the opportunity to drive it around the perimeter roads. Once Paul Hardiman, the journalist and photographer had arrived, our host called Frank Williams and he came and met with us all and inspected the car in some detail.

We were given the opportunity to drive the

A family connection at Goodwood's Festival of Speed press day: the Lotus Seven Series 2, originally raced by Piers Courage, alongside the controversial, and Courage-liveried, Lotus 'twin chassis' F1 car from 1981.

At the time, Imperial Tobacco, owners of the JPS brand, also owned the Courage brand – this livery appeared largely due to restrictions on cigarette advertising. Although a Courage heir, Piers' racing career had not been funded by the family's wealth.

car around within the complex; this created quite a buzz and a small crowd gathered. I thought that it was appropriate that Don should be the first of the past owners to drive the car and this was an experience he clearly enjoyed. Bearing in mind that this visit was taking place in March, it became quite chilly after an hour outside and the entire party was invited into the conference centre for refreshments. We had the opportunity to speak with Frank Williams for a further hour or so before being taken on a personal tour of the private Williams F1 museum. All in all, an absolutely magical day.

Still high on excitement after our Williams visit, I could have had no expectation that things were about to get even better...



Below: Re-introducing 00 9149 to Frank Williams at Grove. Since they first met, Williams has gained a Knighthood and the car has gained an extraordinarily chequered life story (as has Sir Frank, actually).



Going back in time slightly, the theme of the 2011 Goodwood Revival had been *The 100 years of Ford in Britain*, and I had been lucky enough to be invited along to display a Ford Capri which I own. At this event, I happened to be speaking with Jack Tetley, who is one of the organisers responsible for the selection of cars for both this event and the annual Goodwood Festival of Speed. He had heard on the grapevine about my ex-Piers Courage car, and that it was undergoing restoration.

Jack was in the process of assembling a shortlist of cars for the Festival of Speed 2012, where Lotus was going to be the featured marque. He had a number of Lotus Sevens in mind already as potentials to attend. However, he also wanted to know whether my car →



00 9149

was finished yet. I had to tell him that it was not, but I did mention that we had a deadline to get it completed—our visit to Williams in early March.

Lo and behold, a few weeks before our trip to Williams, I got a call asking me if I would be willing to take the Seven to the Festival of Speed's press preview day. I readily agreed, but asked why they wanted it at the press day. I was then told, to my delight, that they would be extending this invitation to a full entry to the Festival of Speed as part of the Lotus line-up. They had decided that mine was the car that they wanted at the Festival because it was a fresh restoration which hadn't been seen in public before, and of course, it has an interesting history. They also liked the fact that, because the owners since Courage are all still alive, its history over this period is well documented. I vowed I would put together a clear storyboard so that the public could read about its every step when on paddock display.

The event itself ended up surpassing my every expectation. The cars, the drivers, and even the weather contributed to an amazing experience. On the morning of the first day though, things weren't looking good on the weather front; as I readied myself and the car for the first run up the hill, the heavens opened. Sitting in my paddock slot, a marshal came round and told me to get ready to leave. Not looking forward to the inevitable drenching I was about to receive, I asked if it would be possible to wait a few minutes, to which he readily agreed. During the next few minutes before I did need to set off, the rain stopped, and sunshine was to grace us for the remainder of the weekend.

My first run, on a still-wet and narrow track, was a cautious one, but the car ran faultlessly all weekend and my times got better and better. Not that it necessarily looked like I was going that fast—I had Emerson Fittipaldi driving up the hill just before me, so the little Seven probably looked rather pedestrian! The general idea throughout the weekend was that cars would drive up in batches of similar types. However, as we were part of the Lotus Demonstration, we went up in a group of our own. Within this, they intended to send up the single seaters first; but, inevitably, drivers approaching the start line would get side-lined by autograph-hunters and end up out of the cars, so we all got rather mixed up and just ran when we were told to.

The car looked and sounded great, and it performed well all weekend—a testament to a

wonderful restoration job by James Whiting. I know I'm biased, but I have to say that out of all the cars in the pits, the Seven was the one permanently surrounded by a crowd. There was plenty of interest in the noticeboard we had made up, showing history of the car right the way through its life. Particularly pleasing, was that a number of people had seen that a Seven was going to be present had turned up with pictures of their own cars to show us and talk with us about.

The hillclimb drive itself up the famous Goodwood hill, in front of the crowds, was a pretty scary affair. Many people cite the closeness of the flint wall as being of most concern, but having hillclimbed in Jersey, Guernsey and France where events tend to be held on closed public roads, I'm rather used to that. What is far more dangerous is the risk of getting a wheel on the grass, because you would just



become a passenger... As my times fell over the weekend, I got closer and closer to clipping the grass just as much as I dare, but running on skinny cross-ply tyres, it paid to be careful. Unfortunately, the times of only a few were logged, so I don't have a record of my performance over the weekend's six runs, but it really was an honour to participate, even if it couldn't really be classified as competitive motorsport.

Of course, the other amazing thing about the day was the number of famous racing drivers who were taking part. As a lifelong motorsport fan, being amongst them meant that I was absolutely in my element. On the very first day, I was in the changing rooms getting ready for my run, when I found myself helping Sir Stirling Moss to get his jacket on (he doesn't wear overalls!), and then helping

John Surtees to get out of his leathers and into his race suit. In another corner of the room, former Formula One drivers Jacky Ickx and Jackie Oliver were having a chat. There were so many of my heroes in one place!

Things got even more exciting (or maybe surreal?) come the afternoon. I found myself driving to the start-line with Surtees and Moss in front of me and Fittipaldi and Oliver right behind. As we were scheduled to run at the end of the batch of runners, we had about a thirty minute wait before competing, so all the drivers got out of their cars to congregate for a chat.

On the second day, instead of driving back to the paddock, we were asked to drive the cars to the lawn outside Goodwood House and arrange them in a ring for a photo opportunity. Emerson Fittipaldi came up to me and said "I enjoyed talking to you yesterday

please tell me more about this Lotus Seven which I understand was owned by Piers". He proceeded to spend the next half hour regaling me with stories and recollections about Courage's life.

It appears that Emerson was lined up to drive for Williams in 1970 as No. 2 to Piers Courage; however, during the previous winter—and after his swift rise to prominence—he had been approached by Colin Chapman and ended up taking a role with Lotus instead (*Fittipaldi subsequently made his Grand Prix debut at Brands Hatch, a month after Courage had died. ED*). One of the first things that Emerson had to do with Lotus was to take a Lotus Seven to each of the European circuits, to learn them as best he could. The reason for using the Seven was that the seating position was seen as being as close to that of a single →



Right: Neil (in the race suit) with James Whiting at the Festival of Speed.



Left: On the hill at Goodwood, running in the featured class of historic Lotuses.
Photo by Martin Bushaway.

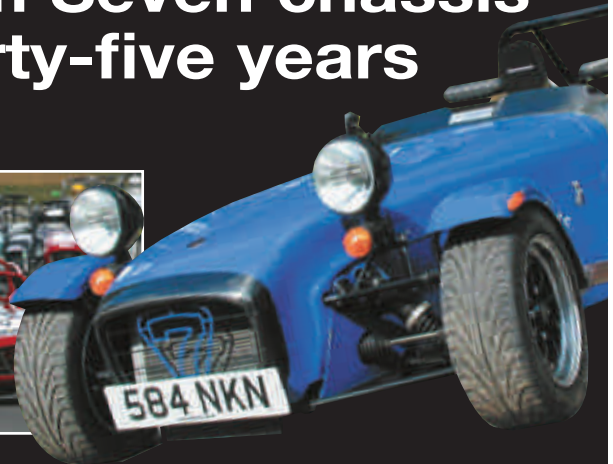
Below right: A family get-together – Seven Series 2, 49C (as used by Fittipaldi for his Grand Prix debut, see text) and 72.

Below: Not the usual 'along the bonnet' shot: ahead is Stirling Moss in the Rob Walker Lotus 18 (see also above).





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Right: Beautifully presented and attracting interest at the Festival of Speed.

Photo by Brent Chiswick.

Far right: Seven and McLaren separated by a few feet of Goodwood's grass and half a century of history.



Amazing collection of cars assembled in front of Goodwood House; the more you look the more gems you find...



seater as you could get in a road car. I asked him if the theory for learning the circuits had worked, to which he said, "No, not really, but it was great fun!"

Later he gave provided possibly the most memorable moment of my weekend. He had asked what I had enjoyed most about this event, to which I replied that I obviously loved the mix of amazing cars on show, but that I really liked the fact that it gave an opportunity for the public to mix with professional and amateur drivers. He put his hand on my arm and said "I don't like what you just said there. Don't ever use the words amateur and professional when it comes to drivers". I wasn't quite sure how to take this, but he then asked "Why do you do this?"; to which I could only answer "Because I love cars." "I love cars too" he told me, "the only difference is that someone once decided I should be paid to do it, whereas you do it out of your own passion. I don't believe in this amateur and professional thing." I was taken aback by his sincerity and friendliness. He gave me his email address and

made me promise to keep him up to date with my, and the car's news.

This was truly a memorable weekend, the like of which I suspect I will never experience quite the same again. My Seven was, without doubt, the least valuable vehicle competing, yet that chance discussion some three years earlier—which led to my buying it for restoration—had opened a door into a world I would never have imaged having access to.

So what of the future? This car and its restoration have consumed my life for the past three years. The project has been immensely enjoyable, I have made many new friends, and it is my intention to continue showing and using the car at various events as much as possible. Even before the Festival of Speed, the car's first 'official' outing was at the Jersey International Motoring Festival in St. Helier. Journalist Paul Hardiman had been following the story of the restoration with a view to preparing a feature for *Octane* magazine (yet to appear). We thought it would be appropriate for Paul to drive the car in the sprint, so he

could experience a driver's view for his article. I was already entered to drive my 1965 Sunbeam Tiger and my daughter was driving our 1971 Merlyn Mk20 FF1600 single-seater. Suffice to say, the Lotus—'straight out of the box'—performed faultlessly, whereas the Merlyn broke down!

I certainly hope to attend some of this year's Club events in the UK; it will also be displayed, and will hopefully compete, at the two Jersey historic motor festivals this year, which are ideal events for a car like a Seven.

As an aside, it may be of interest to Club members that whilst the organisers have a '1978 manufactured' cut-off date for these events, the Classic & Vintage Motor Racing Club of Jersey do have a special 'silhouette' class for all Lotus Seven derivatives, so as to allow more modern cars to compete. I know that some Club members already take advantage of this, but anyone else wishing to compete, and have a holiday in sunny Jersey at the same time, would be very welcome!

Visit www.classicandvintagejersey.co.uk

The Seven grill(e)



Left:
playing with the big boys—Dick
tries out a Surtees TS11 F5000 car.
Below:
in the same car at Oulton Park's
Knickerbrook chicane.



Seven people

This month, John Aston puts the questions to Dick Dixon.

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M A LIVERPOOL SCALLYWAG who was taken to Ware in rural Hertfordshire when I was too young to fight back, but my parents never saw me again because I was far too busy on my truck or off trekking on my bike to come home very often.

When I grew up, relatively speaking, I joined the London Fire Brigade and found myself at Tottenham Fire Station—the third busiest in the World. There was all the action I needed—and the legendary social life of the late 1960s and 70s; let's just say it was pretty lively. My claim to fame is that my firefighting was so effective that I saved a corner of Alexandra Palace; in fact, I saved it so well that they gave up trying to demolish it after the fire and it is still standing...

In the mid-80s I got closely involved with running Lotus Seven Club activities, including editing *Lowflying* – I took over from David Mirylees and thoroughly enjoyed it.

BET YOU'VE GOT SOME ANECDOTES ABOUT THOSE DAYS, DICK...

As you mention it—probably the thing I remember with the most amusement was when we organised a trackday at Goodwood, only to be contacted by the Onyx Grand Prix Team who told us that they needed to do a shake-down test before heading on to the Continent. We weren't too happy about this, until they told us that Stefan Johansson would only need ten laps or so and that Onyx would pay for the whole day's circuit hire. I took their arm off! (*Formula One anoraks may remember that the man behind Onyx, a flamboyant Belgium called Jean Pierre Van Rossem ended up in jail for tax irregularities... JPA*).

WHAT IS IN YOUR GARAGE, DICK?

My Seven of course, a 1964 s11 1500, which I've had for forty years and which I had wanted since I was eight. I've got an Elan m100 which replaced an s3 Elan; the trouble was that something was always going wrong with one of three old Lotuses so I got the newer one – my other Lotus is a Type 61 Formula Ford. I've always wanted to race and I bought this car stripped down and in boxes twenty years ago and had to build the garage before I could put it back together. More about the 61 later...

ARE YOU CAPTAIN SLOW OR THE STIG?

I seem to have two speeds without realising it. I am too fast when I'm with my wife Jane

but without reducing speed I seem to be just about normal when she isn't with me—how could this be? I do respect the lower speed limits but on some roads I sort of tend to forget them...

YOU'VE WON THE LOTTERY – BIG TIME – WHAT'S IN THE DREAM GARAGE?

Any Lotus which Jim Clark used to drive—or maybe what he would have driven if he had lived longer, so a Lotus 72 would be just fine. *So what about road cars Dick?* (Sounds of Dick asking Jane what they would have on the road if they had lots of money?) Dunno—Jag, Aston Martin? Go on then, an Aston but no idea which one as they all look the same. (*Do you get the impression that Dick prefers track action to road cars? I thought you might. JPA*)

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE RACING DRIVER AND WHY?

I never actually saw Jim Clark or any of those heroes from the 60s, so I suppose I'd nominate James Hunt; he was posh, rich and he got the birds—he was all that a racing driver should be. In current racing, I'd have to nominate Simon Hadfield who is an historic racing god. He drove my 61 at Dijon and after just a few laps he came in with a list of things to do which, when done, hugely improved the car's performance.



Above:
in his more familiar mount, the Lotus 61, heading a variety of machinery in a mixed-formula single-seater race at Spa; this is the chicane which replaced the 'Bus Stop' near the end of the lap.



Right:
one of the most distinctive of all Formula Ford cars, the 61, from the marque's series of wedge-based designs—56, 57, 58, 63, 64, 70, 72, 73, 76...

WHAT WAS THE LAST MOTORSPORT EVENT YOU ATTENDED?

Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit for a race in Historic Formula Ford. I'm never going to be a front runner—unless of course there is a potential sponsor amongst the *Lowflying* readership? Yeah, thought so. So I'm always in the thick of it—what David Coulthard calls 'the mess'—where there is lots of racing and lots of incidents too.

Well, after 21 years racing I finally had my 'big one'. I had a 100mph kiss on the straight from another driver which took us both off, along with two of my wheels. I was trying to

steer an 80mph sledge for some time until I came to a sudden stop. The good news was that I then knew how I would be spending my winter...

WHAT ARE THE TRACKS OF YOUR TYRES?

I do wish I had a more musical brain, like some of my friends. I might say Kinks, Stones and Beatles but I'd be missing out Arthur Brown, Led Zeppelin, even some punk, some zany French number (*Tell us more? JPA*) and so many more I can't remember until I hear them. Manuel Falla's 'Ritual Fire Dance' and Handel's 'Zadoc The Priest' do it for me too

(*Well, it can't be too long until we have another Coronation. ED*). I guess I like anything which moves legs and emotions at the same time.


WHEN AND WHERE WAS YOUR PERFECT DRIVE?

Back at Brands: a very wet afternoon a few years ago. I started 17th on the grid in the Lotus 61 and if I'd had another half a lap I would have got third. My car loved it and I just sat there overtaking everybody in sight. Or was it when I was leading 25 Sevens through God's secret country on a Hertfordshire to North Wales run, or watching 155 Sevens →



Have established myself as an older classic Lotus 7 / Caterham 7 specialist, for the past 39 years. I have specialised in buying and selling older sevens ranging from late 1957 to early 1990s models.

I began by finding lotus sevens in the Exchange & Mart magazine, and progressed from there, forming a good relationship with many '7' like minded people worldwide. We are a small family run business and I am a proud Lotus Seven Club Member of many years.



Mike Abbas

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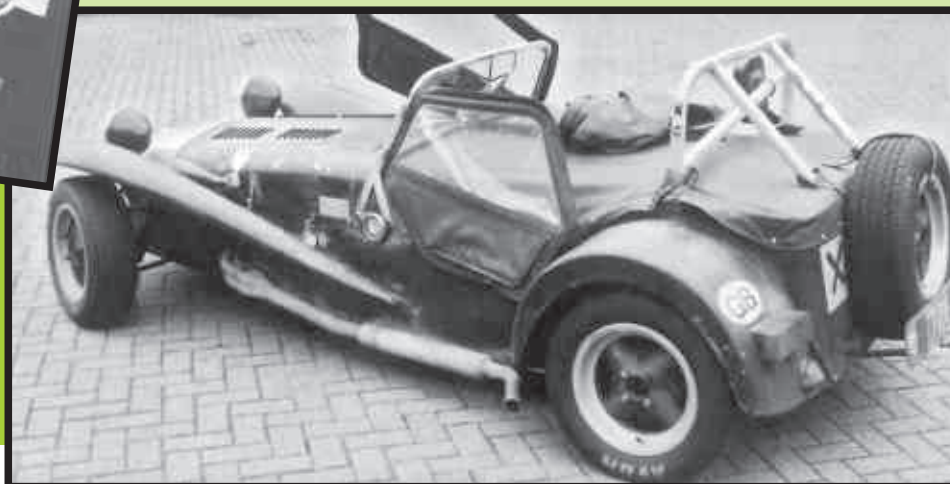
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Member profile



Before becoming fully occupied with historic Formula Fords, Dick was a regular, and successful Class 1 competitor in the Club's sprints—he was top points-scorer for two seasons; here, in 1994, he is presented by John Rees with his second successive T&J Fire trophy (quite fitting for an ex-fireman...).



Dick's Seven, as it appeared in Lowflying in 1993, after the great 'Engine Shoot-out' which involved eight Sevens put to the test on Oselli's rolling road. Engine types included BMC A-series, Rover K, Crossflows, Zetec and Vauxhall, Dick's car being (beneath those wings) a 1964 Series 2 with a 1500cc pre-crossflow, Elan CR gearbox and a 4.11:1 differential.

heading around the M25 to lap Brands at an International meeting? Then again it could have been the time when one really scruffy old Seven was so well geared for Harewood Hillclimb that it blew even the V8 away on a Westfield play day. Actually, I was embarrassed as much as they were.

But maybe my highlight was when I drove a Formula 5000 car... *I am insanely jealous—your didn't race it did you?* Oh yes I did—in the Oulton Park Gold Cup. It was a Surtees TS11 owned by Greg Thornton and raced in period by Sam Posey (*an American £5000, CanAm and TransAm racer, and occasional Grand Prix driver. ED*). I could hardly fit in, couldn't get comfortable, couldn't steer it properly and I was acutely conscious that it was somebody else's car. But once I got out on the circuit it was staggering; quite seriously I wondered why all the Formula Two cars in front of me had suddenly slowed down on the straights, because nothing prepares you for the kick which a 500 horsepower V8 gives you in a single-seater. I suddenly felt that Cheshire had become a very small county and, as Keith Norman—another £5000 racer—said to me in the paddock after the race “driving one of these things is like taking a dinosaur for a walk”. I've been lucky in having some amazing drives: I also drove the Levante 450bhp V8 Seven on the road—that was quite quick...

WHEN YOU ARE NOT SEVENING, WHAT YOU ARE DOING...?

I help run the Historic Formula Ford series as drivers' representative; I'm involved in a local history society as I am a bit of an arm-chair archaeologist; I have some building

projects I play with and I fix very bent Formula Fords for a hobby—this year at least. I used to get involved with helping somebody in Historic Formula One—I remember taking a Lotus 72 and the Eagle Weslake (*the prettiest Grand Prix car ever built, JPA*) down to Monaco for the historic race meeting. As soon as I opened the back doors thousands of Japanese appeared with cameras and then Dan Gurney, Belgium Grand Prix winner in 1967 in this very Eagle came over to shake my hand (*I am now boasting that I have shaken the hand of the man who shook hands with Dan Gurney. JPA*). That event also gave an interesting perspective on just how good even the backmarkers in Grand Prix racing are. Alex Yoong was driving the 72 so he could get some experience of Monaco before the Grand Prix. He'd never driven a car like this but was still second on the grid and, after an incident during the race, when he was following the pace car for several laps the car became stuck in fifth gear but he still only lost one place. Believe me—even the ones who look hopeless in Grands Prix are normally on a different level to the rest of us.

WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE LOTUS SEVEN CLUB FOR YOU?

Its enthusiasm—especially from the management team. I was very lucky a long time ago to find a great bunch of guys and girls when I took things over—Guy and Sarah Munday, Jim and Ruth Whiting, Barry Sweeney, Nick and Julie Richens, Lol and Dor Pilfold and more; I wish I could remember them all. We all worked together in creating the basis for what I think is a brilliant, all-

encompassing club and one which was created solely through enthusiasm. I love the fact that as a member you can compete or just show your car off—and everything in between.

BEST BITTER OR CHAMPAGNE?

Definitely both. Actually, none of that bitter stuff but proper stout or porter. Also the old adage 'life is too short to drink cheap wine' is ringing true these days—so I try to uphold that too.

GARAGE SECRET – JUST HOW MUCH SWARFEGA DO YOU USE?

Lots! Unfortunately there aren't any fairies in the garage that do the jobs on a couple of forty-year-old cars. I was also fortunate to be taught engine-building by Crossflow guru Roger King in exchange for doing some grubby jobs. That was a real education.

AND FINALLY, DO TELL US – WHAT REALLY WAS YOUR SCARIEST MOMENT?

Bad question. I have had moments when I have been too engrossed to be scared, such as hanging on to a fire jet fifty feet above the ground whilst travelling from one factory roof to another due to too much water pressure; that focuses the mind, a bit like my last race did... As does fighting a fire next to a huge boiler that was about to blow up. You live through it and then I suppose you label it as scary when you have had the time to think about it... ■

DICK, THANKS FOR TALKING TO US

We're hoping that Dick's Formula Ford will back in action at Cadwell Park's HSCC meeting in April, when Tiff Needell is planning to be in the fray with his Lotus 69, shown in February's issue.



1983...

As we prepare for a big celebration this year, we look back at how it all started. Below is the text of a letter from our founder, David Mirylees, which first appeared in Lowflying in May 1989; it describes life before the Lotus Seven Club, the original owners' meetings and how the Club came into being.

Where it all began...

The announcement of our first International Meeting, which led to the formation of the Club as we know it.



WELL BEFORE THE formation of the Lotus Seven Club as we now know it, there were a few areas in the UK where a number of Sevens had found themselves among similar company. The consequence of this was that the chaps met at regular intervals to talk about their 'pride and joys'. Remember, at this time there were very few Sevens on the road and if the occasion arose where you spied another like vehicle, you didn't just wave, you stopped and chatted, perhaps found the nearest pub, had a drink together, and generally felt good about the world!

The Bristol Area was probably the first to have such a meeting, arranged by Terry Scouse and another owner, back in the late sixties or early seventies shortly followed by yours truly, and it grew and grew. Sundays were nearly always blessed with a meeting of some kind, perhaps a hillclimb at Prescott, or a race at Castle Combe or Thruxton, and the Sevens would trek their way to these events with pictures taken at every opportunity.

Unfortunately, as the owners grew older, married and settled down, the urge to attend such race meetings waned, and nowadays the activities are reduced to the monthly pub chat with the rare inter-club skittles match.

Similarly, a chap named Ron Wood and a couple of Seven owners met and got together in the Manchester area and that meeting is,

today, still going well. It is possible that there were other like-minded chaps having meetings but they are not, as yet(!) known to me.

Caterham came into the picture in 1973/4 and took upon themselves the task of instigating the Lotus Seven Club, produced a magazine and also arranged a local meeting in Surrey. Unfortunately, after only two editions of the publication, the pressures and time to run such a club were unavailable and to all intents and purposes, the club 'died'. There was also around this time a meeting held at The Feathers in Hertfordshire (some of you may remember that classic photograph of a number of Sevens parked under the floodlights at the Feathers).

A chance call to Caterham in 1981 informed me of the first ever International Meeting for Sevens that was to be held in Switzerland, shortly after the 24-hour race at Le Mans, which I had intended to visit. Well, it sounded too good to miss, so two Sevens made the trek to Switzerland, via Le Mans and the South of France.

To cut a rather long story short: I returned home utterly embarrassed by the hospitality of the Swiss and amazed at the love shown to their cars, and indeed us, their guests. They sported 'Britain is Great' T-shirts, used Union Flag tablecloths and were apparently more British than we were—and we build the cars!

Not to be outdone, the end result of all this was that on my return to the UK I started to make arrangements for the first International meeting here in England. The venue was to be Beaulieu and the date, May 1983.

I had moved to Wales in 1972 and of course had met other Seven owners, and I set up the meeting with their aid. Over the two days of the meeting, some 135 Sevens arrived at Beaulieu and made it the largest gathering of Sevens ever at this time.

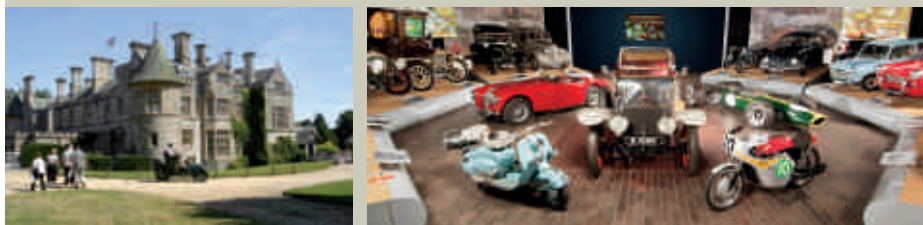
A by-product of this meeting was that a number of Seven owners, 'lost' without a club to join, asked to be put on the mailing list of the Welsh contingent which already produced a monthly news sheet.

Well, that really was all there was to it... the numbers grew and eventually I approached Lotus and Caterham; and the Lotus Seven Club was officially relaunched.

From those early days, there have been many more local area meetings held on a regular basis, and that news sheet has grown to become this superb newsletter that you are now reading. As you can imagine the club has most definitely outgrown the organisational skills and time of yours truly, and is now run by a management team of enthusiastic and dedicated people. (I have owned a Seven since 1967, so I think my regard for the car is pretty obvious). **David S Mirylees, May 1989**

LOTUS SEVEN CLUB 30TH ANNIVERSARY BEAULIEU SATURDAY 1ST JUNE 2013

- Celebrate thirty years of the Lotus Seven Club at Beaulieu, home of the National Motor Museum.
- Beaulieu holds an important place in the Lotus Seven Club's history, as it was the location of the first international meet, and where it all began (see facing page).
- As well as general entry to the museum and Beaulieu's range of other attractions, there will be special events for Club members, including:
 - A fun, precision-driving event
 - Low-speed autosolo event
 - The presentation of a birthday cake from Beaulieu
 - Marshalled parade lap around Beaulieu grounds open to all Sevens
 - Trade stands
 - An aerial photograph of all the Sevens present will be attempted, possibly forming a figure 30



...2013

BOOKING NOW!

Entry tickets are £15 per adult; £10 per child (5-17 years); under 5s free.

Tickets are available for order now via the Club office and **must be booked in advance**.

Please see the booking form and booking details over the page.

TRADE STANDS

Trade stands are welcome; cost is £50 per stand, including tickets for two people to man it.

CATERING

Lunch will be available from the on-site Brabazon restaurant – or bring a picnic!

ENTRY DETAILS

The gates open for members from 8am.

The National Motor Museum and other Beaulieu attractions open at 10am.

Our Sevens will be parked around the Arena in the centre of the action.

ACCOMMODATION

For those wanting to make a weekend of it, a good source of information on local hotels and B&Bs can be found at www.thenewforest.co.uk

ATTRACTIONS

This is an event for the whole family and your entry tickets will also provide access to:

- The National Motor Museum
- Bond in Motion (the world's largest official collection of original James Bond vehicles)
- Palace House and Gardens
- Beaulieu Abbey
- World of Top Gear attraction
- Rides and drives including the monorail, veteran bus and mini-cars for younger visitors

LOCATION

Beaulieu is set in the heart of the New Forest, a short drive from Southampton and the M27.

MORE DETAILS...

We'll publish more news of the event next time, but in the meantime you can find out more about Beaulieu and the National Motor Museum at www.beaulieu.co.uk

News

New sponsor for Club's speed events series

Simon Rogers reports



I AM PLEASED to announce that the Club's speed series has a new title sponsor—Evans Coolants. Consequently, this year's series will be renamed to the **2013 Evans Coolants Lotus Seven Club Speed Championship** and the competitors' handbook has thus been renamed 'The Cool Book'!

Evans Coolants are manufacturers of a unique waterless engine coolant range which has become popular amongst many performance and classic car circles for its exceptional properties.

We hope that Evans will benefit from the Club's national championship status and that we will see them in attendance at some of our events. We also hope that this will be the start of a long and successful relationship.

From the Club's perspective, the sponsorship arrangement brings a number of significant advantages. As well as the opportunity to be associated with a growing brand, the deal helps us provide a 'thank you' gift to the organisers at each event, which is typically raffled and donated amongst the volunteer marshals—without whose assistance, motorsport as we know it would be impossible.

Waterless...

The story behind a revolutionary engine coolant.

Although the name may have only recently become familiar in the classic car scene, Evans Coolants has been supplying waterless formulation coolant for internal combustion engines for more than 20 years. Even as a newcomer to our sector, Evans has quickly established a high profile for itself at classic car shows and has an increasing presence on the UK's historic vehicle motor racing stage.

US-based innovators John W Evans and J Thomas Light have been developing this waterless coolant technology since the 1970s. Their conclusion, after years of experimentation (especially in NASCAR racing) was simple: pouring water into your radiator may not be the best way to keep your car cool. Messrs Evans and Light believe you should ditch your toxic antifreeze coolant mix and replace it with Evans Waterless Engine Coolant.

Evans first offered its cooling mixtures to American car enthusiasts in 1994, making the universal part-water, part-glycol antifreeze mix, in their view, redundant. Evans Cooling Systems, based in Connecticut, with UK operations in Swansea, now has 21 issued US patents, more than 40 foreign patents and numerous patents pending.

Thermal efficiency

The company's range, which includes specific formulations for performance, classic and vintage engines, all take water completely out of the equation. Evans' coolant is said to

help engines to run more efficiently, minimising power losses. Where, with water-based coolant, pockets of steam can form around the cylinder liners, waterless coolant remains liquid, thus offering more effective heat transfer, and eliminating hot spots around the combustion chamber. The overall effect, Evans claims, is a more efficient engine.

In addition, removing water from the cooling system also removes oxygen, as well as water-borne minerals, all of which can cause corrosion. The waterless coolant also boils at a higher temperature than H₂O (in excess of 180°C), meaning the cooling system doesn't have to be under such high pressures to prevent boiling over, which reduces strain on engine components. It also offers cold-conditions protection down to as low as -40°C.

Purge, drain and fill

Offered by 40 nationwide distributors, Evans waterless coolants should never have to be changed during the engine's lifetime. If you need to work on your engine, simply drain out the Evans coolant and store it for re-use. To first prepare your engine to transition to Evans waterless coolant, you need to simply run the preparation fluid through the cooling system (to purge old water and antifreeze), drain then refill with waterless coolant.

High-profile names are claimed as enthusiastic converts to the brand, including America's self-styled No.1 petrol-head Jay Leno.

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Lotus Seven Club 30th Anniversary event Beaulieu June 1

booking form

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TOTAL AMOUNT (payment enclosed) _____



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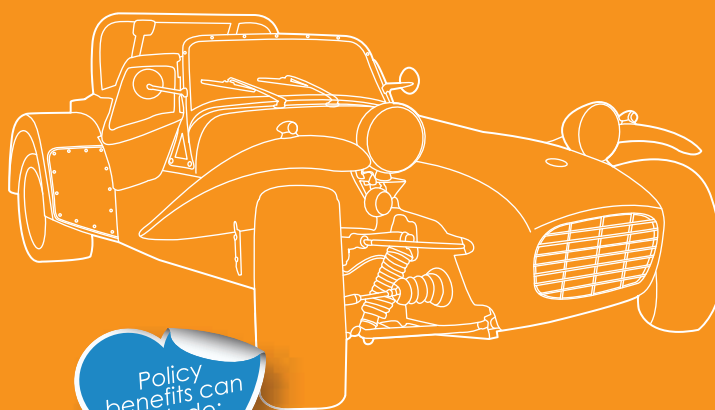
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Workshop

*Dampers—or shocks or shockers, whichever you prefer—are obviously important contributors to the handling of your car and the more sophisticated models are highly tuneable, some offering separate adjustments for high- and low-speed bump and rebound, although a combined adjustment for bump and rebound is more common. But you can go further: **Stuart Woolley** describes fine-tuning his Nitrons by revising the composition of the shim stacks.*

MANY INTERNET VIDEOS and write-ups discuss how to swap valve-stacks in a shock absorber to achieve a different ride, but there is very little public knowledge on the theory of changing shims within the valve stacks themselves to customise your suspension setup.

The original set-up on my Nitron shocks was unsuitable for my needs, and the cost of having them shipped back to the UK from Africa where I live, have them re-valved was a bit high—so I decided to have a go at doing it myself. Luckily, I've been re-valving suspension for motocross and enduro bikes for a few years, so I had some prior experience and knowledge. And I can say that the process was quite straightforward, and I am extremely happy with the results. With a bit of effort and the aid of this guide, you should be able to achieve the same!

SHOCK TACTICS

Let's start with the back-to-school basics before we get to the shock absorbers themselves, as certain things need to be right for the shocks to do their job correctly. The movement of the suspension arms needs to be as friction-free as possible for good suspension movement. Spherical bearings are the best, but nylon bushes can be very good and last for a long time, as dirt cannot make its way into the bushes very easily. With rubber-bonded bushes you are never going to have an ideal set-up. Also, your ideal spring rates will differ depending on your usage and your car weight. It's not good practice to have very soft springs and then try to compensate for a soft ride with stiff shocks, as the ride will feel harsh. On the other hand, having springs that are too stiff and shocks set too soft will result in a bouncy, uncontrolled ride. When set up correctly, you should be using all the suspension travel and on a fast blat the suspension should bottom out occasionally.

SHIM THEORY

Rather than being overly-specific about re-valving, this article will be more general—to keep it shorter—and will take you through how to change a valve stack to make it stiffer or softer, and how to adjust rebound and compression. It will also go over two-stage valve stacks for softer rides and more suited to lower speeds, harder rides for higher speeds, and how to pre-load shims in the valve stack.

Gaining a softer or harder set-up will require the shims in the valve stack to be replaced by shims of different diameter or thickness, or to add or remove shims to or from the valve stack.

Figure 1 is a schematic side-view sketch of the internals of a Nitron shock absorber. From the top, we have the nut and the rebound valve stack (each horizontal line representing a shim), then the main valve body (or piston), followed by the compression valve stack and the main bump stop plate. Both valve stacks

essentially act as one way valves—allowing fluid to flow past in one direction, but providing much resistance to flow in the opposite direction. The main valve body will normally have four holes for oil to pass through for rebound, and eight holes to pass oil for compression.

Figure 1 will be very close to what a standard valve stack will look like in your shock. The many shims in the compression and rebound valve stacks result in a firm ride.

Figure 2 differs from Figure 1 in that the compression valve stack has an annulus near the valve, which pre-loads the first shim onto the valve. This will only allow oil to pass once it has reached a critical pressure, making the ride very firm over little bumps in the road and helps to stop the car from diving under braking, but it will act as normal over larger bumps.

The valve stack shown in **Figure 3** can be achieved by removing some large diameter

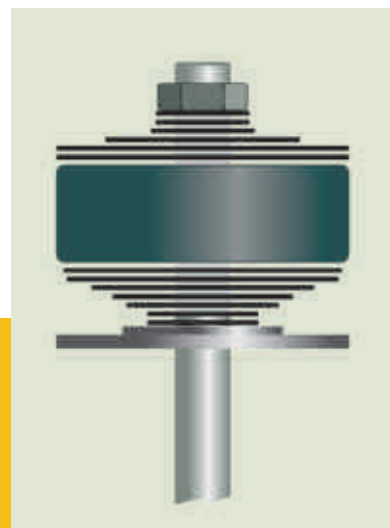


Fig 1
hardest valve stack

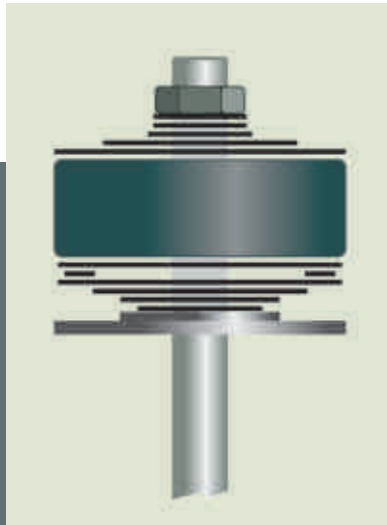


Fig 2
hard valve stack with pre-load

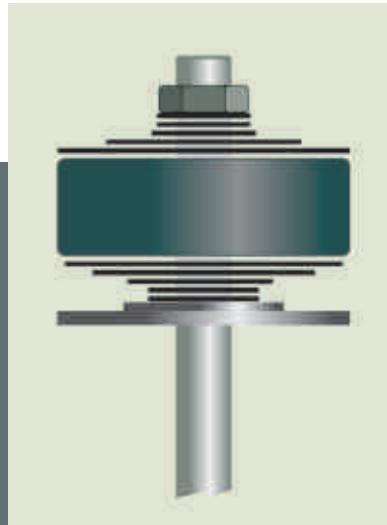


Fig 3
soft valve stack

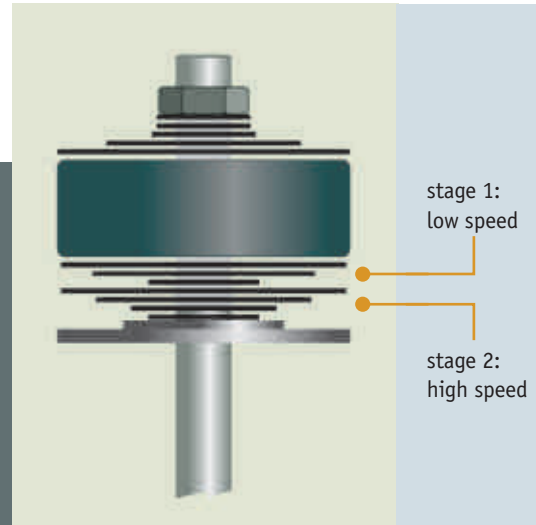


Fig 4
two-stage valve stack

Fig 5
Typical examples of shim stacks with shim thicknesses shown in mm

relative stiffness	1st shim	2nd shim	3rd shim	4th shim	5th shim
hardest stack	0.2	0.2	0.2	—	—
harder	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
medium	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	—
softer	0.2	0.2	0.1	—	—
softest stack	0.2	0.2	—	—	—

shims, if there are more than one, and one or two intermediate shims. The resulting ride will be much softer. In the case that there is only one large shim and you want a softer ride, the shim can be replaced by a thinner one.

Figure 4 depicts what is known as a two-stage valve stack. This configuration can give the best of both worlds, as one stage is responsible for low-speed damping and the other deals with the high-speed damping. In the first stage, two or three shims are followed by one to three small diameter shims, and then the second stage can start with two or three large shims. The idea is that the first stage shims bend for slow-to-medium speed until they come into contact with the second stage—suddenly increasing the resistance to flow—at which point greater high-speed loads are required to bend the shims in the second stack. Changing the number of small shims in the centre will change the point at which the second stage comes into effect. When set

up well, the two-stage valve stack will result in a smooth ride but with good resistance to bottoming out.

NOTES

It is very important to note that your first shim (the shim closest to the valve body) completely covers the holes on the main valve body to create a seal.

In all of the figures here, the small diameter shims next to the large bump stop washer on the shaft side, affect the high-speed compression. The compression shim stack should bend enough to contact it, and fitting more small shims will make high-speed action softer.

When removing shims from the compression stack to make it softer, you will have to make the rebound stack softer to keep the ratio balanced.

When replacing shims, you have to bear in mind that the thickness of a shim plays a

major roll in the resistance to oil flow. For example, the resistance caused by a single shim of 0.2mm thickness is greater than two shims of 0.1mm thickness—it is actually more nearly equivalent to three 0.1mm shims. And the resistance of two 0.1mm shims is less than that of a 0.15mm shim.

To point you in the right direction towards getting a softer setting on a shim stack, I have drawn up a table, **Fig 5** (above) of shim stacks, with each stack being one step softer than the previous one:

Bear in mind that these will be for the main part of the shim stack which is located against the piston and do not include the several shims of reducing diameters that are also part of the valve stack.

Obviously the number of possible shim stack combinations—when you start to include shims of 0.15mm thickness and start varying the outer diameters of the shims—can be quite immense, but you will quickly →



Shock tactics

find that there is only a narrow region of combinations which will suit your car and your needs. To give you a true example, I'm using my front shocks with 300lb/inch springs and the valve stacks I'm currently running with are shown in the second table, **Fig 6**.

My car is used on the road as well as track-days and gymkhanas (*something akin to our slaloms or autosolos in the UK*) and to me, this feels much better than the standard set-up. When I get some thinner shims, of 0.15mm thickness which allow even finer adjustment, I will dabble a bit more and see if I can improve things further.

Fig 7 shows the shock absorber adjustment valve, which is controlled by the adjustment knob on the bottom of the shock. When screwed all the way in, it will cut off the oil flow through the shaft bypass holes. When fully opened some oil can bypass the valve stack, resulting in a softer ride than when the adjustment valve is closed. If the valve stack set-up is too hard and the adjustment valve is open, the shocks will behave better at slow speeds, but will still feel stiff at high speeds.

The type of oil that you use is another tuning variation available to you. Most shocks will use shock oil on the range from 2.5w to 7.5w. Most motorcycle shops will sell good quality shock oils, which are where I get my products from. I only use 2.5w oil, as thinner oils move through the valve stack quicker, resulting in a more responsive and less harsh action.

If your shocks have a separate nitrogen canister, you will have to release the pressure before you strip them. As a tip, once your shocks are assembled and bled, you can use a small pump sold for mountain bike shocks to pump the canister pressure up to 10bar for testing; once you are happy with the set-up, you can purge them with nitrogen.

I'm sure there will be a few places willing to sell you shims, but to save you some time, try out Racetech in the USA who can supply you with shims, shaft seals and bump-stop rubbers. You can see their range of shims and products at www.racetech.com

Note that Nitron shock absorbers use shims with a 12mm inside diameter.

DISMANTLING

If your car has been corner-weighted, mark the shocks so you know which one goes where when reassembling, and measure and record the spring lengths. Unwind the adjusting nut and remove wire clip. You should then be able to remove the spring seat and the spring from the shock.

Clamp the bottom of the shock in a vice-fitted with soft jaws, so that you don't damage anything. Use the tool shown in the **Fig 9** (a pin spanner—for my Nitrons I needed one with 6mm pins) to unwind the shock nut. Proceed to carefully remove the internal shaft.

Drain the oil and clean the chamber out with benzene, or a similar substance, which will remove any oil and anything suspended in the oil.

Remove the top nut from shaft, making sure the shaft remains upright. Using a long screwdriver or a thick wire, slide all the shims and piston off of the shaft, taking note of how the piston was mounted—as it will only work when mounted one way—and place, in order, on a paper sheet, **Fig 11**.

Fig 6

Example: shim stacks currently used by the author
Nitron front shocks with 300 lb/in springs, mixed road/track use
see text

compression stack

- 1 shim of 35 x 0.2mm
- 1 shim of 32 x 0.3mm
- 1 shim of 24 x 0.2mm
- 2 shims of 18 x 1.0mm

rebound stack

- 1 shim of 35 x 0.3mm
- 1 shim of 32 x 0.3mm
- 1 shim of 20 x 0.2mm



Fig 8

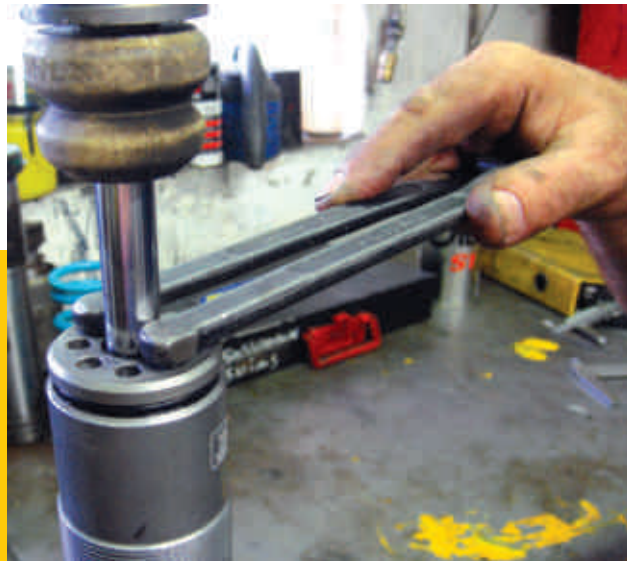


Fig 9
using a pin spanner to unwind the piston nut

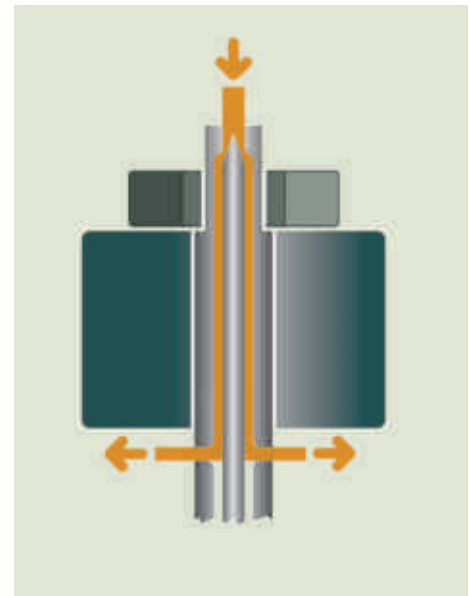


Fig 7
adjustment valve
see text

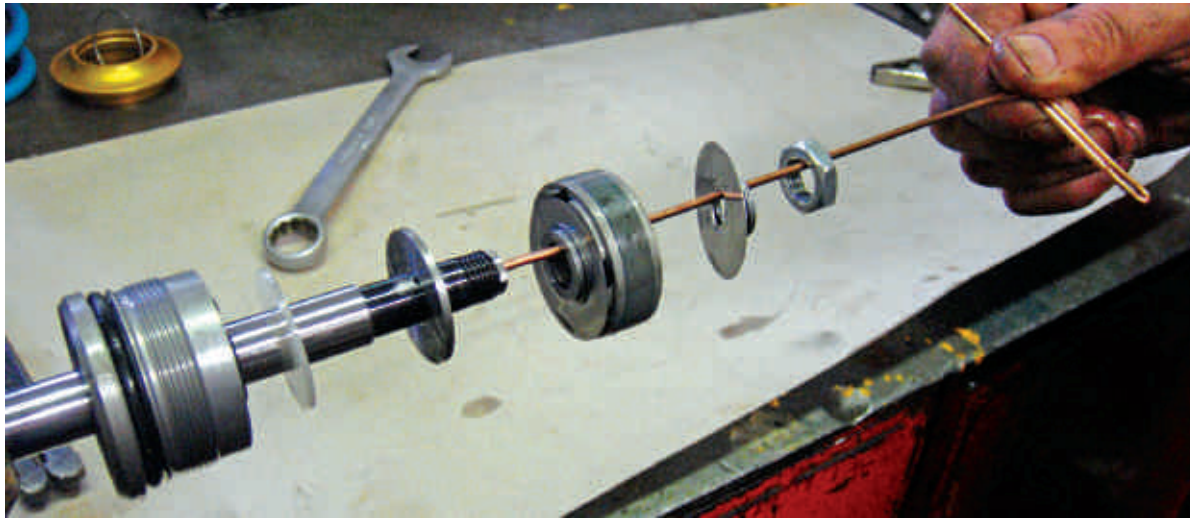


Fig 10
unthreading the components from the shaft onto a piece of wire or long screwdriver

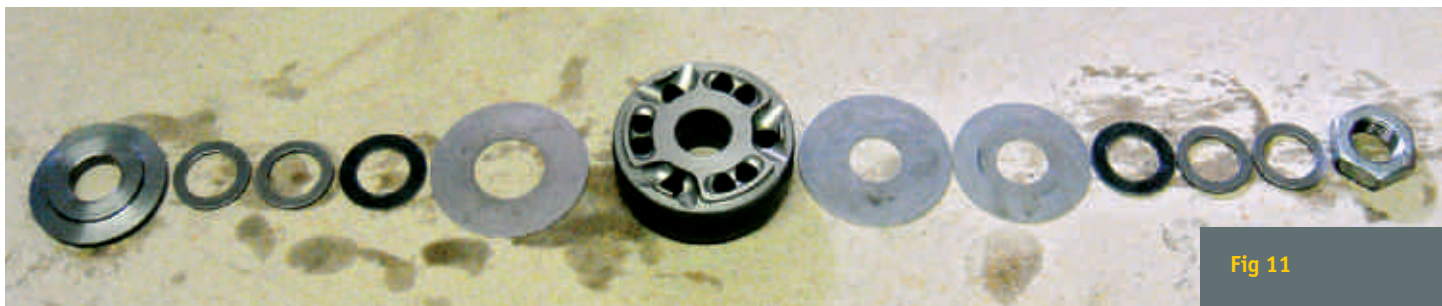


Fig 11



Fig 12
close-up view of the shims and spacers above and below the piston



Fig 13
tapping the shaft and piston assembly with a non-marking hammer to expel any trapped air from the oil



Fig 14
when raising the piston again within the body, take care not to allow air to sucked back in



Shock tactics

Do not remove the piston seal nut from the shaft unless you are changing the shaft seal.

Laying all the shims and the piston in order simply helps you keep track of the sequence in which everything is placed, and makes it easier to identify where shims should be added or removed. In **Fig 11**, from left to right we have the bump-stop plate, spacer shims, compression shim stack, piston, rebound shim stack, spacer shims, and the nut that keeps the valve stack altogether. Make a list of the shims in each stack for reference at a later stage.

REASSEMBLY

In the correct order, slide the spacers, shims and piston on to shaft, followed by the nut, with one drop of blue Loctite.

For Nitron shocks, the nut should be tightened to a torque value of 18 Nm (13.3 lb.ft).*

Fill the body with new oil. Slide the piston into the oil, moving it up and down a few times with a bit of force to release any air bubbles. Raise the piston near to the surface of the oil, but do not let it come out of the oil as it will suck air into the system. Make sure the shock adjuster screw is turned all the way out.

Hold the shaft and tap the end of the shaft with a rubber hammer. This action forces oil through the valve stack and displaces any air that is trapped between the shims and within

the piston. You will need to continue tapping the shaft until all the all of the air has been expelled from the system, while topping up the oil level when necessary (**Fig 13**).

Once all the air has been expelled, fill the oil up to the top of the chamber and slowly raise piston so it is level with the threads—about 20 mm down the bore (**Fig 14**). Be careful not to raise the piston too much or it will suck air into the system and you will need to purge it again, tapping with the hammer.

Still holding the shaft, slide the shock nut down the shaft and screw it into the threads. Oil should bleed out from the groove on the side of nut, which indicates that the system is completely full of oil, and does not contain any air. Do not over-tighten the nut, as it's the o-ring that seals the shock.

Place the bottom of the shock on a rag and push down hard to compress it until it hits the bump stop; then release it and let it return under rebound. Now do the same with the adjusting screw all the way in, and there should be a noticeable resistance under rebound and compression. If that checks out, adjust the adjustment valve to a position that will suit your needs; or try setting it halfway between fully-opened and fully-closed, then use it to fine-tune the shocks on the car. ■

A word of caution

This article is intended as a general guide only, and although it is based around Nitron dampers, the concepts should be common to many damper makes.

As always, before undertaking any DIY task on your car, **please ensure** that you are comfortable with undertaking it safely as we cannot accept any liability for problems which you may encounter.

* We did take the opportunity to pass this text via Nitron's technical department for feedback. They made a couple of comments which should be taken into account when reading this advice...

"The torque value stated in this article for the piston nut is too soft at 18 Nm. We use 33 Nm (24 lb.ft).

Also the article does not mention what gas pressure to use – this is crucial whether for air or nitrogen."

On a Club event a couple of years ago, I spotted a Caterham with a small additional mirror mounted on the windscreen. I spoke to the owner, who told me that he spends a lot time in southern France and that on returning to this country, often find himself struggling with a blind-spot when driving on motorways. He told me that this wide-angle mirror resolves the problem and has the added benefit of not vibrating as much as the door mounted ones do.

I traced the make, Stadium, and found that it is sold at Halfords for just over £4. It's meant to clip onto a sun visor to help you keep an eye on the children! After a year's use, I can say it's a great item – it helps you see who's in the outside lane, although it does takes a while to get used to estimating distances due the mirror's wide-angle curve. It is also a great help when reversing.

When I found the most useful mounting position, I fixed a piece of insulation tape to the screen as a reference, and this also prevents any permanent marks on the glass. As I had been told, the mirror

Of mirrors and missing handbags

Mike Harley recounts a tale of lost-and-found, the kindness of strangers – and a useful gadget...

does indeed remain stable at speed and the only real limitation I have found is that it can only be used when the hood is off.

The picture shows it fitted – you will need to accept my apologies for the filthy windscreen and the range of dead wildlife, but there is a story and a justification for this...

We had just had a very fast 40-mile run though the small vineyard roads around Chablis, much

to the delight of the vineyard workers who had clearly heard us coming and were out on the roadsides, waving furiously.

Why the speedy run? Well, following a leisurely lunch beside the river, Kate had left her handbag – which contained our passports, documents and money – on the back of the car when she climbed into the passenger seat. Of course, it fell off onto the road as we left.

Luckily, it was found by a local lady, who took it to the restaurant, guessing we had eaten there. It was only when we arrived back at the campsite that Kate had what can only be described as 'One of Those Moments'.

"My bag, where's my bag? Oh my God! – you'll have to go back. Go fast. Very fast. My life is in that bag!" So I did.

Much to our relief, the restaurateur had the bag and everything was intact. In the meantime, he had also contacted the Police, explained what the bag contained, given them our registration



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number and told them to be on the look-out for a black Caterham.

So, after thanking everyone for their kindness, I made the return journey but this time, at a more sedate pace (well, most of the way anyway!)

We have heard of a couple of thefts from cars and tents in France in the past, so it was great to know that there are many good, honest people about. Anyway, Kate is now on a 'restricted' wine intake when in France, even though she uses the excuse that she needs a glass or two before she rides as a passenger with me...



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or 01223 292 400
rachael.sangha@lotus7club.com

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 please visit www.caterhamclub.no
 or contact:
 ▶ Christian Brechan Aas
 CBAA@StatoilHydro.com

N

Oxford

The Railway Inn at Culham, just off the A415
 Abingdon-Dorchester road
1st Tues
 ▶ Brian Soper
 01235 531632
brian.soper@research-sites.com

Reading, North Hants and Berks

(ReHab)

2nd Wed and last Thurs
 The Phoenix, Phoenix Green, Hartley Wintney,
 RG27 8RT (on the A30, between Basingstoke
 and Camberley)
 ▶ Andy Webber 07721 722111
andwebber@aol.com
3rd Sun, at 1pm The 'AWESOME' Meet
 The Old Hatchet, Hatchet Lane, Cranbourne,
 Windsor SL4 2EE
 ▶ Tony Whitley
www.7rehab.co.uk

Scotland (North)

Roving venue - please contact for details
 ▶ Nigel Simpson 01561 362153
northscotland@lotus7club.com
www.jock7s.com

Shropshire

The Burlton Inn, Shrewsbury SY4 5TB
last Tues at 7.30pm
 ▶ Clive Bridges
 01743 232466 or 07855 837335
 ▶ Martyn Edwards
 01939 210908 or 07712 117283
 emails for both: shropshire@lotus7club.co.uk

Somerset and Wessex



The Crown, Rumwell, Taunton,
 Somerset TA4 1EL
1st Thurs at 8pm
 ▶ Roger Ashelford
 01823 270373 (h) or 07796 266742
somersetwessex@lotus7club.co.uk

Staffs (Mid-)

The Swan with Two Necks, Longdon,
 off the A51, between Rugeley/Lichfield
3rd Thurs
 ▶ Colin Heseltine
 07774 878475 colin@ntuk.net

Suffolk

The Scole Inn, at Scole, near Diss. (IP21 4DR)
1st Mon at 7pm
 ▶ Geof Carlton Smith
 01728 860608 or 07775 938405 (m)
geofcarltonsmith@intamail.com
www.carrotland.co.uk

Surrey

The Parrot Inn, Forest Green (near Ockley)
3rd Tues
 ▶ Mark Garnett 07766 162032
 ▶ Gordon Cross 07990 822631
 emails for both: surrey@lotus7club.co.uk

Sussex (East)

The Gun, Chiddingly, TN21 0JU
2nd Tues
 ▶ Chris Barclay
 07816 770697
eastsussex@lotus7club.co.uk

Sussex (Mid-)

The Gardeners Arms, Ardingly, RH17 6TJ
last Thurs, from 7.30pm
 ▶ Nigel Roberts
 01403 249299 nuttynige@uwclub.net

Sussex (West)

The George, Earham, PO18 0LT, nr Chichester
2nd Weds
 ▶ Steve Newman
 01243 601943 or 07771 907401
steve.newman@lotus7club.co.uk

Switzerland

Lotus Seven Owners of Switzerland meet
 on the **1st Tues** of each month.
 ▶ Rainer Carspecken
 +41 79 401 52 02 (mobile)
chairman@lsos.ch www.LSOS.ch

CH

Thames Valley



The Pelican, Froxfield, on the A4, 2 miles
 West of Hungerford, towards Marlborough
1st Weds
 ▶ Nick Bassett
 07768 051428
 ▶ Ben Long
 07785 100 100
 both: thamesvalley@lotus7club.co.uk

Wales (North)

Glasfryn, Rakes Lake, Mold
1st Tue
 ▶ Paul Formston
 01352 754831 or 07970 663442
paul.formston@gmail.com
 ▶ Chris Proudlove
 01492 544514 chris.proudlove@gmail.com

Wales (West) 'The Nomads'



*usually at The Cresseli Arms, Pontargothi,
 on the A40, east of Camarthen
 please call, dates and locations may change*
2nd Weds
 ▶ Paul Andrews 07887 862527
nomads@lotus7club.co.uk

Wales (South)

Piercefield Inn, St Arvans, near Chepstow,
 on the A466, 1 mile north of
 Chepstow Racecourse entrance
1st Thurs at 7.30pm
 ▶ Alan Henderson
 01633 413020 or 07779 958937
alan@taffiacats.co.uk
 ▶ Dave Jackson
 07771 891947
c7top1900r@yahoo.co.uk

Warwickshire (North)

The Boat Inn, Stockton,
 A426 between Dunchurch and Southam
1st Weds
 ▶ Jane Varnum-Wilson
 07788 411861
warwickshire@lotus7club.co.uk

Warwickshire 7s

(Warwickshire South)

*roving venue (contact or check website, below,
 for latest information)*
Last Weds at 7pm
 ▶ Kevin Scott
 07714 767371 (evenings)
 ▶ Philip Ambrose
warwickshire7s@lotus7club.co.uk
www.warwickshire7s.co.uk

Wiltshire (North)

The Jolly Tar, Queens Road,
 Hannington SN6 7RP - 1 mile off the B4019
 (take junction at the Freke Arms)
2nd Weds
 ▶ Geoff Brown
 01793 876465
lsevencnwilts@tiscali.co.uk

Wiltshire (South)

The Bath Arms, Clay Street, Crockerton,
 near Warminster, BA12 8AJ
2nd Mon
 ▶ David Smitheram
 07718 368173
david@racelife.co.uk
 ▶ Paul Manning
 07989 600950 or 01380 828655
manningpaul@talk21.com

Worcestershire

Brook Inn, Callow Hill Lane, Elcocks Brook
2nd Weds
 ▶ **AR position vacant**

Yorkshire (East and North)

The Gold Cup Inn, Low Catton,
 near Stamford Bridge, York YO41 1EA
3rd Weds
 ▶ John Waters
 01482 632435
watersswanland@watersswanland.karoo.co.uk
www.york7.org.uk

Yorkshire (South)

Ladybower Inn, Bamford, Hope Valley,
 Derbyshire S33 0AX,
 on the A57, at end (or start) of Snake Pass
last Thurs
 ▶ Nick Henstock
 01226 765463 (h) 01977 655506 (w)
 07894 614217 (m)
nickh7@orange.net

Yorkshire (West) and Pennine

The Devonshire Arms, Cracoe, on B6265,
 4 miles N. of Skipton, on Grassington Road.
2nd Wed
 ▶ Charles Carter
 07831 668988
w Yorks@lotus7club.co.uk



Running header

On Wednesday 20th February, Caterham CEO Graham Macdonald spent the evening talking with a group of Club members. The event, organised by the North Kent Area, enabled a wide range of questions to be addressed. Stephen Hubbard reports:

MAN AT THE TOP

I ARRIVED AT THE PLOUGH, Eynsford early (having failed to reach Car Builder Solutions during opening hours) but not so early that I was at risk of being first to the bar or drinking alone. Two Area Organisers were there ahead of me and other Club members soon arrived, filling the main bar with chatter (but the car park was graced by just two Sevens and my 21).

The Plough is a great venue, a bright, neat, modern take on a traditional pub with no background music (this gets a big positive mark from me). Once we had ordered food, people moved to the upstairs area and the staff brought the meals to us. Graham Macdonald joined us soon after 7pm and engaged people in conversation as he too, ate supper.

By 8pm the room was well filled, as were those who had ordered food. Ian Bruce introduced Graham and over thirty members gave him a warm welcome.

Graham admitted that this was not going to be anything like his normal subject matter; he knows that most Club members already know plenty about Caterham Cars, its history and about the car itself. So he started by talking about his career and how he became Managing Director, having joined the company six years ago, to the very week.

He had started a Quantity Surveying course but one year of that was sufficient and he switched to studying accountancy. His career has spanned a range of companies, industry sectors and company sizes, encompassing retail, leisure, multi-nationals and SMEs. Three of his former employers which most people would recognise: Pontins, Brinks Mat and Brake Brothers.

However, he became most animated when talking about his father and his upbringing in Scotland. He worked in civil engineering, but his hobby was racing stock cars and Graham described his father creating a roll cage for one of them. As his father welded scaffolding poles, Graham was standing on the far side of the car, shouting out when flame came through! He then described standing in the back of this car, holding onto the cage as his father used the works yard to try and get the car sliding sideways.

Moving south of the border coincided with his first cars, starting with a lime-green MG Midget which benefited from a 1,275cc engine. This introduction to rag-top motoring was sufficiently memorable for Graham to have his Seven in lime-green too. Whether his next car was a step up could generate a lot of debate, but there are positive things to say about Triumph Spitfires too. We weren't told what colour the Spitfire was; presumably it was not lime-green. I suspect that there were a number of unmemorable tin-tops between then and now but these were not mentioned. ↓

Graham recalls that BlatChat was beset by posts which could have been written by Private Frazer – we're all doomed! – because the bean counter had taken over the principal office.

This background was just a run up to his arrival at Caterham in 2006, soon after Corven Ventures bought the company. The recruitment process took four months, which must have been very frustrating. According to Ansar Ali, it was Graham's passion for cars that swung it his way. At that time Caterham Cars was making a loss, but by 2010 (their busiest year), this had been turned into a million-pound profit. Over those four years Graham reported some dark days when cash-flow was a significant problem; there was at least one point where there was only enough cash to keep the company going for a single month, leading to difficult meetings with the bank

and the venture capitalists at Corven. Sadly, business has fallen back a little since 2010, but I am happy to report that more money is going into development than was the case under Corven. Indeed, one of the first decisions Graham made as CEO was to bring the sales and marketing teams together and plan what new models were needed.

Just at the time this decision to invest in development was being taken, Graham recalls that *BlatChat* was beset by posts which could have been written by Private Frazer – we're all doomed! – because the bean counter had taken over the principal office.

Graham moved onto the crucial part of his speech, dealing with where the company is planning to go from here. He told us that three new models would arrive this year. First is an €5 model to satisfy the European market for a more powerful car. Details of the others were less precise, but a replacement for the Classic should arrive at the July celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Caterham producing the Seven. The third launch was left intriguingly undetailed.

He touched on the importance of CTI, with its 85 employees, within the Caterham Group. As well as the obvious Alpine joint venture with Renault, other projects involve Tata, Nissan and the other companies within the group. With regards the joint venture itself, Graham expects the design of the mid-engined car to be signed off soon, with a launch due towards the end of 2015 or early 2016.

Talked moved on to the co-operation between the various companies within the Caterham Group: Caterham Cars, Caterham F1, Caterham Composites and Caterham Technology and Innovation. Whilst Graham is responsible for a distinct company within the

group, there is significant interaction—for example, Caterham Cars takes technical input from CTI. The F1 base at Leaffield is often used as the public face of the group, recently hosting the Prime Minister and a member of one of the Royal families from the Middle East. At the same time, the Caterham Group is just a part of the whole Tony Fernandes empire. One of the things that Graham wanted us to keep in mind was that Tony Fernandes has

Genk in Belgium which produces the 2-litre Duratec is to close (and in fact, may have already closed by the time you read this). Fortunately, Caterham has stocked up with engines, having been given a little notice of the end of production. However, the new, smaller capacity, turbocharged format in F1 reflects a trend across the whole of the motor industry and it is likely that Caterham will follow this trend over the coming years.

numbers sequentially and the slow speed at which administration works; much of the delay was apparently in the response times of VOSA. Other delays were in the re-engineering of the carrier, from which he learnt about the limitations of internal promotions. Much of the remedial design work on the carriers was done by two engineers recently recruited from outside the business. Graham added that whilst internal promotion was important to



Graham Macdonald (seen here on the Caterham stand at the recent Autosport International show) joined the North Kent Area and talked about growing up in Scotland, his background in industry and his life-long love of lime-green cars... Graham also answered members' questions about Caterham—the cars, the company and the future.

made a lot of dreams come true, despite the disparate nature of the companies that he owns. Graham also wanted to emphasise that Tony Fernandes' aims are different to those of venture capitalists, and this should prove very effective in the long term.

This lead well into the first question, which was about the influence of the Caterham brand's current position as a back-marker within the F1 field, and whether this was good for the image of the Cars business or not. His view was clearly that this is a double-edged sword, but whatever the current position in the F1 pecking order, just two years ago it would have been unimaginable that the 500 million people globally who watch F1 would see Caterham branding at all. At the same time, the Caterham drivers do not currently feature greatly in the TV coverage because they are back runners. However, Graham is optimistic that when the engine revisions arrive in 2014, the field will be shaken up, which may be beneficial to the Caterham team.

At this point in the evening Graham dropped a bombshell. The engine plant at

The next question concerned the move from the Station Avenue showroom and where its replacement would be. Graham described protracted negotiations—over several months—with Simon Nearn (the family still owns the freehold), which were brought to an abrupt end by an email received on Christmas Eve. This left a period of about seven weeks in which to secure alternative premises and make the relevant arrangements. Talks are now underway with a major dealership to take over a site—about 20 minutes drive from Caterham—which would offer a considerably more extensive facility.

I asked Graham about the saga of the BMW differential carriers, what he had learnt from the episode and whether he would do anything differently in the future. This problem arose very soon after Graham had become CEO. He talked about wanting to ensure that things were done correctly and done well, that he believed the thoroughness of the response was more important than a hurried one which might need to be redone. They had learnt about the difficulties of not using the chassis

Caterham Cars and their staff, he realised that experience from outside was needed too.

In the past there has been a 'Sevens for Schools' project, where schoolchildren could learn from the experience of assembling a car. This has always been based on the Classic, a model which is currently not available. The cost of rectification of those projects was considerable and this casts some doubt on whether the scheme can continue.

Another member asked what was the biggest hurdle to achieving more sales. Graham emphasised that it was not manufacturing capacity, for he could certainly deliver more than the present annual output of around 500 cars. He said that the first limit reached might be storage space (I imagine that every available space currently has a crated Duratec engine sitting in it!) but they could probably supply 800–900 cars per annum. He talked about the effects of the recession and changes in legislation, drawing particular attention to tax changes in France which have recently added a notable premium to the price of a Seven there.

Graham Macdonald

Questions were raised about the age of buyers and the proportion of kit-builds. Graham said that there'd been a recent trend towards an increase in the age of buyers, most likely due to the increasing cost of buying and running a car. This has also led to a decline in the proportion of cars supplied as kits. Of the output of new cars last year, slightly over half went abroad and all of these are supplied assembled. Roughly 230 cars represent the annual UK market. Of these, about 100 are supplied as kits, of which 56 are Academy Series race-cars. This leaves about 40 kits delivered to the general market. Thus, the remainder—approximately 80% of Caterham Cars'—output is now factory-assembled.

Graham is well aware that Club members act as a substantial, enthusiastic, informal sales force for the brand.

Graham was asked about the possibility of racing elsewhere than in F1. Le Mans was dismissed on the grounds of cost, but there may be other opportunities for a Caterham entry

in endurance racing with an SP/300.R or a special Seven, perhaps at the Nürburgring 24-hours. This would likely be used to showcase CTI. This brought us onto the development and production of the SP/300.R, where Caterham made the astute decision, after the design and development stage, to purchase all the rights to the design from co-developers Lola Cars before they ceased trading. The good news is that orders for the car are strong (at least, within the context of production planned at 20 cars per year).

Regarding the new Supersport model, which replaced the R300—did the name change reflect a decision to discontinue the 'R' identity? The answer was no, but there had been discussions within the company about range names, with Tony Fernandes concerned about an apparent lack of clarity—although Graham thought that most purchasers understood how it worked. However, the R300 had worked its way through its product life-cycle and he felt that a more powerful engine was insufficient news without a new name.

Finally there was discussion about the new Caterham Group badge. This is an emotive

issue on both sides; without doubt the new Caterham Group needs a cohesive identity, but many current Seven owners love the more traditional badges. From many Club members present, there was a feeling that the rectangular shape with angled stripes could be viewed as redolent of Austin Rover's logo from the dark days of the 1980s. From Caterham Cars' perspective, there was a feeling that the rectangular shape does not work well on wheel-centres. From Graham's response it appears, perhaps, that this remains a live issue and constructive suggestions are welcome.

On a really positive note, Graham reported that he was well aware how members of the Club often act as a substantial, enthusiastic informal sales force for the brand, and was keen to investigate how we could cooperate more closely.

I think I can speak for all present when I say that Graham greatly impressed us with his affability, his openness and his enthusiasm for cars in general and for the Seven in particular. He clearly still sees a long future for the model, despite the increasingly difficult task of homologation. ■



CLUB LOTUS

INDEPENDENT LOTUS SPECIALIST

UK · SPORTS · CARS

INDEPENDENT LOTUS & CATERHAM SPECIALISTS

Your Caterham Wanted

If you are thinking of selling your Caterham contact **Paul Clugston** to discuss straight sale, commission sale, part exchange or whatever

t 01227 728190 w www.uksportscars.com

Cars for sale

1989 Caterham 7:

Built from a kit by myself; short cockpit with cycle wings, ali with red glassfibre. Ford crossflow with twin 40's, engine lightened and balanced, big valve unleaded head, steel rocker posts, Aldon distributor with Aldon Ignitor ignition and a 234 cam, Ford Escort 4-speed sport gearbox, Marina axle reinforced by Caterham cars, Quaife torque bias slip diff, new glassfibre all round; half hood, tonneau and boot cover by Soft Bits For Sevens. Needs some TLC; sounds great and goes like hell! £7,995 but open to offers

contact: 07976 300289 or 01495 722106 or email lanestuart@aol.com

1996 Caterham 7 Roadsport:

1.6K Supersport, 138 bhp, 31000 miles, Caterham Red, cycle wings (bonded), 6-speed gearbox, Apollo tank, widetrack front/adjustable platform Konis, uprated 4-pot/ventilated discs, LSD, barely worn AO21's, heater and full weather equipment, FIA roll bar, leather seats, 4-point harnesses, Momo steering wheel, excellent condition. £10,800 ovno.

contact: Bill on 07831 101419 or bill@cwlaws.plus.com (East Cheshire)

Parts, miscellaneous

Brian James Minno 4-wheel car trailer:

Fitted with spare wheel rack (lower chassis assembly); 2003/2004 version used for Caterham Academy series, hardly used since, with very low mileage and in almost new condition. Pictures available. £1,400

contact: Ian Hoper 02392 593207 or email p.hoper1@ntlworld.com (South Hampshire)

Wanted

Super Sprint Seven:

With Rover 1.6 or 1.8 injected engine, de Dion, low mileage preferred. May consider unfinished project. Model from 1997 to 2006.

contact: Michael on 07721 999555 or email mike@global-vip.com

Caterham and Lotus 7:

Looking for unfinished project, crashed or damaged, anything that needs re-building and/or tlc, even incomplete cars. Can be ex-race cars; age does not matter.

contact: 07850 234585 or email wizz.robson@lookers.co.uk

Any pre-1976 Lotus cars or parts:

including engines, any condition considered, especially Lotus 7 models.

contact: Neil, on 07944 413111

Series 2 or 3 Lotus 7 (or Caterham)...

as a restoration project. Basket case, damaged or incomplete car considered.

contact: David Marsden dwmarsden1@btinternet.com or 01452 760474

Project 7:

Crashed, damaged, unloved – anything considered. Also interested in any early Lotus, from parts, engines to complete car.

Also wanted: 1960s/70s Clubmans, Formula Ford or anything interesting requiring work.

contact: Barry on 07990 841093

Ads are accepted for

Cars for sale

(Sevens only please)

Parts and miscellaneous and Wanted

Maximum 100 words

How much?

Club members, **Free**

(quote membership number)

Non-members, **£10** per insertion, inc. VAT

Payment by cheque

payable to 'Seven Club Limited' sent to the address below

Where to?

by email, to:

sam.pearce@lotus7club.com

or by post, to:

Sam Pearce, Lotus Seven Club,
PO Box 7, Abergavenny,
NP7 5WQ

Deadline?

to be received by **8th** for inclusion the following month

Contact details?

Please remember to include your contact details (yes, some do forget). Consider indicating your location: this could be of concern to a buyer wanting to see a car or collect parts.

the small ads

Recent Nuke-the-Leuk contributions:

2013, lap 1

James Thomas makes a charitable donation instead of sending Christmas cards **£114.00**

Matilda Mount says thank you to **Roy Blyth** for the sign **£20.00**

Donation received from **ReHaB SBS** **£25.00**

Charles Carter says thank you to **David Lynch** for the proxy shopping at the Autosport show **£20.00**

John Waters donates the proceeds from the raffle held by the **North and East Yorks Area** **£115.00**

Charles Carter donated funds raised at the **Yorkshire West and Pennine Area** Christmas dinner **£110.00**

Richard Collins donated the money raised at the New Years Eve raffle **£75.00**

Darren Carr made a donation to say thanks to **Steve Grubb** for the bonnet rack **£20.00**

Monthly standing order from a shy, team sparring partner of old... **£25.00**

Monthly give-as-you-earn donation from another shy club member **£25.00**

This month's total:	£549.00
Total for 2012 to date:	£549.90
Fundraising history, 1991 to 2011:	£390,847.13
Total to date:	£391,396.13

You can make a donation online at:

<http://leukaemialymphomaresearch.org.uk>

If you do this, please email me a copy of the receipt so that I can make sure it gets included in the Lotus Seven Club total. And please don't forget to use Gift Aid where appropriate – you can download a form from the Club website. Thank you!

NtL contact details:

e: nuketheleuk@lotus7club.com
Caroline Grubb,
2 Grafton Close, Gosport,
Hampshire PO12 4GD

NtL

Benefits for members

DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

*A little bit of history, and an update,
from Geoff Brown, our Members' Benefits Coordinator.*



IT WAS BACK IN 2006 that the idea of using the collective buying power of Lotus Seven Club members to push retailers for special deals was created. At that time, Steve Winterberg was the Chairman, and at an Area Representatives meeting that year, Steve was looking for ways to push the Club forward and asked the assembled throng for suggestions.

I bravely stood up and made my piece about "giving something extra to members for their annual subscription – what about discounted products, aligned to what members are likely to need, therefore giving some value for the money spent joining the Club?"

Steve thought this was a great idea and I was 'volunteered' for the task by way of thanking me for standing up and making the proposal!

Halfords was the very first name in the directory and by the time the first edition was launched in February 2007, there were twenty providers of goods and services on the list.

Since then, the directory has grown to 92 providers, although we try to maintain a notional cap of 90.

Keeping control of all of the deals can be difficult, as a lot of providers do not inform me immediately if these are terminated, or if there is a change in terms and conditions or such like. Even an annual trawl does not reveal all, so I do count on the membership to inform me of any real problems – which I always try to resolve as quickly and as diplomatically as I can!

The Directory now provides discounts for Club members on goods and services ranging from insurance and car parts to holidays, touring and even Pizza Hut gift cards!

A later edition to the Discount Directory is the short-term 'Special Offers' displayed in advertisement boxes on the right-hand side

of the Club website's home page; these are pre-programmed to 'auto destruct' on a given date when the offers expire.

Finding the Directory:

The Discount Directory resides in a secure area within the Club website, accessible from the home page. Members wishing to access the Directory should first log-in, then click on **Members Area**, then in the drop-down click on **Deals & Discounts**. Displayed will be a page with Special Offers. On the left **Category Quick Links** and below that a **Company Listing**.

Here are a few examples of the Directory's latest long-term offers:

MSAR

Motorsport Equipment and Accessories

Everything from batteries and jacks to helmets and HANS devices at discounted prices.

The Wheel Specialist (TWS)

Nationwide refurbishment service offering a fixed discount for 4 or more wheels with a discretionary depot discount for odd numbers.

Leisure Time Solutions

Specialists in high quality self-catering holiday apartments in the UK, Spain, France, Lanzarote and Portugal at low prices. Look out for Special Offers on the Club home page.

Lets Subscribe

Deals and offers on most well known magazines and newspapers – more if you subscribe using a credit card.

For details on these and other offers you need to log-in to the Club web-site home page. Happy bargain hunting! More next month...

Evans Coolants Lotus Seven Club Speed Championship 2013

round 1

Sat 11 May
Llandow sprint (Bristol MC)

round 2

Sat 12 May
Llys y Fran hillclimb (Swansea MC)

round 3

Sun 19 May
Curborough sprint 1 (Lotus Seven Club)

round 4

Sun 25/26 May
Gurston Down hillclimb (BARC)

round 5

Sat 16 June
Epynt hillclimb (Brecon MC)

round 6

Sat 22 Jun
Castle Combe sprint (Bristol MC)

round 7

Sat 14 Jul
Loton Park hillclimb (H&DLCC)

round 8

Sat 3 Aug
Harewood hillclimb (BARC)

round 9

Sun 4 Aug
Harewood hillclimb (BARC)

round 10

Sat 25 Aug
Curborough sprint 2 (Lotus Seven Club)
the Sandra Harrison-Moore Memorial Sprint

round 11

Sun 7 Sep
Wiscombe Park hillclimb (MG Car Club)

round 12

Sat 15 Sep
Blyton Park sprint (MDA)

round 13

Sat 5 Oct
Anglesey sprint 1 (Longton & D MC)

round 14

Sat 6 Oct
Anglesey sprint 2 (Longton & D MC)

Entry forms for all events will be sent to competitors who have registered for the championship.

For those interested in competing (or just spectating) check out last month's *Lowflying*, page 32, and the Speed Championship pages of the Club website for more details.

Enquiries to the Competition Secretary, simon.rogers@lotus7club.com

APRIL

Sat 27

The Leg-end Hairy Taffia Fish and Chip Run

Chepstow to the coast and back

A day on the fabulous Welsh roads, with lunch at the seaside; route suggestions supplied. Free of charge. See February's *Lowflying* for more details.

- › David Jackson
- e c7top@yahoo.co.uk
- t 07771 891947

MAY

Sun 5–Mon 6

National kit car show, Stoneleigh

Stoneleigh Park, Royal Showground near Kenilworth.

Traditionally our first big get-together of the year. In addition to all of Sevens, there'll be hundreds of other club stands, trade stands and live action displays. Camping is available onsite for a modest fee. *More details to follow.*

- i www.nationalkitcarshow.co.uk

Mon 20

Cadwell Park trackday

near Louth, Lincs.

Open pit lane; free track driving instruction on a first come, first served basis. Noise limit 105db, static; entry fee £165.

- › Geoff Pickin
- e geoff.pickin@lotus7club.com
- booking form available from Club website*

JUNE

Sat 1

Lotus Seven Club thirtieth birthday party

at Beaulieu in Hampshire, home of the National Motor Museum and the location of our first International Event back in 1983 – it's where it all really began for the Club thanks to the initiative of David Mirylees.

See page 19 of this issue for more event details and booking information.

Fri 14–Sun 16

No Limits Tour of Mann

A long weekend enjoying the stunning scenery and fantastic roads of the Isle of Man. Friday evening drive and Fish supper; Saturday touring and sightseeing and evening get-together; on Sunday morning, a few laps of the TT circuit and Sunday lunch. Combined travel and accommodation package available or you can book each independently. See announcement in this issue for more details.

- › Mike Scott
- e mikeandmary@manx.net

Sat 29

Retro & Classic Action Day

at Castle Combe circuit

The opportunity to display your Seven and drive on track. We'll have a display area large enough for sixty Sevens; ESV attending.

Up to sixty free admission tickets will be available with deals on circuit passes.

Please note that, initially, one free ticket will be available per car, but deals for passengers will be available too.

To get on the advanced booking list for free tickets contact:

- › Geoff Brown
- e geoff.brown@lotus7club.com
- t 01793 876465

JULY cont

Thu 11

Track evening at Brands Hatch Indy Circuit

Open pit lane; free use of pit garages; track time from 17.30 to 20.00; noise limit 102db, static, 92db drive-by; entry fee £125 per car and one driver. This evening is being run by Club MSV in association with the Club, therefore no FIA bar/cage required. Booking is direct with Club MSV on a dedicated webpage for Club members; go to:

- i www.msvtrackdays.co.uk/lotus7bheve

Sun 14

The J's Motorshow

at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford

Open to the public from 11am–3pm.

The organisers would like all displayed cars/bikes in place by 10.30am. £5 donation suggested on the day to display your car – but it's not compulsory. Last year, the show raised over £4,000 for the J's charity www.thejshospice.org.uk

If a few or more from one area wish to attend, please organise through your AR.

- › Matthew Whiffin
- e whiffinmatthew@yahoo.co.uk

Fri 26–Sun 28

Silverstone Classic

BOOK NOW!

Major festival of historic racing at Silverstone Circuit booking via www.silverstoneclassic.com

You'll find numerous ticketing options there – enter the Club code **C13202** to access for **2-for-1 ticket offer**, which is open until **March 31**. Tickets available thereafter, at standard prices, until the end of May; prices range from £37.83 for 1 day to £86.00 for weekend pass.

Please note: advanced bookings only – no tickets sold on the day.

You can park your Seven on the Club stand – no limit on numbers; ESV in attendance.

- › Peter Griffiths
- t 07915 089161

AUGUST

Thu 22

Brands Hatch trackday

Grand Prix circuit

Exclusive session for Club members on a trackday run by Club MSV.

Lotus Seven Club members will get seven 20-minute sessions throughout the day.

Free track driving instruction on a first come, first served basis; noise limit 101db static, 92db drive-by; free use of a block of 10 pit garages reserved for Club members. Entry fee £295.

- › Geoff Pickin
- e geoff.pickin@lotus7club.com
- Booking form with March issue of Lowflying.*

OCTOBER

Sat 19

Oulton Park trackday

Exclusive session for Club members on a trackday being run by Club MSV. Lotus Seven Club members will get seven 20-minute sessions during the day.

Free use of pit garages is included; no FIA bar or cage required; noise limit 105db static, 92db drive-by.

Booking is direct with Club MSV on a dedicated web page for Club members; go to:

- i www.msvtrackdays.co.uk/lotus7op

2013 diary of events

Event details and amendments: please submit to sam.pearce@lotus7club.com

News and events

As we reported last month, Caterham Cars has had to move out of its town-centre showroom in Caterham as the landlord has terminated the lease so that the site can be redeveloped into retirement flats.

On Sunday 17th February, Caterham invited owners and enthusiasts to come and say a fond farewell to the showroom. No doubt egged on by a glimpse of sunshine and the prospect of a bacon butty with like-minded fans, Seven drivers turned out in their hundreds.

Caterham had arranged an auto-jumble of car parts and other memorabilia, and from the moment the doors opened at 9am, there were scenes reminiscent of the first day of the Oxford Street sales as people clamoured to pick up the best bargains. As well as Caterham parts and upgrades, pictures, signs, flags, books and regalia were avidly gathered up by the hordes.

With Caterham needing to downsize to its new, temporary, location while a permanent home is found, even signs still attached to the walls were haggled over by enthusiastic visitors, determined to acquire for themselves (or their garage?) memorabilia from Caterham's long stay in the town of its birth. The local media was also out in force to record for posterity the town losing one of its most famous names. However, shame on the local supermarket manager for sending out an unfortunate attendant to try (unsuccessfully) to dissuade Sevens from parking in the public car park for fear of crowding out shoppers. Early on a Sunday morning? Really?

To thank the hundreds who made the trip, Caterham had put on a good show. Senior staff, including CEO Graham Macdonald, spent the day manning the barbecue, dishing out free hot drinks and bacon butties to a queue of people which never seemed to get any shorter. An impressive array of cars was lined up on display, and the unanimous view of those present could be summed up simply as 'what a shame it is that Caterham is leaving its spiritual home'.

On Monday 25th February, the new and used showroom took up temporary residence at **Unit 11, Denvale Trade Park in Crawley, West Sussex**. This is expected to be a six-month tenure before moving to a new and much more spacious permanent facility 'not far away'.



The show must go on...

Above: The site by the station has long been the home of 'Caterham South'. The company was originally based in fairly run-down houses at the top of the hill on Townend – with a new showroom opening there on a redeveloped site when the factory facilities had relocated to Dartford in 1987.

Left: Caterham Cars CEO, Graham MacDonald turns his hand to the barbecue to feed the throng of Sevens.

Below: seeking out bargains and memorabilia in the autojumble.



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A writer's tale; photograph from Ian James

