

Lowflying

May 2020

for Caterham and Lotus Seven enthusiasts



**THIS MONTH: AGAINST THE ODDS... • IT ALL BEGAN IN 1973 • LOW FLYING, ARMY STYLE • THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW...
• SEVEN PEOPLE: ANDY COUCHMAN • ON TRACK FOR THE ACADEMY • LESSONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HARD KNOCKS
• MY SEVEN STORY • MAINTAINING THE QUICKSHIFT GEARLEVER • A VERY SPECIAL 'CAR SOS' • THE BIG CLUB QUIZ**

GRAVELY & PAINE

SEVEN SPECIALISTS

Dear All

Damian and Antony and all of the staff at GP Sevens send our best wishes and thoughts to everyone who has been affected in any way by the Coronavirus and we wish all of you the very best in these unprecedented times.



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Graham Gibbon's ex-Academy Seven is pictured at Mount St. Bernard Abbey, a Trappist monastery in Leicestershire.

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Introduction...



This is a tricky editorial to write as every angle on the Covid-19 lockdown has already been rehearsed in triplicate amongst the mainstream press and there's little point in following the already-trodden path. Richard Meaden's column in this month's EVO struck the nail on the head the most directly for me when he wondered to himself "How do you produce a publication dedicated to the Thrill of Driving when you can't drive anywhere"? Without overly wanting to promote a different publication, they did a pretty good job by carrying not one but two articles that included Caterhams - one a group test between a Seven 310R, Elise Cup 250 and Ariel Atom 4, the other about the newly-announced Super Seven 1600, the 'behind-the-scenes' details of whose launch you will read about within these pages. As I said last month, with few current events to report on, I had been worried I would be struggling for material to print, but our fabulous members have done the Club proud and responded enthusiastically and I'm almost spoilt for

choice... The result is one of the fattest copies of Lowflying we've ever produced, so do please keep it up!

In the meantime, I'm sure I'm far from being the only one to be staring wistfully at the unusually empty roads and dreaming of getting the Seven out for a blat. I live on the edge of the ancient woodland habitat known as Burnham Beeches and during this lockdown, the local roads have been reclaimed by not only by families, dogwalkers and joggers, but also by cyclists, horse riders and bikers. It's a sad fact that for some reason, bikers seem to be able to enjoy the open road without approbation, whereas we Seven drivers somehow seem to fall the wrong side of the 'socially acceptable' divide during this time of separation. However, this is probably a good time to reflect on just how lucky we owners are even to have such a special car stored away, awaiting that first blat out once the situation has improved.

Wherever you are, stay safe.

Michael Calvert,
Editor

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SOME MESSAGES FROM OUR SUPPORTERS...

A PLAN

We hope all members are safe and well, hopefully making good use of the time available working on their Caterhams! At A-Plan Specialist we are very much open for business and whilst members are, understandably, looking at ways to reduce financial outlay during this time, we are keen to assist wherever possible. As some currently have more time on their hands, now could be a great time to review insurance requirements, not just for the Caterham but other vehicles and home insurance as well. At A-Plan Specialist, we have dedicated, independent qualified insurance consultants available (all working from home) who are on hand to assist with all members' insurance needs. Feel free to give us a call (average answering time of under 10 seconds!) on 01635 874646. Kind regards and best wishes from all at A-Plan Specialist



Cars can be damaged by accident or fire and they can be targeted by thieves even when unused and parked on private property so you may find it cost-effective to convert to laid-up insurance cover. If you take laid-up cover while you fine tune your Seven for the show and event season, it will remain protected but the policies are cheaper because there is no third party risk.

Doctors have advised me to self isolate.

Am I still covered to drive? You will still be covered to drive but we advise against driving during the lockdown unless absolutely essential, especially if you are showing symptoms which could impair your ability. If you have concerns about your motor insurance, contact the dedicated Lotus Seven phone line - 0800 089 4060, or visit the website.

GP SEVENS

Damian and I and all of our staff at GP Sevens send our best wishes and thoughts to everyone who has been affected in any way by the coronavirus and we wish all of you the very best in these unprecedented times.

GP Sevens are open but virtually via phone, walk-around videos and email; we have temporarily closed our office and showrooms in Sevenoaks, Kent. We have taken deposits on our Sevens and will continue to do so and when the Government tells us that the lockdown is over and it is safe for us all to go back to work, then you can do the fun bit – come and see us and view and drive your Seven.

We are pre-booking services, upgrades, MOTs, (don't worry, the Government gives you a six month extension if your MOT is due on or after 30th March) from the end of May and will roll these appointments on if the Government advises otherwise. Hopefully these difficult times will be over soon and we can all get back to having fun in



the sun in our Sevens?

Stay safe – Antony Paine and Damian Gravelly GP Sevens – 01732 445782

MILLWOOD MOTOR COMPANY



During these unusual times created by the Covid-19 crisis, Millwood Motor Company are still open for business and to support members of the Lotus Seven Club for all their needs. Contact Jon Vicker 01453 541511 / 07836 522553 (24/7) for any assistance and advice needed on your car.

Sadly, the annual summer BBQ scheduled for 26th July is cancelled but we plan to be back next year, better than ever!

REDLINE



Redline Components remains open for business. The set-up here is safe and within the Government guidelines. Orders are processed from my home office and the picking, packing and dispatch is completed at the remote warehouse once a day. Our supply chain is largely intact and stock levels are healthy. So, business as usual. My message is – please don't hold back, if you need a part then get in touch by email: sales@redlinecomponents.co.uk or phone 01883 346515

SEVENS AND CLASSICS



During the Covid-19 restrictions Sevens and Classics are continuing to stay open at our Brands Hatch showroom, at least whilst we have business to keep us going. We are here all day, every week day to answer any queries anyone may have. We are continuing to service cars, provide MOTs and undertake any maintenance work required. We are also able to collect and return any cars; FOC if local and for a cost charge elsewhere. Contact Andy Noble 01474 871184 www.sevensandclassics.com

Lowflying would like to offer its thanks to all of the organisations who support us as advertisers and wish them a swift return to normality after these difficult times.

AREA ANTICS

Antony Hawkins reports:

April 7th saw the monthly meeting of the South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire area temporarily move from its regular haunt at the Ladybower Inn to the recently established "Zoomers Arms". As with any change of venue, there were a couple of minor teething issues, not least that (no names mentioned!) one of our members turned up a full 24 hours early and another area had already booked the venue (a.k.a. the L7C Zoom account) that night.

Luckily I also have a work Zoom account that my employers are actively encouraging all staff to use for social connectivity (thank you, LogicMonitor!) so with the details emailed out, we sat with our drinks, waiting to see who'd turn up. We had a respectable attendance, with half-a-dozen in the end. Nick Henstock "won" by being the only



person to attend in his Seven, and was able to enjoy a beer or two as he wasn't driving it anywhere. Will we be back next month? The food and drink was good enough, so if the Ladybower is still closed, it's a passable alternative.

INTRODUCING... THE CLUB'S NEW COMPETITION TEAM

Incoming Competition Secretary **Graham Howard** tells the story

When Chris Bramall decided to step down from being Competition Secretary, I, like most Club sprinters I guess, felt slightly concerned for the future of our Speed Championship. Chris has done such a fantastic job over the last four seasons that it was difficult to imagine how the future would be.

Some time passed and it was clear that nobody was volunteering to step in and it was sort of at the back of my mind that I should help. Then I received an email from Alan Bowler suggesting that either myself or Paul Collins could be Competition Secretary, but offering his help and support. It stalled there for a few weeks whilst we thought about it. Then I got a call from one of the AR9 suggesting that I might take the job... It was then that we formed the idea of making it a team effort.

So here we are - me (Graham Howard) as Competition Secretary assisted by Alan Bowler and Paul Collins. There is certainly no lack of experience between us — we've competed at a great many events with varying levels of success.... 43 seasons between us I think it is! Most sprinters will know us as long-time members in class 2.

We have had several online meetings both with Chris and between ourselves to ensure a smooth handover and to plan how we will split tasks. For example, Alan disclosed that he works a lot with spreadsheets in his day job so he will obviously take on scoring while Paul - well known for his fashion sense - will be responsible for T-shirts. I am confident that Chris will be giving us as much help as we need to make for a smooth transition.

We enter this season in extraordinary times and it is not certain if there will be a season at all. There is a revised calendar which starts at Barbon in early July which at the time of writing looks a little optimistic. As soon as it becomes clear when motor sport events will be allowed to restart, we will be ready to adapt the series so that competitors can salvage something from this year.

The Speed Championship is run for the enjoyment of competitors and we are always open to suggestions as to how it can be improved. Contact details for all of us are on the website and at the front of Lowflying.

The editor has asked us to introduce ourselves with a short bio...

GRAHAM HOWARD

I have been a member of the Club since 2000 when I built my first Caterham from a starter kit using a secondhand Crossflow engine. Sprinting wasn't really on the agenda until a couple of years later when I tried an event at a venue that was then local to me, North Weald. I enjoyed it more than I expected



New Competition Secretary, Graham Howard

and have competed in the Lotus 7 Club Championship every year since 2002.

In earlier years, my motor sport experience included about 10 years of 100cc karting and 5 years circuit racing in a Mini 7, so I guess I have been an addict for most of my life.

During my 18 seasons, I have managed a few class wins and a single class championship. Those seem a while ago now and perhaps age is becoming more of a factor than experience! Even after all this time, I enjoy the competition and the general camaraderie at speed events.

I have been AR for Northants Beds and Bucks for the last 5 years and organised with Paul Collins the recent Introduction to Sprinting days. Fortunately, we have found a replacement AR (thanks Paul Cannon) so I can now focus on being Competition Secretary.

Now past retirement age, I was lucky enough to be able to retire early from a career spent partly working for Computer Aided Design software companies and latterly for an automotive parts supplier managing CAD and Product Data Management systems. I live in Olney near Milton Keynes with my wife Hilary. Other voluntary work I am doing includes selling books online for Oxfam and being an Observer for the Institute of Advanced Motorists, preparing drivers for their test. Since retirement I have also become a keen tennis player.

I built my current Caterham in 2005 and have used it for speed events every year since. I also use it for at least one long trip a year and drove the North Coast 500 in 2018. I am really looking forward to the challenge of being Competition Secretary, particularly working with Paul and Alan, both of whom I have known for many years. The paddock banter we are used to has strayed over to our Zoom meetings already!

PAUL COLLINS

Of course, when the question of helping with the running of the Speed Championship was asked, it was easy to come up with reasons not to. I have a busy full-time job - ah, but so did Chris Bramall. I still want to compete in a lot of events - Chris rarely missed any. I'm from the North - blinkin' eck, so's Chris.

I really couldn't say no. It says a lot about the amazing job that Chris did that we believe it will need three of us to do it justice.

So, I should say a few words about what it is that qualifies me for the task. I live on the edge of Derby (not far from Curborough) with my wife Shirley. I worked for many years in a large motor parts and accessories retail/factor business, but a few years ago, changed tack to join a business building sailing dinghies. I fulfil a number of functions as part of a small team and despite being past retirement age, I'm likely to be working for a few more years yet.

My first Caterham arrived in 2001 and, like a number of others, began competing in the Club speed championship the following year. I started in class 2 and have remained there ever since, in the belief that I should win the class before moving on. Again, like many others, the thrill of competition and the incomparable joy of sharing great days with like-minded people, keep me returning each year.

My trusty 2003 Superlight (one previous owner - BookaTrack...) has taken me to a respectable number of first-in-class weekends, but I need to drive faster to take home the trophy at year end. Still, plenty of time left.

To help spread the word, I have joined with Graham Howard to put on the last three Introduction to Sprinting events, and we are always delighted when newcomers to the Championship compete and achieve success and enjoyment. *(cont. on p6)*



Paul Collins

It is with this same aim in mind that I will be supporting Graham and Alan, with the intention that we continue to maintain the high standards set by Chris Bramall. I, for one, am looking forward to the challenge.

ALAN BOWLER



When news that a new Competition Secretary was needed filtered down, my first instinct was to hide, and let others do the work. But I also realised that stitching up not one, but two of my rivals with distracting duties at speed events could work to my benefit. They could be busy with T-shirt distribution, scrutineering queries and talking to officials while I got myself into the zone, hunting for trophies. However, my awkward silence in a conference call at being asked actually to assist them was ignored. At least helping to maintain the Championship scoring spreadsheet could yield some personal advantages...

Like Paul, my work as an IT manager in London keeps me busy, but I'm overdue to "put something back" into the Club, and assisting Graham in the competition area is an ideal opportunity. I look forward to attending a few more events in the coming seasons, though 2020 is not starting well. Hopefully, at least a reduced calendar of events will be possible, as like many, I'm itching to take to the hills soon.

I live in leafy Surrey, and bought my first and only Caterham in 2006, from the Caterham Town showroom. I was encouraged by my dad, a retired engineer and ex-MGB racer that I should try a Seven, and one test drive was all it took. My beautiful standard 2001 1.6k has evolved a little over the years, gaining inevitable "upgrades" and too much patina, but it's a keeper. Like Paul, Graham and Chris, I compete in the popular and competitive class 2. This gives a good balance of modest power on road-focussed tyres, which keeps us all busy at the wheel. The camaraderie, tomfoolery and adrenaline rush keep me coming back for more.

I've worked in IT for many years, specialising in databases, but will spare you more detail. I usually try to come up with a more imaginative occupation for the annual championship handbook, though was surprised how many unswept chimneys I was offered in 2014.

Chris has moved the Club Speed Championship on, in terms of his organization, the event calendar, and encouragement to novices. I look forward to its continuation, and to playing a small part in keeping the show on the track.



CATERHAM SHUTDOWN

With the Caterham Cars' business currently closed, Lowflying asked Chief Commercial Officer **David Ridley** for an update

Like all employers, Caterham has to think of its staff first and foremost, so from the moment that Monday evening when the Prime Minister asked people to stay home, we told all our personnel not come in next day. We had already taken Government advice on board and asked those staff who could work from home to do so, but obviously we run a factory and manufacturing plant and those employees clearly don't have the option to operate remotely.

Things are unquestionably hard right now, but Caterham is in a very strong position to weather this storm. We have taken advantage of the facilities the Government set out for businesses like ours and the majority of our staff are currently furloughed. The four directors and a small number of staff remain to keep things ticking over, but we are a manufacturer first and foremost and we cannot currently build cars in a way we consider safe for our staff. The supply chain is largely shut down too, as is our dealer network in the UK and overseas.

The directors hold a daily call to update each other with where we are, and are doing as much as possible to keep the business ticking over and set the scene for when we can start to get back to normal. We're working on a "return to work" plan and can't wait to get the business fully operational once more. We don't know quite when that will be of course - we've developed various models. Our hope is to be able to return a skeleton crew to Dartford to start getting the wheels turning again soon. We have been told that IVA stations have been closed for

three months, but this doesn't impact cars for international markets, nor the new Super Seven 1600. We have a number of dealer demonstrator and stock cars at Dartford that are close to completion, so getting these finished and dispatched will be an obvious priority. To support our customers, Darren in the parts department is working full time to answer queries and will plan to go into the factory once a week to ship parts.

Caterham's Financial Director, Trevor Steel, is probably the busiest man right now; he has been doing great deal of forecasting and modelling, and all things considered, the company is in a really strong position to see this through. We currently have something like an eight month order book; the initial response from our key markets to the Super Seven has been positive and we expect this to generate additional orders on our return. I would like to thank our customers for their patience and loyalty and reassure them that we'll be doing everything we can to get back to normal as soon as possible. Like us, we know that Seven owners are itching to drive their cars, work on their cars, upgrade them, race them and long may that enthusiasm continue! Despite being officially closed, we have been able to answer many customer enquiries and only yesterday I was delighted to take a deposit on used car from a customer who had been given the medical "all clear" and decided he was going to treat himself to the car he had always promised himself. It's this sort of ongoing enthusiasm that reinforces our belief that business will return strongly when conditions allow.



AGAINST THE ODDS...

Why would anyone launch a new model during lockdown? Lowflying spoke with Caterham Cars C.C.O. **David Ridley** and Global Brand Executive **Adam Betteridge** for the lowdown on the Super Seven 1600 that was announced on April 9th.

Photos: Caterham Cars

Hi David – thanks for taking the time to speak with us and congratulations on the launch of the new model. A car launch with the country on lockdown must have been a pretty unusual experience. Why did you choose to introduce a “retro” themed model, and why launch it now?

Taking a few steps back, many will remember the limited edition Sprint model that we introduced to celebrate the Seven’s 60th anniversary. It’s probably fair to say that its success took even us by surprise – we knew it was something special, but when we first revealed it to Seven Club members at our showroom, we were blown away by the reception. It was the first time we’d developed an intentionally “retro” model, and we weren’t exactly sure how it would go down. We took deposits for the entire limited edition run within just a week of revealing it to the public at the Goodwood Revival. We always had the idea that we could build on the Sprint’s success with a somewhat higher performance model that we called the SuperSprint. After the buzz created around the Sprint, the Supersprint’s launch went even better and the entire limited edition run sold out on the first Friday of Goodwood; those two models went down as the fastest selling Sevens in the history of Caterham Cars.

Although we’d been taken aback by the success of these models, it shouldn’t have come as too much of a surprise as across the whole automotive market there’s a

strong demand for retro cars currently. Beyond Caterham, manufacturers have been responding to customer demand – think about Singer for example, and even Jaguar now has its own heritage division through its ‘E-type Reborn’ programme. We wanted to play our part in this movement over the longer term, rather than purely with limited edition ranges...

Despite the success of the Sprint and Supersprint, a good number of people had said that much as they loved the concept and styling, they just weren’t in the market for a live axle car powered by a 3 cylinder Suzuki engine – some potential customers just couldn’t see past the chassis or drivetrain. The option to design a retro car based around a De Dion chassis and Sigma engine made total sense. We put together a concept for our annual dealer meeting last year, held alongside a race event at Spa. Our international dealers particularly loved it, not just for the looks, but because of the noise and character that come from the throttle bodies and K&N air filters. Those of us who started our careers with Crossflows and HPCs know just how important the noise and character of the engines in these models was to the whole experience, so being able to recreate some of this in a modern car was always going to be popular.

So, when did you originally plan to launch the car to the market?

When we gave the project the go-ahead a year or more back, we had our Easter open day clearly in mind. It’s always a fabulous

occasion and the opportunity the pull back the sheets and unveil a new car in front of 500+ enthusiasts seemed like the perfect solution. As it happened of course, the evolving situation with Covid-19 meant that our open day had to be cancelled, leaving us in something of a quandary as to how to proceed. We were rather a victim of our attempt to do things properly this time... In the past, we’d generally announce a new product and only afterwards make vehicles available to the press. We’d decided to approach things differently this time, with the aim of having all of the press drives complete in advance of the public reveal and we *almost* achieved it!

We’d actually managed to sort out press drives for four of the top tier media outlets before the lockdown announcement came, when we had no choice but to cancel the remaining drives. You may also have seen the video we produced to accompany the launch – it came out well in the end, but it wasn’t *quite* what we had in mind originally and certainly didn’t follow the storyboard. It was more than just the virus that conspired against us however... Having booked Bicester Heritage for the filming, it rained relentlessly so we were unable to achieve anything useful...

(Marketing Manager Adam Betteridge takes up the story of the next stage of filming for the launch...)

"So for round two, we needed photographs and video on the road. We headed to Seven Sisters and Beachy Head. I suspect a majority



of the Caterham community will recognise the drivers in the film - Sam Parker (she's been part of Caterham for years and worked a lot on the CDX side), reprising her role of 'Penny' from last year's 420R video, and Luke Kidsley, a professional who is one of our go-to people for anything sideways. From the images, you'll also notice another gentleman in dark glasses piloting the red Super Seven - Joe Marsh, our senior press technician. The filming was just before the social-distancing measures rolled in and Sam and Luke travelled all the way down to Beachy Head from their homes in Northampton and Leicester. Unfortunately, while the rest of the country enjoyed amazing weather, Sussex hadn't got the memo. The roads didn't clear up all day and we only managed a few more bits of filming. Look closely and you'll notice that some of the shots in the video are a lot cloudier.

We had to come back for a third and final shoot. Sam was unable to make it, so Joe was forced to jump into the Super Seven and play her role. Re-watch the video and you'll notice that on the sunny shots, you never see the red car in focus, or see the driver clearly. We had to use some clever camera work to make it look like Sam never left the car - it might have been a bit of a giveaway if she suddenly sprouted a beard! This wasn't our only hurdle - social-distancing had just been introduced and the lockdown was impending so with a small team of 6, we had to get the film done, all while staying in separate cars and holding meetings 2m apart. We used suction-mounted cameras on the back of a van and managed to catch all of the images without ever having to

share cars. We were fortunately blessed with relatively quiet roads (plus, armed with my Mini I was able to scout ahead or drop back to ward off any fast-moving traffic). As we neared the end of the day, we had one more shot to get. However, we'd attracted the attention of a boy-racer who felt his lowered Polo could keep up with a Seven in the hands of a professional racing driver. It couldn't. Every time we drove down the road, he'd give chase and ruin the shot. Eventually he returned with a police car following closely behind.

As the sun began to set, we managed one clear run with no traffic, no boy racers and no rain. The lockdown was announced that evening, so we really got there by the skin of our teeth..."

(Back to David) But you decided to go ahead with the launch anyway?

We had the cars and the press shots, but with the lockdown announced, we still had the option to hold back on sending out the press release. However, the major players in the print media had already written their first drafts so it made most sense to make the best of the circumstances. Our planned Easter open day reveal was clearly off, but in a 'Best of British' way, we decided to carry on regardless...

So, you said that you tested the original concept in front of Caterham's dealers. Major manufacturers use focus groups to fine-tune their specifications, a luxury I suspect you have to do without. Were there any particular details of the car that were difficult to agree on?

As you say, when it comes to market

research we don't have the luxuries enjoyed by the big manufacturers, but our dealer network are such an enthusiastic and knowledgeable bunch that the feedback they gave us in Spa a year or so ago was crucial. They very much liked what we presented, but told us that what we had at that time wasn't quite "special" enough - we needed to introduce some additional key elements to make it stand out - the interior trim, touches like the embossed logo on the dash, different paint finishes for the wheels, special paint schemes... Our design efforts were all about trying to make it authentic, but without becoming a pastiche of a car of yesteryear.

Because the Sprint and Supersprint models were based on Suzuki running gear, one thing we'd been unable to do was offer SV versions. Because the Super Seven 1600 is based on a De Dion chassis, this limitation is gone and we can provide standard and SV variants. This did lead to some new considerations however, including the fact that the factory had never tried fitting an SV with flared wings so we really weren't quite sure how it would look and work. The outcome was that we had to design a new profile of flared arches that would work on both - just one small example that far more work has to go into these developments than most people appreciate. Another thing that may not have come out clearly in the original information is that the Super Seven 1600 is also available with cycle wings. Like the flared wings however, these are of a new design, with a retro tinge!



'Super Seven' is a classic name that for a long time seemed accepted as a fairly generic term for Sevens. How did you decide on it and what is it meant to evoke?

As you suggest, the model name is clearly meant to evoke Caterham Cars' heritage. In terms of a decade, whilst the Sprint and the Supersprint were all about what a Caterham Seven might have looked like had we been building then in the 1960s, the Super Seven 1600 is designed to represent a modern version of what we were producing in the 1970s and early '80s. The original 1700 SuperSprint was probably our biggest inspiration as there are probably more XFlow

Sevens out there than any other. However, we'd already used the Supersprint name for the 60th anniversary car so 'Super Seven 1600' became the obvious title – strong historical connotations, yet a name that we'd not used for a long, long time. As you say, many enthusiasts still think of the whole range as Super Sevens, so it's a name we're rightly proud of, a rich part of our heritage. Contrary to what some may think, we're very proud of our links to Lotus and of a heritage that stretches back to those early days; we have a great affinity with everything we've been doing as a manufacturer over the last 40 odd years and 'Super Seven' seemed to fit really nicely.



Luxury leather interior with SMITHS Instruments and wooden-rimmed Motalita steering wheel

One of the things that we were really conscious of however was the fact that 4 or 5 years back, we'd worked really hard to change the Seven models' naming structure. It meant dropping traditional names like Roadsport, Supersport and Superlight. Many enthusiasts still had a lot of affinity with those brands and were unsure why we'd done that, which I understand because I grew up with those too. However, it was still absolutely the right thing to do because the new structure is so much simpler to understand. With the launch of the new model, we didn't want to mess the new structure up, so we had something of a challenge to decide where it should sit. The solution was to have the Super Seven 1600 sitting as a separate line, evoking 'heritage' for those who remember Caterham and Lotus of old.

I understand that the Super Seven 1600 is based on the Seven 270, so does that mean that it is homologated for international sales?

Yes, this was a clear objective from the outset. To be specific, the Super Seven 1600 is actually based on what we refer to as the Seven 275 (EU5 compliant and therefore acceptable across all of Europe) rather than the Seven 270 that has to go through IVA before it can be UK registered. There are a number of technical differences between them including electronic throttle, different exhaust system and so on. We based the car on the 275 so we can build it as a "type approved" car with a Certificate of Conformity, so it no longer needs to go through IVA testing in the UK. It means we can deliver cars more quickly, and that we only need a single model type approved for Germany, Japan, France, the UK etc. rather than our traditional approach of having a UK version and a European one which increases complexity through two different build books, bills of material and so on.

Not needing to do IVA testing looks particularly advantageous today, because it was announced recently that all IVA centres will be closed for three months. We've currently got a stock of new cars at Dartford ready to go to UK customers but that can't be released because we can't get them through IVA. I should point out however, that for the UK market, we are still going to offer the Super Seven 1600 in kit form, so owners will still be free to take the IVA route if they want to do the build themselves.

So where do you see the biggest market for this new model?

Feedback so far has been extremely positive around the word. We expect it to sell in big numbers in the UK and France but Japan is likely to be the biggest single market. The feedback from our Japanese importer was particularly important because they are such a big opportunity. The market that surprised us most with its interest however was the USA, which hadn't in all honesty been one we'd been specifically targeting.



Poor weather hampered the original plans for the press shoot

So is the fact that this retro design is based around the Seven 270 rather than a higher performance version like the 310 is because Caterham wanted an internationally 'universal' model?

Yes, absolutely. The idea was to introduce a "global" car that we could sell in as many markets as possible. This meant that we were restricted as to which model it could be based on – either the Sigma-engined 275 or the Duratec-engined 485. The Sigma car was far more appropriate for what we had in mind.

Some people have said that they're surprised that the throttle bodies fitted to the Super Sport 1600 do not release a little more power compared to the base model.

Was it a commercial decision to peg the power outputs between the 270 and the Super Seven 1600?

No, the setup is all about driveability and getting the engine response the way we wanted. More power was never the objective – the throttle bodies are all about the look and feel of the car and also about the noise... Those of us old enough to remember the fabulous sound of twin carburetors on older Caterhams will clearly relate to that.

And so to a question I suspect you may be becoming somewhat sick of answering, but important nonetheless. The Super Seven 1600 is intentionally a 'backwards-looking' heritage model car, powered by an internal combustion engine. Yet the government has announced that new IC-engined cars will no longer be allowed on sale by 2035. How do you address the question about the long-term future of the Seven that concerns us all?

As a low volume manufacturer, it will be clear to all that we are heavily reliant on other car manufacturers for engines. As I see it, we are never going to be in a position to produce our own engine – a couple of British low volume car manufacturers have tried to break the mould but most ended up going to the wall. Yes, legislation changes are something of a concern, but we have visibility of the availability of our Sigma and Duratec engines for the foreseeable future. We've got a solid five year product plan that we are in the very early stages of at the present. Having said all that, we are always ready to embrace new technologies. We are always monitoring the market, speaking to people and to new potential partners; in my mind, an EV Caterham will unquestionably come, it's just a matter of timing. With current technology, our view is that an EV Seven would overcomplicate

the car, making it heavier and impinging on the core values of lightweight and handling. At the same time, the price would be pushed up immeasurably. With what's on the market today, to have any decent level of performance and range we estimate an electric Seven would go up by around 200kg, so you'd have a much more expensive car that wouldn't handle or drive like a Caterham. Right now is definitely not the time, but absolutely, we see having an EV car in our future, as soon as the technology is there and at a sensible price point. Of course, we also need to be looking at this problem from an availability perspective, bearing in mind that a time is likely to come when we no longer have IC engines available to us. Our traditional markets are not yet ready for an EV Caterham, but there may be some very specific markets – California for example – where one could do very well. **LF**

CATERHAM SUPER SEVEN 1600 - TECHNICAL INFORMATION

ENGINE	1.6 Ford Sigma with twin 40s throttle bodies
TRANSMISSION	5 Speed
MAX POWER (BHP / RPM)	135 bhp @ 6,800 rpm
MAX TORQUE (NM / RPM)	165 nm @ 4,100 rpm
WEIGHT	565kg
PERFORMANCE	0-60mph in 5.0 seconds
POWER-TO-WEIGHT	250bhp-per-tonne
SUSPENSION	Road Suspension Pack
WHEELS	14" Classic alloy with diamond cut lip
TYRES	Avon ZT7
BUILD	Kit or factory built
HERITAGE PAINT OPTIONS	Racing Green, Caribbean Blue, Tuscany Red, Saxony Grey, Serengeti Orange, Bordeaux Red & Oxford White

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IT ALL BEGAN IN 1973

Tom Price responds to the piece we carried in last month's magazine on behalf of the Motorcycle Action Group, and offers some interesting suggestions for motoring in the post-2035 world.

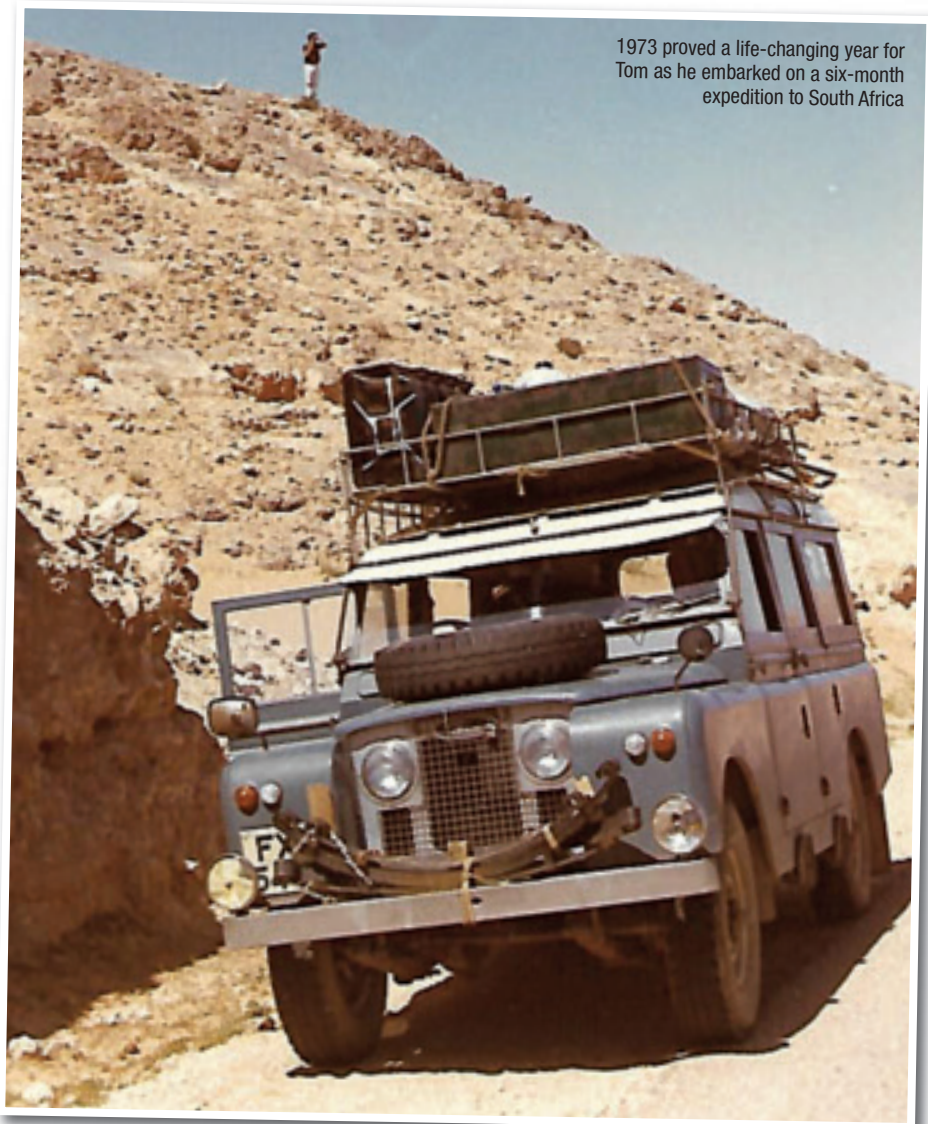
I read with some interest the views expressed by Ian Churchlow in April's *Lowflying* about the target date of 2035 for banning the sale of fossil fuelled cars. I felt it deserved a response but couldn't find the inspiration until I read that the Motorcycle Action Group Ltd was formed in 1973 and I realised I had a story to tell.

The law requiring motorcyclists to wear crash helmets came into force in 1973; it was seen by some as a draconian act by a Big Brother government which took away personal freedoms and that it must be fought at all costs. It was also the year that I embarked on a new adventure. For the four years previous I had thrashed the nuts off a Lotus 7 S3, which was quickly followed by a Lotus 7 S4SE which I also drove almost into the ground, so you can see I was sort of living dangerously. Anyway, I decided to take some time off work and become an Overlander and drive down to South Africa in my own long wheelbase Landrover. I recruited three fellow adventurers and we set off in February 1973, having obtained all the necessary visas for the expedition, which is what my insurers called it.

During my six month life-changing and life-threatening adventure there was one memorable event which is relevant to my response to Ian, that occurred on a beach in Northern Algeria. One evening we had a driftwood bonfire with about a dozen random English-speaking travellers like ourselves. There were several Americans who were draft dodging the Vietnam war, a couple of Australians, four other Brits and a selection of beach bums you might describe as hippies. We had some beers and one or two were using some of Morocco's finest cash crop which was readily available under the counter at every market stall. The topic for the evening was the impact of human activity on the planet.

The discussion was surprisingly intense and enlightening, largely because of the background and in-depth knowledge of some of the participants. It took the form of a debate with a motion which was voted on at the end of the evening. The motion was "do we believe that mankind will cure the damage that we are inflicting on the planet?" That vote, after two hours of debate, showed that about one third felt that mankind would solve the problems, one third (myself included) felt that humans were so selfish and short-sighted that we were doomed and one third hoped that we would solve the problem but could not decide one way or the other.

Whilst the vote was interesting, the fact that everyone there believed beyond doubt, that we were damaging the planet, was a significant



1973 proved a life-changing year for Tom as he embarked on a six-month expedition to South Africa

observation for me. You see, we all knew about acid rain, the effects of lead poisoning from petrol, the impact of asbestos and smoking on the lungs, the effects of smog pollution from burning coal, the state of the nation's rivers, some like open sewers, the fact that European countries were dumping toxic waste into the North Sea and although there was little plastic in the oceans, it wasn't pleasant swimming with floating human turds. We also knew that for decades, motorcyclists were sadly dying for the want of a crash helmet in the name of personal liberty.

There was one topic that evening which most of us had little prior knowledge or personal experience of and that was "global warming". It seemed to be no more than a theory based on a few facts. However, it spiked my interest which I still have to this day, although now of course it is more often referred to as "climate change".

A lot has happened in the 47 years since 1973. Thankfully, lots of new legislation has resolved many of the awful things we were doing to each other and to the planet, although lots more problems have replaced them since. We now have cleaner rivers and beaches, lead free petrol, catalytic converters, some decent recycling and a government that has at last accepted that something has to be done about climate change. Left to our own devices, none of the above would have taken place because as I said in 1973, people are too selfish, have vested interests and won't bring about change themselves. It takes laws to bring about significant change; call it the nanny state if you like but it's the only way that real change will happen.

In 47 years, I have bought and read more books on climate change than on Lotus Sevens and I have read scientific papers and the summaries from the Intergovernmental



Sewing a mosquito net in Algeria

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Back in 1973 there was little evidence for climate change and you could excuse anyone for being sceptical but over the years it has accumulated to the point where it is now completely overwhelming. In a way it's not even complicated science, it's just a matter of recording the changes to the planet every year and reviewing what has happened over the last half century. Global temperatures are rising, the polar ice caps are melting, the glaciers are retreating, the tundra is losing its permafrost, the sea level is rising, wildfires occur around the globe, droughts are occurring everywhere and extreme weather events are more frequent. The impact of all this is the beginnings of a mass extinction, water shortages, food shortages, flooded coastal communities and homeless mass migration and starving people in countries across the world.

Climate change is happening, but why, and what's causing it? Well the answer is simple, because the science tells us that it is the greenhouse gasses we are producing which is causing a hot house effect. I know that the scientists are being challenged on this but in the last century the climate scientists warned of the rapidly increasing depletion of the ozone layer which would increase skin cancers. Nations across the world accepted the advice with little hesitation and took urgent action to ban CFCs. China dragged its heels, but the hole in the ozone layer began to shrink. Now we have a situation where these same scientists, armed with even better science than they had then, are finding it hard to convince people that we are facing a bigger problem. The difference between then and now is that there was no big industry behind CFCs and there was very little lobbying to oppose it whereas now the

science is taking on the huge and wealthy fossil fuel industry that has a very large vested interest in delaying any legislation that will curb their activities.

There are, however, two areas which could be described as contentious within the science. The first is in agreeing the method by which we predict what is going to happen next and how quickly it will happen. Climate scientists, like all research scientists, are a notoriously argumentative lot and that's because they are looking to explain things and they develop their own theories which they test. This is often latched onto by sceptics, who say that even the scientists don't agree. However, what they disagree on is how soon we are going to pass the point of no return rather than the facts which they overwhelmingly support. Most predictions have underestimated the rate of change and that's partly to do with the IPCC's need to collate the lowest common denominator that all scientists can agree on for their report to governments. Currently, the worst case scenario is that we have already passed the tipping point and the best case is that we have a handful of years left.

The second area of contention is in determining how we are going to get out of this mess, even though the simple answer is to stop producing or releasing greenhouse gasses. The hard part is determining not just how we do this but more importantly who is to do it and consequently who is going to take the hit? In fact, all of us have to take a hit, just as we have with coronavirus, but not everyone recognises it especially as vested interests are trying to confuse the issues and do their best to avoid taking the brunt of the changes themselves. It is at this point that politics takes over the task from the scientists, because nothing much happens without a change in the law.

The way forward is down to politicians to take some tough decisions and even though converting to electric cars is only a small part of the solution, I am afraid that even 2035 is too late to go all-electric. So until the politicians develop some massive cahonies and take on the very powerful lobbies, think yourself lucky that we have 15 years left.

For the record, I am not a scientist or a member of any climate group or an activist, just a builder — retired now — who has followed developments on climate change for nearly half a century and who is happy to pass on what I have observed. If you disagree with me, that's fine, all I ask is that you keep an open mind, read widely on the subject, preferably not using social media and make up your own mind.

The last part of my story which started in 1973 is much more positive. As a committed Lotus 7 nut I can see two ways around the 2035 electric car target, one of which is obvious to my friend Noel Harris. You see in 1973 (what a year that was), Noel bought my first Lotus 7, the series 3 and he still owns it, maintains it, loves it and runs it over to Shelsley Walsh at



Tom with wife Ann and their Seven

every sunny day opportunity. The first answer is, therefore, to buy the Seven of your choice and keep it for at least 50 years, hoping that there will be sufficient fuel (and there will be) to keep it running.

The second solution is in the hands of Caterham because they are currently looking around for an in line engine and gearbox to replace the Ford units and I would dare to suggest that they take a look at the Mazda MX-5 naturally aspirated 1.5 and 2 litre engines and purpose-built six speed gearboxes. These sweet and reliable engines have potential to take tuning but more importantly Mazda are developing a mark five version which is rumoured to have hybrid and electric power, with the intention of manufacturing their sports cars well beyond 2035. Let's hope Caterham take the hint. So in my opinion, the future of the Seven is bright and you can bet that if Caterham make it, an electric car looking like a Seven will be quite a performer. **LF**



MY LIFE BEFORE SEVENS - LOW FLYING, ARMY STYLE

Club member **Charlie Coode** recalls a military career that reads like a "Boys' Own" adventure

Whilst we wait for the coronavirus restrictions to lift and for the start of what's left of the 'Seven season', I wanted to respond to the editor's plea for content by sharing some memories from a period of time spent flying in the Army. It's not strictly Seven related but I am encouraged by this magazine's title and by some other articles that have appeared in previous editions. It seems several lifetimes ago, but I have hugely enjoyed re-living these times and I hope you enjoy hearing some of the stories.

Coming from a military family and enjoying rules-based systems as a young man, a career in the military seemed like a good idea for my younger self and, having flirted with the Marines and infantry, a visit to an Army Air Corps centre where they took me flying convinced me that this was what I wanted to do. Following university, a nine-month spell at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst (RMAS) and six-months spent with an armoured regiment getting experience as a young officer ended with me arriving at Middle Wallop for a year's training programme that (all being well) would see me qualify for my Army wings.

There was a mix of people on the course, but a core group of a dozen Air Corps young officers who had been on the same course at



B Sqn aircrew with Charlie on the right, sitting on the external fuel tank

RMAS formed my main social group, and this group remain my closest friends to this day. Most young men suffer (enjoy?) some level of invincibility syndrome and it's safe to say we had a particularly severe case of it. There was a concentration of over-powered motorbikes as well as convertible cars (mine being a Series 1 Mazda MX-5), regular visits to the local water-skiing lake and spare time spent

playing volley-ball – you get the picture. The fact that Top Gun had recently been released didn't help.

The course started with a fixed-wing phase on the de Havilland Chipmunk, an under-powered and ageing tail-dragger that felt seriously steam-driven: after shouting 'Contact!', you needed a shotgun cartridge to start the engine, which would always fill the



The "supply run" to the coral island of Hunting Key was understandably a popular task

cockpit with blue smoke. Many saw this phase of training as something to be endured simply to get on to the 'main event' of helicopters but I loved the Chipmunk. Middle Wallop is Europe's largest grass airfield and an ex-WWII Spitfire base, so it was hard to beat the feeling of zig-zagging across the grass on a sunny day, with the canopy back, having completed a solo sortie. They even had one of the Chipmunks painted in Spitfire colours which was referred to as the 'Spitmunk'.

The rotary (helicopter) elements of the course were conducted on a Gazelle, a small, French-made reconnaissance helicopter that was both fast and manoeuvrable. Whilst I did not find my first solo flight in a Chipmunk particularly memorable, the first time I lifted into a hover on my own stays with me to this day. I still find the act of hovering rather magical and, if you understand anything about helicopter aerodynamics, you may be inclined to agree. On graduating, I was posted

to a regiment based in Dishforth, North Yorkshire. Many will know the Vale of York to be especially prone to fog, which struck us as a curious place to locate an airfield (in fact, a string of airfields) but it did mean that I had numerous postings away from there over a two-year period. The most memorable of these was four months spent in Belize, central America. Nominally, it was an operational tour, as Guatemala retained a claim to the territory of Belize, so the UK government maintains a garrison for deterrence sake. In addition to an infantry battalion, there was a detachment of Harriers, a flight of RAF Puma helicopters and our Gazelles.

As a newly-qualified pilot and in need of experience, Belize was fantastic. There were few settlements to avoid and even fewer air traffic restrictions, meaning we were free to explore the country from the air. The only rule (guidance, really) was that, because the Harrier fast jets operated down to about 100'



Brown, dusty and in the middle of nowhere - this clearing in the Northern Territories was home for seven weeks during joint exercises

(above ground level), we tried to operate even lower so as to minimise traffic conflicts, meaning that it was a regular occurrence to return to base with remnants of jungle canopy caught in our skids.

One tasking was particularly sought-after by the crews: the resupply run to Hunting Key. Hunting Key was a tiny coral island on the outer reef whose sole occupants were a small infantry detachment whose task was to observe the shipping lanes in and out of Guatemala's main Atlantic port. For those stationed there, the days could drag, but for us, it was heaven. We'd try to time our visit for lunchtime, land on the beach, unzip our flying suits and go snorkelling on the reef for an hour or so. After a picnic lunch and a snooze in the sun, we'd return to the mainland. Not for the first (or last) time, I couldn't quite believe that I was being paid to do this.

Weekends were spent either on the keys or diving on the reef. As he had been helped in the past by an RAF Puma, the owner of one of the most luxurious resorts allowed one of our helicopters to spend Sunday occupying the resort helipad, so I remember cramming into the back of a Puma on several Sunday mornings, wearing swimming trunks and clutching a towel.

Another deployment from Dishforth was with the first UN peacekeeping mission to Bosnia in 1993, whilst the civil war was still active. The mountainous terrain and changeable weather made the flying particularly challenging and witnessing the inter-community conflict first-hand was chilling. In addition to supporting the peacekeeping efforts, our time was spent planning and training for military action to relieve besieged pockets of Muslim 'Bosniaks' and Sarajevo itself, which was besieged at the time. Whilst it was extraordinary to consider a full fighting war involving tanks in Europe in the 1990s, these missions were never approved. The genocides at places like Srebrenica sadly followed shortly afterwards.

When the time arrived for my next posting, I was lucky enough to be selected as an exchange officer to the Australian Army. This was something of a 'plum' posting and saw me flying both the Kiowa (a militarised Jet Ranger) and the Black Hawk, both American helicopters. Australia is an extraordinary place to see from the air and we had many adventures over the 2½ years I was there. Flying the Kiowa saw us ranging far and wide across the continent, at times landing in the bush, rolling out our 'swags' for the night and sleeping by the aircraft, before setting off again after breakfast the next day. For long transits, we would fly to fuel drums pre-positioned at strategic points in the outback and hand pump the fuel into the aircraft before continuing on our way. On these trips, we always had a pump-action shotgun with us to ward off curious crocodiles and other residents that could spoil your day.



Kiowas on Aviators' Beach

The most remarkable trip we took was to visit the highlands of Papua New Guinea in a detachment of Kiowa. With their single engines, the long transit up the east coast of Australia, across the Torres Strait and the Fly River Delta concentrated the mind somewhat, but the visit was akin to stepping back hundreds of years when we reached the isolated mountain communities. Papua New Guinea is a relatively lawless place, with many bands of 'raskols' roaming the land. One of the only occasions I was aware of being shot at in a helicopter was when we inadvertently disturbed a robbery on an armoured cash truck as we approached a remote airfield to refuel. The raskols panicked, thinking the cavalry had arrived, and we couldn't figure out why the refuelling staff were all hiding under their desks!

To give a sense of the time-warp feeling you get in this country, we also came across a B-17 bomber on a mountainside - except for its broken back, it was largely unchanged from when it was shot down by Japanese Zeros in WWII.

Operating the Black Hawk was a big step up in flying terms, with its three engines, crew of four and a role that covered troop lift, search and rescue, under-slung loads, special forces and counter terrorism. Amongst its many gizmos, it had a GPS navigation system which — at the time — was state-of-the-art and the high level of accuracy of the military version was a revelation (the civilian GPS signal was scrambled up until 2000). This was a huge help in navigating over a featureless jungle at night and in formation!

Whilst I enjoyed the small, agile Gazelle as well as the 'back-to-basics' Kiowa, the Black Hawk was a pleasure to fly – a real

pilot's aircraft. Its systems were all designed to keep your attention outside the cockpit (where it should be) and it had oodles of power should you ever need it. As a result of its speed, manoeuvrability and carrying capacity, it was a popular choice with the infantry and special forces community. Quite why the UK government didn't buy these fantastic aircraft and chose instead to upgrade the homegrown Westland Lynx is beyond me, as well as many others in the army aviation community.

After my happy and eventful years in Australia, I returned home engaged to my now wife and with a career behind a desk in front of me. So, after a short year as an Operations Officer of an airmobile regiment in East Anglia, I left to pursue a career in

business. From the start of my training to my last flight in a military aircraft was a period of 8 years, which now seems a lifetime ago. And if it reads like a "Boys' Own" adventure, that's pretty much how I remember it.

POSTSCRIPT

With the exception of a handful of jollies (including a memorable flight in a Spitfire last year), I haven't been at the controls of an aircraft for 20 years – my Seven providing a partial substitute for the excitement. Although delayed by the coronavirus, I have committed this year to regaining my licences and taking up flying again. I'm also delighted to find that an airworthy Chipmunk is not as expensive as I had thought! **LF**



B-17 in Papua New Guinea



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THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW..

Alan Bowler considers his recent years of competition in the Club's Speed Championship.

Some of what follows may be true. As Spike Milligan said of his war memoirs, "I may have jazzed it up a bit".

ACT 1. FROM DESPAIR TO WHERE?

Scene 1. A small consulting room in Harley Street, late 2018

They don't use a swinging pocket watch any more. If you want hypnotherapy, it just needs a reclining chair, a waving finger and the desperate need for sleep that afflicts all nine-to-seven train commuters. "Go back to that dark place, where it all fell apart. Take me there..."

Scene 2. Anglesey Circuit, October 2016

The best feel-good movies have the most unlikely build ups. Triumph in adversity, "Come on lads, we're only five-nil behind, we are down to eight men, Rocky is in goal but we can do this!" After my usual mediocre start to the season, I'd picked up some unlikely wins and stood a chance. Was I the best driver? Not really, but I was benefiting from other people's spins and holidays, a fresh engine and was riding a wave of luck.

The maths around the scoring system in the Club Speed Championship is, well — maths. It's a fair system that works well. After a good run up the hill at Wiscombe, I had a possible shot at The Big One. Formula One



The one and only "Caterham Seven Bowlersport Mk.4"

title decider in Brazil? No, Class 2 winner, to be decided at Trac Môn. I'd never driven the gorgeous Anglesey circuit before, thinking it too far from civilization, with too many corners. Events that suit me tend to be short hills without many bends, rather than the

complexity of apices (apices?) and all that 'slow in fast out' throttle-balancing weight transfer nonsense. The Club championship traditionally finishes with a double-header up on the island — glorious in summer, "mixed" in October.



Things were going well, with a barely-believable cheeky win by 0.01s on Saturday. Trac Môn is clearly *my* track. I was playing it cool, no nerves. "It's all about the taking part", friendly handshakes and "good lucks". On the outside. On the inside, nerves are frayed. I pour tea down my race suit - I'm so focussed, I've forgotten how to drink. I laugh off the banana skin left by my wheel. *They know.*

Practice goes well, I'm on the pace. And then it rains. Of course it does... I've never driven here in the wet. I now have to balance needing to be within half a second of the winner to claim "The Big One", versus any kind of spin. With speed events, it normally comes



down to the final run. One bad corner, one missed gear, one slide — even if you catch it — and the clock takes its revenge. And on a drying track, where *is* the limit? You have to drive just over the limit to find it, and after a soggy first timed run, it all comes down to this final lap of the season.

The light goes green. I drive the perfect lap - smooth, controlled, no mistakes. A Championship Lap. Not Senna, but Prost. I am The Professor. And then it goes horribly wrong. Those who have tried speed events will have already spotted my mistake. For everyone else, including the racers, read that back and spot the error... "smooth, controlled". I was half a second too conservative. Others had driven closer to the limit, with tales of kerbs, half a wheel on the grass, dabs of oppo. I hadn't so much thrown away the championship as passively and politely handed it over by Driving Miss Daisy.

Well done everyone, it's all about the taking part. Not. About. Losing. The entire season. By 3 tenths.

It was a sweary six hour drive home in the Legacy, and the steering wheel took some abuse. My legacy - 2nd prize. First loser.

Scene 3. Various bleak, disappointing and generally inhospitable muddy fields, 2017

Next season, my heart just wasn't in it. Waking up half-frozen in my tent at Loton, then walking the hill to find a dusting of snow covering the deer pellets at the top sealed it. *Lewis Hamilton does not walk the track at Monza and have to kick snowy deer poo off the track.* My fancy new gold-topped adjustable dampers don't have an "ice" setting, and the Tilletts certainly aren't heated. Several spins and a 13th place at a wet Curborough confirmed the new plan. Time to stop being grumpy. I sold the trailer and sold the rusting rally-bred tow wagon. Time for a new hobby I actually enjoyed, perhaps something that normal people do. My plan was to wait until spring then polish and sell the Seven and take up golf. Or fishing. Maybe Morris Dancing.

ACT 2. A DESIGN FOR LIFE, FAST FORWARD TO 2019

Scene 1. Car still in garage, unsold

New helmet and new head inside it. Let's try this again for fun. No point in counting points. No interest in trophies (unless they are really shiny).

My scruffy blue Caterham Seven Bowlersport Mk 4 remains the same. Plenty of patina, with a few stickers to hide the worst of it. Not wasting money on "upgrades" this time. It's going to be about enjoyment, not spending. Apart from a lovely new trailer. Oh, and a data logger, cos "That's what the F1 teams use" (apparently). But the £6,000 6 way dampers that might save me 6 hundredths if I actually drive faster have been removed from the basket.

After a year and a half away, it seems "Class 2" has changed. A few trusted adversaries, some familiar faces, but many new friendly rivals. I spend less time studying track maps





Ascending the hill at Barbon to tie for first in class (Credit: White Dog Motorsport Photography)

and triple checking tyre pressures and failing to get “in the zone”. I spend more time chatting, eating ice creams, sharing laughs and relaxing - these are good people. The banter never stops.

The data logger is amazing. Not only does the laptop overheat and then drain the new tow car’s battery (oh how I laughed, as I tried to hide the humiliation), but I now get 15 graphs explaining, in full statistical detail at 10 times a second, the clear truth. My day job playing with data and spreadsheets might be useful for something – I just need to find which section of that one corner where I am losing time. Then I compare graphs with someone else, and I see that I am consistently slower... everywhere. An illuminated sign on the dash flashing “Drive Faster You Idiot” would be have been simpler and cheaper.

Scene 2. Barbon Manor, lower lakes

A 7,000 mile round trip to the lower lakes. This was no “John Aston” tour though. Swap his R400 on the B7683 from McDougal Pass to Loch Nevermore for a Nissan Satsuma SUV on the M6 and you get the picture. The Nissan has comfortable seats, plays podcasts and everyone points and waves at the funny car on the hilarious trailer behind.

Barbon is a beautiful setting. To my shame, I hadn’t visited Cumbria for 25 years. We even took a family holiday to Coniston later in the year (if you go, do take the steam boat). A glorious sunny day, fuelled by ice cream and fudge, and I whizz up a new hill in 29 seconds dead, grinning like an idiot all the way for a very unexpected tie for first.

Scene 3. Harewood, Yorkshire (and other hills)

A somewhat ill-conceived and disastrous plan followed. I was tipped off that a non-championship event at Harewood hill, another new venue for me, could be entered. I joined the BARC Yorkshire, bought a flat cap and whippet and sent off my cheque. But a week’s delay in making a decision forced me onto the no man’s land of the “Reserve List”. I travelled across the beautiful B85482 on Saturday evening, confident that I was top of the reserves and would be bound to get a run. Walking the course as darkness fell, can of John Smith’s finest in one hand, whippet lead in the other, the excitement built.

Unfortunately, Harewood is the most organised of venues. Next morning I’m informed that programmes were printed last week, classes are defined, but I am welcome to watch. Never mind, the camping and hot shower were good, and I enjoyed watching the practice runs and a leisurely drive back down south. Harewood would have to wait. If you do want to spectate at a speed event, some venues are better than others and Harewood is surely amongst the best.

I had started to find myself enjoying some venues more than others. Organisation and track layout are a factor, but there is something special about the hills. Gurston Down, Loton Park and Wiscombe Park are all set in beautiful countryside, and are a relaxing place to spend a weekend enjoying club motorsport. When writing this, I had to check the results as I had no recollection

– the times, positions and (lack of) trophies were just not as important as the light sunburn and sheer joy of running up those hills as fast as I dared.

I finally got to drive Harewood later in the year. At least I had already walked the track on my previous visit. Other competitors had always raved about the hill, but “Yorkshire” and “Lots of tricky corners” had always put me off. I was wrong: the layout is amazing, as is the general organisation and spectating. The complexity of the course means gains are more achievable, and the adrenaline rush as you complete the almost impossible final bend is incredible. A new favourite venue. My result at Saturday’s non-championship event flattered, but a competitor’s crash into a farm building sadly shortened the main event on the Sunday. But again, it wasn’t about the result. The camaraderie in the Club Speed Championship is often misunderstood. It’s just damn good fun, with those who do compete somewhat passionate about their hobby. It goes without saying that if you have an issue on the day, your rivals will have you back on track as soon as possible, so that they can beat you.

Sprinting is not a team sport. It’s you, the car and the clock. As often repeated by those older and wiser to me, as I failed to understand how they could possibly be faster: “It’s all in your head”. The Caterham is the perfect vehicle for Britain’s speed hillclimbs, and has been since 1957. All models, all driver abilities. Give it a go. It might just change your life for the better. Just don’t take it too seriously... **LF**

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- FRIDGE DOOR

"They certainly know how to welcome a Seven in the Highlands", reports David Evans... Looks like you also need to have ear defenders at the ready! ▶

With K&N air filters back in the press, Geoffrey Sempels shows how it used to be as he guides his '87 Caterham Supersprint through the roads of Saint-Remy-Geest (Belgium). ▼

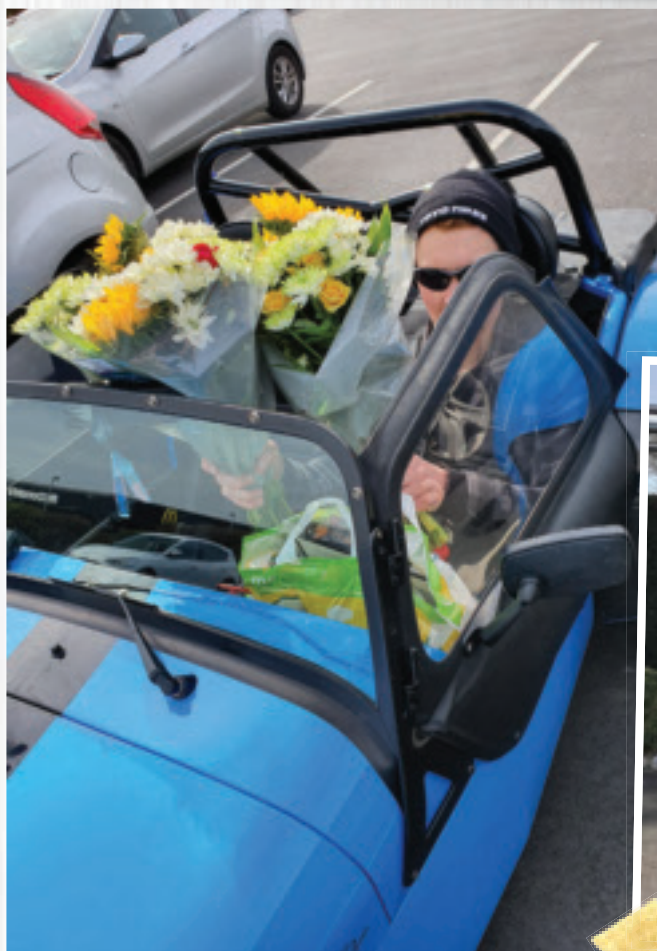


With an equally Scottish theme, Nigel Brown's Seven is pictured against the backdrop of the Forth Bridge which is a short drive from home.



If you would like to see your pride and joy featured on the Fridge Door, please send your Seven photos (general photos of Seven life welcomed too of course!) to lowflying@lotus7.club

John Taylor negotiates the stunning Albula Pass, at a height of 2,315m in Switzerland



◀ Mark Watkinson and son Alex make best use of Roxy the R400 to collect mothers' days flowers.

David Trent has owned his ex-Academy 125 Roadsport for a year now. Having had it reshod with Avon ZZS tyres and fully serviced, he had hoped to get on track this season but with the current restrictions, knows he may have to wait a little longer... ▼



SEVEN PEOPLE: ANDY COUCHMAN

This month, Lowflying talks to slong-time Gloucestershire **AR Andy Couchman** about his time with the Club and his 30-year-old Seven.

Hi Andy – can you start off by telling us about yourself please?

I live with my wife Marion in the Cotswolds near Bourton-on-the-Water. It's a modest modern house in a lovely village, and we've lived here over 30 years now. I have two daughters, both now married and living about an hour away, albeit in different directions. We have two lovely grandchildren too.

Age wise, I was born in Kent on Coronation Day but am far from retired and hope to have a good few years of Sevensing still ahead of me. Indeed, I've yet to meet a Seven owner who would class themselves as old. The little cars keep us young in spirit, if not in body.

I have a couple of micro businesses and work in the insurance sector – we're B2B and operate as a marketing consultant and technical writer – so, for example, if you do the professional exams on health insurance, you'll read a couple of my books to get you there.

Tell us about you and the Club

One of the first things I did, even before buying the car, was to join the Club. A couple of years later, the existing AR moved away and I just kind of took over the role, and I've been AR for Gloucestershire ever since. We have a fantastic core team of guys 'n gals here who are *way* better organisers than me, so we have great events and I hope we welcome all – old and new – to all our monthly meetings and other events. One highlight is the annual Millwood BBQ in July, run by Jon Vicker and his team –



Jon has a thriving Seven business and is just about the nicest, most helpful person you could wish to deal with.

The very opposite of the stereotype car dealer!

In the past I've been a Management Team member, director and treasurer too. That was an interesting period – it was at the time of the financial crisis in 2008 and for a while, just about everything we did lost money.

Traditionally, the Club's financial model was simple – membership fees came in, we spent what we needed to and made a small surplus each year to reinvest in bigger things. But it was reliant on people giving their time for free and we can be a demanding lot. So, over time, we had to become more professional and buy in services which added costs, as has compliance with ever-growing rule books.

So, during my time as treasurer we were tightening up on how we operated – I well remember going through and analysing some of the expenditure. For example, we sold Club umbrellas at £11 each and thought we were making a 20% profit. Actually, due to a change of supplier and other things, they cost us £14 each so we lost money on every one! We started to computerise everything but, as a one man band, I just didn't have the time to do what I knew would be necessary so after 18 months I had to pass the role on, and my successors have done a great job of ensuring the Club's finances are sound.

Just after I'd announced my stepping-down date, we had an HMRC letter advising us we

would have a VAT inspection. Aargh! So, I stayed on for that but we had one problem. We paid a lower rate of VAT, mainly because Lowflying was not VATable. However, over the years the HMRC letter confirming that had been lost. Anyway, I packed the biggest suitcase I could carry full of club papers and set off to London to our then accountants for the inspection. I feared the worst when I asked the nice VAT inspector if he was into sports cars. Nope – he was a confirmed cyclist and didn't drive...

All went well until the very end and he gleefully told me that I and my predecessors had been paying the wrong amount of VAT. *Gulp.* He then produced the letter (phew) and explained. We'd actually been overpaying, and the result was an unexpected but very welcome VAT refund of over eight grand as HMRC backdated the refund! It was one of the few positives to come out of what was quite a difficult financial time for the Club.

I asked the nice VAT inspector if he was into sports cars. Nope – he was a confirmed cyclist and didn't drive...

Tell us about your car

Bought as a kit in 1988, my late dad and I spent about six months building it. We booked a long-wheelbase Transit to pick the kit up from the factory but when we arrived at the hire place, their only LWB Transit had already been hired out so we had to use a standard van. We drove the 100+ miles back with the rear doors half open, tied together to stop the car from escaping. I sourced the engine (a bit of a duffer from a firm in Blackburn), gearbox (bought as an Escort Sport but it wasn't) and an Ital axle and things like wheels and seats which I got from Jem Marsh of Marcos fame.

Since then, it's been 'upgraded' pretty much every year – still Ford Crossflow engine, four speed gearbox and Ital axle but... the engine now puts out 170bhp (so 100bhp per litre at last!) and it's fuel injected with an ali head, all-steel internals and forged pistons plus dry sump. Gearbox internals are Quaife S/C C/R and we run a Quaife diff, Rakeway halfshafts plus James Whiting's disc brake conversion and James's Alcon front brakes too. On-the-road weight is just under or just over 500kgs, depending on whether it has windscreen or aeroscreen.

The engine was built by Peter McEwan at Raceline and the latest rebuild by local man Bernard Saunders – who spans the National Motor Museum's Honda 250 bike



1988 Crossflow has been upgraded pretty much each year to its current 170bhp fuel-injected spec.



Class record-holder at the Brighton National Speed Trials

that Mike Hailwood won Honda's first ever TT with. Superb engine builders both. It runs the first ever Omex 7000 series ECU and Omex MD Richard Wragg did the development on that. Brian Hill (BGH) built the gearbox and the rear axle is a lightened race unit by Graham Sykes, with the car geometry set up by Northampton Motorsport. That all sounds a bit 'designer labely', but it works and I've had so much really good help developing the car from great engineers.

In 2001 I had a big off in the car and the subsequent refurb meant a complete Arch chassis rebuild and we introduced a number of changes when we did that. Overall, if you like factory-standard Sevens - move along, nothing to see here...

Bodywise, we run CSR front wings, carbon rears and I've spent quite a bit of time lightening and moving the weight distribution rearwards - so we run the battery in the boot plus the washer bottle for example. Suspension is widetrack front with Freestyle adjustable anti-roll bar and the dampers are all AVOs.

I like the car's back end - super plain. The filler cap is in the boot, no reversing light (get a torch!) a high intensity racing-style light sits in the undertray and that undertray helps protect the all fuel tank too. The number plate is on the offside wing and a clear panel in the rear lights acts as the number plate light. It keeps things light, simple and looks good. And part of the appeal of the Seven is its looks and they've certainly stood the test of time - as the many copies confirm!

Inside, we have a RiF carbon tunnel and I've changed the dash layout to put the smaller gauges together as I prefer them nearer and am happy to have switches further away as I don't need to see them. One neat feature is a big old 1950s indicator switch - harder to knock accidentally or leave on. An aircraft-style ignition switch and push button starter just feel better too.

I'm proud that the car is a 3G car - it easily brakes and corners at over 1G and once - only once - I hit the perfect start at a Club Curborough sprint and did 0-64 feet in



Classic Crossflow engine upgraded with OMEX ECU and fuel injection

exactly 2.0 seconds. That's 1G and, although I've failed to get anywhere near two seconds since, it means we've therefore officially been recorded at 1G for acceleration too. I'm very proud of that!

Overall, the aim is to have a car that works aesthetically as well as practically so, if there's such a thing as a car's philosophy it is 'weekend café racer' - to impress your mates down the pub but that actually does a bit of competition too. 'Show and go' if you like.

Why get a Seven? I fell in love with the car after seeing a Lotus 7 in the Observer's Book of Automobiles 1963 edition. I loved it in The Prisoner too and then I saw my first Lotus 7 when I started Saturday work as a tyre fitter aged 15. It was purple and very loud and was an automotive terrier. Loveable but tough, tiny but with a bite as well as a not inconsiderable bark.

So - what else is in your garage?

My everyday car is a Land Rover Discovery - just about the opposite of the Seven. But it's a go anywhere, do anything sort of car that's lovely to drive and very comfortable, even seven up, and I've owned it now for a decade.

In 2017 I bought a car I'd long lusted after - a 1968 Triumph Vitesse convertible - and since then have been bringing it up to where I want it to be. It's been in a couple of classic car mags and neatly fills the space between the Seven and the Disco and opens the door to lots of classic car events. I love them all!

Would you say you're pretty handy in the garage?

Yes, but with limits. I can change a head gasket but would never dare rebuild a gearbox or diff, and electrics just scare me!

Are you The Stig or Captain Slow?

I'd love to be The Stig and have competed in many sprints and hillclimbs over the years - albeit rarely troubling the timekeepers. But our claim to fame is three class wins in the Brighton National Speed Trials - the UK's oldest motorsport event, that started in 1905. We actually hold the class record for kit cars up to 1700cc - but only because they ran that class just once! But really, I'm no way quick enough to be a Stig but do aspire to be a better driver so a few years back took the IAM test - I'd recommend it to every Sevens. I learnt a lot about what I did badly and have tried to change some of those. I'm a great believer in the philosophy of driver CPD (continuing professional development) too, so I try to learn or do something new car-wise every year.

Who is/was your favourite racing driver?

Can I have two? Jim Clark was my hero growing up and I was lucky enough to see him race. He had such an effortless, laid back style, very smooth but blisteringly fast - often looking to be in a different class to his compatriots.

My other choice would be Derek Bell, who I was lucky enough to interview a couple of years ago for Lowflying. A great ambassador for the sport, hugely successful over many, many years, a gentleman, intelligent and eloquent too. He also won Le Mans five times – it's a race I love and have attended every year but one since 1980.

Any scary experiences in the Seven?

That off more than a decade ago was harsh – we were on an airfield doing a classic car event and had access to the perimeter road and were encouraged to drive as fast as we liked. There's nothing to hit on an airfield except the landing lights and – guess what? What I found out the hard way is that they were set into solid concrete blocks and that's what we hit head on still doing over 60. Luckily, we took off (well, it was an airfield...) and I can remember seeing nothing but blue sky at one point. We landed tail first with such force that it smashed a rear wheel (despite landing on grass) and bent the fuel tank – a steel tank, which I'd covered in glass fibre as per MSA recommendations – banana shaped. My daughter lost consciousness in the accident and I damaged my coccyx but we walked away – thanks to the strength of the Seven. I ended up with some amazing chest bruises from the harnesses though. Anyway, we rebuilt the car to be even better thanks to help from some very good buddies in the Club, and Bruce at Arch Motors was great in rebuilding the tub too.

Perhaps the real scariest moment though came on an innocuous drive home one night in the dark. It was a fast A road – lots of nice bends, miles from anywhere and no cars around, when suddenly the lights went out. Everything – main, dip, sidelights, dashboard lights – all black. You click into survival mode and, after initially braking hard, I then started to accelerate again. Logically you might expect stopping is the thing to do but you can't – you literally have no idea where on the road you are and any car coming from any direction could and would hit you as you'd have no time to get out of the way. But, with a bit of speed you can just see the outline of the tops of the trees and navigate from that – so that's what I did. Eventually, by fiddling with the headlamp switch I managed to get the lights back if I held the switch down, but I must have driven a couple of miles with no lights. Luckily for me there were no other cars about but that was pretty scary in hindsight.

You've won the Lottery – big time – what's in the dream garage?

It would have to be a big win! I'd start with a Porsche 962C Langheck – my all-time favourite race car – and I was lucky enough to see all its Le Mans wins. I even sat in one once – probably the only car that fitted as well as the Seven does!

I'd have to get a Jaguar XK120 DHC too for Marion – the only car she really covets.



Triumph Vitesse and Seven open the doors to myriad classic car and motor sport events

Old English white with red leather seats and chrome wires would be my choice.

After that – I'm a long time Bugatti Owners' Club member (they own and run the local-to-us Prescott, where I've competed a few times) but never owned one so I'd have to have one – maybe a Type 51 or a 57? Trouble is, after that there are so many cars I'd love to own – C Type Jag, TR6, more Sevens and Vitesses, a Defender or Bowler, Routemaster bus, Austin 7, Lancia Stratos, Lotus 23B and 61 – the list goes on...

Have you been on any long trips in your Seven?

We've done over 60K miles together since 1989 all over England and Wales and to Italy, France, Monaco and a few countries in between. It's remarkably comfortable – thanks to Oxted's cloth S type seats and soft springs, although I'd always recommend earplugs and a hat too. When we're convoying, we use headphones with mics and walkie talkies too and that, plus a sat nav, helps keep us going in the right direction.

Is music important to you?

Yes, I'm a bit of a guitar player – acoustic and electric – and still play the odd gig. Music and cars seem to go together and the creative element is important to me and I think to many members too. That desire for creativity is one reason every Seven is different and for me, being able to create – whether it's building a whole car or just doing some routine maintenance – is therapeutic and a real buzz in these days of no-touch engines and replacing rather than fettling.

A couple of years ago I treated myself to a couple of nice Martin acoustics. Most guitars simply get better with age and Martin has a wonderful saying: 'The worst your new Martin will ever sound is the day you buy it'. Sevens can be a bit like that – factory fresh they're wonderful but it's only once you've done a few miles or made the car 'yours' by changing,

tweaking, upgrading, that it really becomes special. It's similar to the difference between a house and a home perhaps.

You've had your Seven a long time. What changes have you seen in the Seven community since 1988?

A few – one is fewer hands-on enthusiasts and more people just wanting to enjoy their cars and leave someone else to look after them. Absolutely nothing wrong with that, although some non-members still believe you have to know your car's camshaft timings to join the Club or attend monthly meetings. You don't. We also have many more owners who, unlike me, are on their second, third or more Seven. So I think we still have enthusiasts – but Seveners have changed and the demographic is maybe those serial owners, plus racers plus more affluent members for whom the Seven represents just part of their spending portfolio. Oh and a few hands-on enthusiasts too!

In Gloucestershire, we encourage partners to get involved and, though most owners are men, events aim to appeal to everyone and vary from blats to tours, trips and our annual Christmas dinner – which of course is in January...

One constant has been the Club. For me it complements the manufacturer, adding a different perspective or angle that adds to the ownership proposition and the brand. The relationship between Club and manufacturer has never been as strong as it could be though, but you only have to look at the Porsche Owners' Club or Aston or Bentley to see the potential of getting the relationship right.

The cars too have changed. Back in 1988 my car's current spec would have been close to state of the art, whereas now the car's still quick but far from one of the quickest and is quite 'old skool'. That said, I've never been tempted to change the car or even the engine and would rather spend money on updating its spec. And, I'd argue a good Crossflow car



On display at the NEC Autosport Show in 2008, celebrating 50 years of the Seven

still sounds better than most, goes as well as I'd like and delivers an ownership experience that, for me, no other car quite achieves. I'm lucky too that I'm the same height as Colin Chapman was, so his cars just fit perfectly. And it's still the only car I know where you can steer, change gear and indicate without taking your hands off the wheel. And such a tiny wheel and gear lever, no ABS, no brake servo and no power steering makes for a car that gives real feel and involvement to

the driver but you don't need to be Lewis Hamilton or a powerlifter to be able to get the best out of one. Other cars may be quicker – albeit not many up to three figure speeds – but I'd venture none gives the same driving experience and you have to get behind the wheel to really understand the appeal. And some will never get it. That's fine too and indeed part of the appeal is knowing that your car is not one of many thousands or even hundreds but always one of one. It amuses

me when people tell you in hushed tones that there are only say six cars exactly the same as theirs. I'd be gutted if there was even one the same as 'little whizzer' (as my daughters call it).

Finally, tell us a couple of things about yourself others may not know

This will sound daft but one thing I'm very proud of is the little timing strut most Sevens use in sprints and hillclimbs. I designed and made one years ago – using scrap aluminium – and we later published the template in *Lowflying*. James Whiting improved the design and commercialised it but the basic shape I penned, and still have the original drawings and cardboard model for.

The other thing is I'm a Le Mans addict. I've been every year but one since 1980 (in 2013, ten of us from Gloucestershire went to Italy via the Alps and Monaco so missed that race, ironically because I was in France) and love it. It's the ultimate car race and carnival and the fact it includes road-based sports cars and amateurs against the pros in the prototypes makes it a really odd but effective mix. Stand by the road at Hunaudières (on what we Brits call the Mulsanne straight) and the speed of the cars passing just feet away will take your breath away. Just magic. And over 50,000 Brits attend every year in the crowd of 250,000+. Every year. It's the biggest sporting event outside the UK attended by Brits, yet gets so little publicity. But don't get me on that hobbyhorse... **LF**



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Area Meetings

Please refer to www.lotus7.club/area-meetings for most recent changes. The envelope symbol  signifies that an email mailing list is available, to which those interested in receiving information on the area's activities can subscribe (see sidebar for details)

Bristol & Bath

Venue: Boars Head, Aust, BS35 4AX.
3rd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm
Contact: Brian Hall 07751 816149
bristolandbath@lotus7.club

Buckinghamshire ("Penn Sevens")

The Squirrel, Penn
Street, Penn, Bucks, HP7 0PX
last Saturday, 12 noon
Contact: Mark Williams
01908 521382(h) or
07798 766696(m)
pennsevans@lotus7.club
<http://penn.lowflying.co.uk>

Cambridgeshire

The Red Lion
47 High St, Stretham, Ely CB6 3JQ
On the 3rd Sunday of each month.
Contact: Andrew Gilbert
07968 591485
Cambridgeshire@lotus7.club

Cheshire and Staffordshire, North

The Swan Inn,
Main Rd, Wybunbury,
Cheshire, CW5 7NA
2nd Wednesday, 8pm
Contact: Nick Chan
01782 621818 or 07590 841674
Or: Richard Price
01782 616493 or 07770 617127
email for both:
cheshirestaffs@lotus7.club

Cornwall

Contact: Dennis Scoging
07818 423289 or 01752 829157
Meeting date and venue tbc - contact
AR for details: cornwall@lotus7.club

Devon

We meet on the third Sunday of
the month, normally for coffee/
breakfast, with a blat to follow.
We have social evenings, and
impromptu blats as well! (for the
latest information visit these pages
regularly or contact Terence
McCarthy or Graham Wallis 07773
484845 devon@lotus7.club)

Dorset

The Red Lion Hotel, Winfrith
Newburgh, Dorchester, DT2 8LE.
3rd Tuesday, 7.30pm
Contact: Richard Skeets
01202 247710
dorset@lotus7.club

Essex

The Great Baddow Barn, Galleywood
Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8NB.
3rd Tuesday, 7pm and blat the
following Sunday at 10am from
same venue
Contact: Andrew Fielding
07884 318371 or AAR Lynn Hills
essex@lotus7.club

Gloucestershire

The Bathurst Arms,
North Cerney GL7 7BZ, on the A435
between Cheltenham
and Cirencester
3rd Thursday, 7.30pm
Contact: Andy Couchman
01451 821982
AAR: Mike Scott 07754 084019
gloucestershire@lotus7.club

Hampshire, South ("Solent Sevens")

The George and Falcon,
Warnford (on the A32),
Hampshire, SO32 3LB
Last Friday 20.00 hrs
Contact: Steve Biggs
07799 600318
solent7s@lotus7.club

Hampshire, West ("New Forest Sevens")

Venue: Foresters Arms,
Abbots Well Road, Frogham,
Fordingbridge, SP6 2JA.
1st Tuesday, 7.15-7.30pm
Contact: Nick Westbrook
07711 640105
westhants@lotus7.club

Heritage Sevens Group

Meetings are random.
Contact: Rod Thonger
07836 271429
heritage@lotus7.club

Hertfordshire

1st Wednesday, 8pm
John Bunyan Pub, Coleman Green,
Wheathampstead, Herts, AL4 8ES
2nd Sunday, 12pm.
The Moon & Stars, Mill End,
Rushden, Hertfordshire, SG9 0TA.
See BlatChat or contact AR for info
on pre-meeting blats.
Contact: Dick Dixon 01920 871153
herts@lotus7.club
Or: Paul Kennedy 07778 738428

Isle of Man GBM

The Crosby Hotel,
Isle of Man, IM4 2DQ
1st Tuesday, 8.30pm
Contact: Mike Scott 01608 239174
or 07754 084019
IOM@lotus7.club

Jersey, Channel Islands GBJ

Roving venue, please contact for
details
4th Sunday
Contact: Mark Le Lay
01534 867743 or 07797 728939
jersey@lotus7.club

Kent, East

The Sun Inn, The Street, Bredgar,
Sittingbourne, ME9 8EY.
2nd Thursday, 7pm
Contact: Garry Hooton.
07778 392239
eastkent@lotus7.club

Kent, North

The Fox and Hounds, Toy's Hill
Road, Brasted Chart, Westerham
TN16 1QG.
4th Tuesday, 7 pm
Contact: Richard Brunero
07974 927618
NorthKent@lotus7.club

Kentish Weald

The Spotted Dog,
Smarts Hill, nr. Penshurst, TN11 8EP
3rd Tuesday, 7.30pm
AR - Position Vacant
kentishweald@lotus7.club

Lancashire and District ("LADS")

The Blundell Arms, Chorley Old Rd,
Horwich, near Bolton, BL6 6PY
1st Wednesday, 8pm
Contact: Peter Haslam
0161 724 6481 or 07719 541550
Contact: Paul Richards
0161 763 5410 or 07721 564742
Email for both:
LADS@lotus7.club
www.lads7.co.uk

Leics, Notts, Derbyshire

The King's Arms,
Hathern, LE12 5LD.
2nd Thursday 8pm.
Edward Nettlehip 07743 973318
leicsnottsandderby@lotus7.club
Refer to area webpage for directions

Lincolnshire

The Three Kings,
Saltersway, Threekingham,
nr. Sleaford, NG34 0AU
1st Thursday, 7.30pm
Contact: David Patrick 07966 171947
Or: Liz Lukeman 07881 912827
lincs@lotus7.club

London, Central

Anokha
St Paul's Indian Restaurant & Bar,
4 Burgon St, London, EC4V 5DR
last Wednesday, 6.30pm
Contact: Fred Gustafsson
07740 944470
centrallondon@lotus7.club

London, South

The Goat, 66 Battersea Rise, Clapham,
London, Greater London, SW11 1EQ.
7pm, 1st Wednesday of the month.
Contact: Adil Patel 07763 477673
southlondon@lotus7.club

London, West and Middlesex

The Ace Café London
Ace Corner, Old North, Circular
Road, Stonebridge, NW10 7UD
2nd Tuesday, 6.30pm
AR position vacant
londonmiddlesex@lotus7.club

Merseyside & District Sevens ("MADS")

Thorn Inn,
Grappenhall Lane,
Appleton,
Warrington, Cheshire
WA4 4QX
Last Wednesday, 7.30pm
Contact: Stuart Forshaw
07980 225642
mads@lotus7.club

Norfolk & Suffolk ("Carrotland")

1st Monday, 7pm
The Scole Inn, Scole,
near Diss, IP21 4DR
Contacts: Steve Wright 07789
907646 and Kingsley Young 07774
135220
Email for both: carrotland@lotus7.club

Northants, Beds and Bucks

The Old Swan, Astwood,
Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 9JS
3rd Wednesday, 7.30pm
Paul Cannon,
AAR Ivan Pullen
northantsbedsbucks@lotus7.club

North East

The Old Mill, Metal Bridge, Thinford
Road, Coxhoe, County Durham
DH6 5NX
2nd Wednesday 7.00pm
Contact: Paul Mason 07974 215736
northeast@lotus7.club

Northern Ireland

David McCrea
Contact: 07787 863748
or 02893 350324
northernireland@lotus7.club
Please ring for details of meetings.

Oxfordshire

The Flowing Well,
Sunningwell, Abingdon,
Oxfordshire, OX13 6RB
1st Tuesday, from 7.30pm
Contact: Robert Jacobs
01865285026
oxford@lotus7.club

Reading, North Hants & Berks ("ReHab")

2nd Wednesday and
last Thursday, 7.30pm
The Barley Mow, The Hurst,
Winchfield, RG27 8DE
Contact: Andy Webber 07721 722111
rehab@lotus7.club
3rd Sunday, 1pm
The 'AWESOME' Meet
The Old Hatchet, Hatchet Lane,
Cranbourne,
Windsor SL4 2EE
Contact: Tony Whitley
www.7rehab.co.uk

Scotland, North

Roving venue – please contact for details
Contact: Nigel Simpson
01561 362153
northscotland@lotus7.club

Scotland, South

Bothwell Bridge Hotel, 89 Main Street, Bothwell, G71 8EU
3rd Thursday in the month
Darren Smith 07933 362221 and John Wragg 07967 371933
Contact: southscotland@lotus7.club

Shropshire

The Fox and Hounds, Shawbury SY4 4JG
www.foxandhoundsshawbury.co.uk
last Tuesday, 7.30pm
AR position vacant
email: shropshire@lotus7.club

Somerset and Wessex

The Worlds End Pub, Bradford on Tone, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 1ET (on the A38 between Taunton and Wellington). 1st Thursday, 8pm
Contact: Simon Houghton
01458 445503
Somersetwessex@lotus7.club

Staffordshire, Mid

The Swan with Two Necks, Longdon, WS15 4PN (off the A51, between Rugeley/Lichfield)
3rd Thursday, 7.30pm
Contact: Roger Needham
midstaffs@lotus7.club

Surrey

1st Monday, from 7pm
The Plough, Orestan Lane, Effingham, KT24 5SW
3rd Tuesday, 7pm
The Woodman, Woodmansterne Street, Banstead, SM7 3NL
Contact: Mark Lawrence:
07894 464900
Email: surrey@lotus7.club

Sussex, East

The Yew Tree Inn, Chalvington Road, Chalvington, East Sussex, BN27 3TB.
2nd Tuesday, 7.30pm
Contact: Ian Bruce
07973 291144
eastsussex@lotus7.club

Sussex, Mid

Meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 19:00 for 19:30 at The Red Lion, Chelwood Gate RH17 7DE. Currently without AR, enquires to RCSouth@Lotus7.club

Sussex, West

Contact AR for details of venue as currently roving
2nd Wednesday, 7.45pm
Contact: Les Shepherd,
01243 376457
westsussex@lotus7.club

Thames Valley

The Pelican, Froxfield (on the A4, 2 miles W of Hungerford), SN8 3JY
1st Thursday, 8pm
Contact: Nick Bassett
07768 051428
thamesvalley@lotus7.club

Wales, North

Roving Venue, please contact AR
1st Tuesday
Contact: Chris Proudlove
01492 544514
northwales@lotus7.club

Wales, South ('Taffia')

Steel Horse Cafe
Llanvihangel Gobion, Abergavenny NP7 9AY which is located between Usk and Abergavenny.
First Saturday of the month and 3rd Friday of the month, both at 10am
Contact: Andrew Wiggins
07798 500706

Wales, West ('Nomads')

The Halfway Inn, Nantgaredig, Dyfed, SA32 7NL (on the A40, between Carmarthen and Llandeilo)
1st Wednesday, 7pm
Contact: Pete Wileon 07739 714565
westwales@lotus7.club

Warwickshire, North ('Bear 7s')

Blue Lias, Stockton Rd, Stockton, Southam, CV47 8LD
1st Thursday, 7.30
Contact: Giles Hudson
07976 769022
Contact: Simon Cutler
07732 615 204
bear7s@lotus7.club

Warwickshire, South ('Warwickshire7s')

The Falcon, Warmington, OX17 1JJ
www.brunningandprice.co.uk/falcon
2nd Wednesday, from 7.30pm.
Contact: Philip Ambrose
01608 810269
warwickshiresouth@lotus7.club

Wiltshire, North

The Jolly Tar, Queens Road, Hannington SN6 7RP, 1 mile off B4019 (take junction at the Freke Arms)
2nd Wednesday, 8pm
Daylight saving & weather prevailing, meeting starts with pre-meet Blat from Jolly Tar car park at 7:30pm
Contact: Geoff Brown
01793 876465
wiltshirenorth@lotus7.club

Wiltshire, South

Every third Wednesday of the month, at The Royal Oak, Corsley, BA12 7PR from between 19:00 and 19:30
Contact: Paul Manning
07989 600950 or 01380 828655
wiltshiresouth@lotus7.club

Worcestershire

The Vernon, Hanbury, B60 4DB
Meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm
Contact: Russell Gill
07549 953262
worcestershire@lotus7.club

Yorkshire, North and East

The Gold Cup Inn, Low Catton, near Stamford Bridge, York YO41 1EA
3rd Wednesday, 7pm
Contact: AR Adrian Oates 07507 760567 and AAR Roger Abbott 01757 288449 / 07837 227980
neyorks@lotus7.club
www.york7.org.uk

Yorkshire, South and Derbyshire, North

The 7th of each month, 7pm (ish)
Ladybower Inn, Bamford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 0AX (on the A57 at Ladybower Reservoir).
Contact: Philip and Chris Scown
07718 393492
syorks@lotus7.club

Yorkshire, West and Pennines

The Fox Menston (LS29 6EB)
'Seven' pm on the first Tuesday of each month - March to November.
Contact Adrian Atkinson:
07932 979923 / wyorks@lotus7.club

Meetings outside the UK

Belgium (B)

Venue to be confirmed
Please contact AR for more details
Contact: Jean-Marc Bikx
+32.(0) 495.249.239
belgium@lotus7.club

Finland (FIN)

Venue and dates variable, contact AR for details
Contact: Jouko Paloranta
+35850 587 2823 (mobile)
Finland@lotus7.club

France, South (FR)

Contact: Peter Dunn, +33 (0)7 86 52 50 29, francesouth@lotus7.club

France, North (FR)

Contact: Nicolas Callewaert,
+33 (0)6 20 45 95 47
francenorth@lotus7.club

Germany (D)

Venue and dates variable, but mostly last Sunday
please contact for latest details
Contact: Florian Schlüter
+49 171 5842375
germany@lotus7.club

Italy

Paolo Granelli
amministrazione@lotus7club.it

Netherlands

Edward Westenberg
secretaris@sevenclub.nl

New Zealand (NZ)

Meeting place and times currently variable; please contact for latest details
Contact: Nigel Riches 00 64 3318 1440
nigel.stephanie@xtra.co.nz

Sweden

Tomas Bengtsson
secretary@lotusseven.se

Switzerland (CH)

Lotus Seven Owners of Switzerland meet. First Tuesday at 7pm; at ACE CAFÉ Luzern (Rothenburg).
Contact: Rudolf Traffelet
+41 79 350 08 80 chairman@lsos.ch
www.LSOS.ch

USA, Michigan (USA)

Meeting place and times currently variable; please contact for latest details
Contact: John Donohoe
00 1 517-655-5125 (h)
john.d@simplesevens.org
www.simplesevens.org

In order to facilitate email communication with members, mailing list facilities are available for the majority of the Club's local areas and special interest groups. The idea is that Area Representatives and Event Organisers will be able to send out details of local events, special offers, ad hoc meetings, blats, etc to any member who has registered to receive updates for those specific areas(s). As a Club member, we strongly recommend that you subscribe to at least your local geographic area so you get to hear about events local to you. However, if you wish to be kept informed of events and activities in other areas (perhaps other adjacent areas or close to work or to where friends and family are located) then you are free to subscribe to as many other area lists as you wish. To subscribe to any area(s), simply login to your "My LoveAdmin Account" link through our website, go to the "payment" menu (don't worry, it's all free!) and add any of the areas to your account. If you want to check which areas you have joined, click the drop-down option at the top of your "Personal Details" Page.

You may of course unsubscribe from any/all lists at any time, and your email address will not be revealed to any other parties (apart from the AR or EO sending the messages to the list). They aren't "discussion lists" but are intended for announcements, and any reply to an email received will only be sent to the originator. The address to which you will receive the emails will be the one that you have provided to the Club's membership secretary. If you change your email address, please update it in your "My LoveAdmin Account".

PROTECTING YOUR DATA

The Lotus Seven Club takes the protection of its Members' data seriously and it should therefore be noted that individuals may withdraw consent at any time for AR contact and/or Club event/marketing emails.

Similarly, individuals may also request a copy of the information that the Club holds on them.

An individual's information may be deleted from Club records upon request; however, certain information may be retained in order for the Club to meet its legislative requirements. For any of the above, please contact the Club Office: memsec@lotus7.club / +44 (0)1873 777303



ON TRACK FOR THE ACADEMY

With the start of the season currently on hold, **Rob Oldland** shares the experience he gained when seeking sponsorship for his racing, and reveals the additional logo he plans to carry to promote a fantastic charity.

In this month's article I was hoping to update you with the private Caterham Academy testing day at Castle Combe and the progress with securing sponsorship. Sadly I will only be able to fulfil one of these. The unprecedented circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic has caused disruption, chaos and sadness for everyone in the UK and around the world. Initially, Motorsport UK confirmed the suspension of motorsport activities until the end of April. While this would have postponed the sprint race at Aintree, track days were still going ahead. Soon after, Motorsport UK suspended all racing until the end of June which also postponed Anglesey and Knockhill races, and track days also then succumbed due to social distancing. This is the current situation as I write this article. Caterham, BSRCC and Motorsport UK are working with the circuits to complete the season if at all possible and are keeping us well informed. Due to the large Caterham Motorsport grids we will have priority over many other race series and it is still hoped that a full season will be held this year. Of course I am disappointed, although having the Academy postponed is a small issue compared to the impact we are experiencing.

Before committing to the Academy I had to do my sums to work out if I could afford to compete. Despite applying 'man-maths' my conclusion was that I couldn't. Or at least I couldn't unless I was prepared to make some sacrifices and think creatively. In a previous article I mentioned sharing this car with my eldest son to help offset the cost of the required race gear. In a later edition I will

go into more detail of the additional costs to consider when budgeting for a race season. But what I will say now is that I still had a shortfall in my balance sheet. If I was to be able to afford to compete I needed to raise more funds. The answer? Sponsorship.

Here's how I approached finding a sponsor. The first step was to send a list of all the prospective companies I thought I could approach to Caterham for their approval. This step is important as any sponsor must not conflict with the championship sponsors. My mantra for sponsorship from

the beginning was to make sure I could really provide great value to the sponsor(s) – not just putting their company name on the car and taking their money, but really returning them value for their much-needed investment. I designed a presentation which I could easily tweak to make relevant for each company I approached. The presentation included additional benefits I had identified the sponsor would receive to provide them with great value for money. The car could be displayed at their business premises for a promo day, provide passenger hot



Ready to race



Photoshop mock-up design proposal for sponsor presentation

laps during a track day for the sponsor and their employees. The sponsor's employees could enjoy a day at one of the series races, including a tour of the paddock and lunch. In addition, the car would be displayed at many public events throughout the year, so would be shared by the public on Instagram and other social media. Caterham racing is televised, has a significant online audience and of course Sir Chris Hoy as an ambassador. Finally, I included a representation of what the car could look like with their sponsorship design which always created excitement!

I am delighted to confirm a sponsorship deal was secured in March with a local company, SOAR Electric Karting. It's so exciting to have the opportunity to be involved with this brand new, state-of-the-art indoor electric go-kart centre which is currently under construction in Gillingham, Kent.

Additionally, I am proud to carry the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance logo. This is an opportunity to give a little back and promote this fantastic charity at no cost to them. The association with the Air Ambulance is via Garry Hooton one of the LTC's ARs and currently part of the AR9. Garry kindly

helped me to build the Academy car and will join me for each of the races. I thought this would be a nice gesture as Garry's wife is the Marketing & Communications Director for the charity, plus we spend lots of time blatting around these counties!

The next step was to bring the graphical representation of the car to life. Here I was able to save money by using some of my other skills and equipment, vinyl design, cutting and application. When I built the car, I wrapped the car in white vinyl as this would give me a great canvas for adding sponsorship. Onto this I added individually-cut pieces of vinyl to recreate the design of the SOAR go-kart, then added the Caterham championship decals - it now looks like a proper racing car!

By thinking creatively and using some of the computer skills I have such as PowerPoint, Photoshop and Illustrator, combined with the time to apply the vinyl, being prepared to have sponsorship on my car and the willingness to share the excitement of a track day or two, I was able to secure the funds I required to race. As stated in my first article, I was prepared to make sacrifices to be able to enjoy a season of motorsport. **LF**

To subscribe to Rob's YouTube channel and see video from his Academy season, follow the BlatChat link from the thread 'Caterham Academy 2020 VLOG - Can you really race on a budget?' or scan the QR code above.

Founded in November 1989, Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (AAKSS) is the UK's busiest and one of the world's leading Helicopter Emergency Medical Services.

Its highly-skilled medical teams utilise state-of-the-art helicopters, emergency response vehicles, innovative technology and cutting-edge medical equipment and techniques to provide world-class, pre-hospital emergency medical treatment.

AAKSS serves a resident population of 4.8 million and millions more who pass through the region. It works collaboratively with the wider ambulance service and more than 20 hospitals including Major Trauma Centres in London and the South East.

As operational crew, AAKSS has 40 doctors, 34 paramedics, and six dispatchers (who allocate missions from the ambulance control room) as well as a further 38 support staff and 210 volunteers.

AAKSS is the only air ambulance service in the country to fly around the clock. One helicopter operates 24/7 and a second for 12 hours every day. When the helicopters aren't available, primarily as a result of

bad weather, the medical crews respond using emergency response vehicles.

AAKSS responses are targeted to the most seriously ill and injured patients. Last year, medical crews responded to 2,506 incidents with 862 taking place at night (between 7pm and 7am). 66% of missions were tasked to helicopters and

34% to rapid response cars. 37% were road traffic incidents, 25% accidental injury, 18% medical, 8% assault, 6% intentional self-harm, 4% sport/leisure, 1% exposure and 1% other.

It costs £38,740 per day to provide the service with 89% of funds raised by the public.



Rob's car will be carrying the Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex logo

LESSONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HARD KNOCKS

Phil Scown shares some more lessons learnt after an unfortunate encounter with a wall in France as he works to get his Seven back on the road...



Lesson 42: Mounting the side repeaters

Since fitting them, I've lost count of the number of people who have said something like "I've never seen them fitted there before". I've fitted them centrally on top of the cycle wings. My reasons for this are that they were more-or-less in that position when I got the car, they can be seen from inside the cockpit and they aren't out on an exposed edge where they can get knocked.



Positioning was achieved by covering the target area of each cycle wing with masking tape, then putting duplicate, measured, marks for the holes on each wing. Pilot holes were drilled, enlarged to full-size and the repeaters were bolted on, having made sure there'd be adequate clearance between the wires behind the repeater and the tyres.

My plan was to zip-tie the cables to the stays, but before attaching to the chassis and loom, I put the steering on full lock before looping the cable across and fixing it in place. Apparently the route I took for this was also unconventional, being high up the wing stay rather than down by the lower pivot. High up may lack aesthetic appeal, but reduces the bending strain on the cable that would happen with the sharper bend required lower down.

The main problem with fitting the long side repeaters on a curved cycle wing is that the repeaters have a flat base. This was fixed with black Sugru mouldable glue. Having first masked off the wing, the Sugru was packed between the shaped rubber piece under the repeater and the metal base, effectively forming wedges front and back. The result is, to my eyes, a tidy fit, which is inconspicuous and leaves no gap.

Lesson 43: Sorting the clearance between bottom hose and steering column

With the radiator fitted and the steering column in place, I noticed that the universal joint (UJ) at the bottom of the column fouled the bottom hose when the steering was in certain positions. More clearance was needed.

My first approach was to adjust the effective hose lengths by loosening the clips to alter the length of the bottom hose, then doing the same to the hose up to the header tank to shorten it. I tried various combinations but none made sufficient difference to prevent contact completely. What did work was to loosen the steering rack clamps, rotate the column back, and re-tighten. Moving the UJ like this was also much quicker than my efforts with the hoses.

Lesson 44: Heater refitting

This should have been straightforward. The hoses and control cable went on easily enough, but the retaining screws for the body of the heater were a problem, as one of the lugs had broken off. This was remedied using a screw with large washer attached to work as a clamp. That has worked for the last 850 miles. It would have been more, but the off-season has been extended.

Had the above not worked, plan B would have been to attach an "L" bracket to the body of the heater and screw that down. However, that would have required careful checking that any screw hole into the heater body would not puncture anything important inside...

Lesson 45: Heat protection for the starter motor

The car has previously suffered from 'K-series click'. In the early stages, this was resolved by whacking the motor and solenoid with an adjustable spanner that I carried for the purpose. Later on, the standard 'click fix' of a relay was fitted. However, some reading around also suggested that heat might be a factor in causing the click, so the opportunity was taken to add some reflective material around

the starter. A silvered glass-fibre fabric was purchased through eBay, and locked in place with copper wire. So-far, so-good.



Heater clamp screw.



Starter motor heat shielding

Lesson 46: Brake Pipes and hoses

As a direct result of the accident, the front-left hose to the calliper needed to be replaced. It seemed sensible to replace the pair however, as both had been on for a long time. Fitting was straightforward but I had been

forewarned to check hose clearance with the steering on full lock. With the hose not quite nipped up, full lock was applied both left and right, which allowed me to check that the hose wasn't going to risk coming into contact with any suspension components. Putting a slight twist into the hose on each side was necessary - as each wheel turns in, the hose is at its slackest, so a twist is needed to make sure the slack goes away from components and not towards them. Sort that slack, and nip up the hose.

Lesson 47: Getting the indicators working

This was one of my bigger worries - being electrics, I expected it to be problematic. I'd messed about with the wiring to fit the headlamps, the repeaters had been altered too, and when it came to try them out... they didn't work. I toggled the hazard lights switch, but to no effect. I did however notice a click from a relay - replaced that - sorted, except that I now have what must be the only car to have a timer for the left indicator as I have somehow managed to wire the clock so that it only works when the left indicator is on. At least the indicators work but I now either need to fit another clock so that I can time the right indicators, or better, do some rewiring!

Lesson 48: Refitting the rear wings

The rear wings were not damaged in the accident, but needed to come off for Arch to work their magic. During removal, a significant number of the Rivnuts "failed" when in typical fashion, they stayed fixed to the bolt, whilst rotating in the bodywork. To remove the wings, it had been necessary to cut off the bolt heads with a Dremel, then extract the problematic nuts using various forms of force. Some nuts could be replaced with a nut-and-bolt combination because access was available to both side of the skin, and where access is blind, I refitted Rivnuts.

The rear lights presented a dexterity problem. The lights on the back of the wings have leads that need to be manipulated into the right place to be reconnected to the loom. Lying under the car to do this requires suitable protections against the bits of grot that inevitably drop onto your face.

In the dismantling process, I had misplaced the trim that fits between the wings and the skins. I purchased more which wasn't too pricey, but it was annoying all the same. Naturally, as soon as the replacements had been fitted, the originals turned up - I had moved them, moved them again, and then placed the not-in-use half-hood over the top. Lesson learned about being too casual about putting temporarily-unused items away. Make a note, it will save you both time and money.

Lesson 49: Number plate light

During the MOT, it was noted that one of the bulbs in the number plate light had failed. I removed the housing and discovered that



there was also a problem with the clear Perspex — most of it was missing. This means that the bulbs get hit with road grot. An inspection of the "failed" bulb revealed that the problem was actually with the socket, rather than the bulb itself. I cleaned the terminals, refitted everything - and both bulbs worked. They lasted about a week as road fling did for them. A replacement LED item was sourced quite easily however.

Fitting the new unit was another job that required some dexterity. I removed the old unit and its lead, with the idea that the new unit would simply plug into the socket on the loom. While that bit was true, it wasn't the main problem. The cable runs between the rear skin and the fuel tank. Because the space between the two is limited, it is extremely tricky to fit the grommets where they are needed. If I was doing this again I would keep the existing wiring in place and trim the lead on the replacement item to connect outside the rear skin, then push the connector back into the cavity, followed by a grommet already placed on the cable.

Lesson 50: Fitting the boot cover

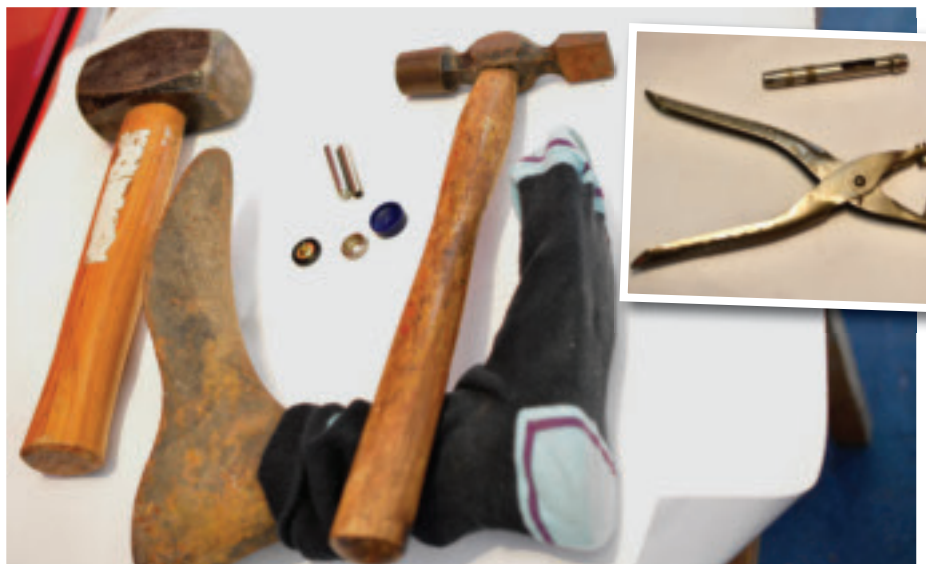
The original boot cover, a vinyl item, had become (like most of us) a bit saggy over time. Characterful, but could look better. Vinyl boot

covers are also more prone to becoming more or less flexible depending on temperature. The decision was made to upgrade to a mohair cover from Soft-Bits For Sevens.

Quite sensibly, new boot covers are supplied un-perforated to allow for variations between where the pop-fasteners have been fitted to different cars' chassis. Consequently, holes need to be punched both for the poppers, and for the harness fixings behind the seats. The way I tackled this was to put the cover in place with the harnesses off. Making sure the cover was correctly aligned, I marked the harness and popper holes with chalk. Remove, replace, and check. I used two different hand hole punches. For the larger harness holes, I used a hammered punch, whereas the smaller holes were made with a pliers-style punch.

I fitted the poppers using the tools supplied with the boot cover, plus a cobbler's anvil which provided a solid, indestructible foundation for hammering. The basic technique is to put the button-top on the outside of the cover, the female part on the inside, and then whack heavily, but carefully, using the supplied formers. Spares are available if you mess it up. There are at least two ways to mess up: i) not holding the former correctly so that the riveting process results in a distorted rivet that can be seen immediately; ii) not whacking heavily enough, though this problem may not materialise until much later. I went for a standard hammer, rather than a lump hammer, choosing controllability over "power" and did suffer some type ii) failures...

The poppers can be quite stiff and if the button comes apart from the female part, the process to remove the harnesses and boot lid completely to re-fix a popper quickly becomes rather tedious. My solution was to put a solid piece of wood in the boot to spread the load, rest the anvil on this, and refit the popper in situ without needing to remove the boot cover. This seems to have worked so far... LF



Tools and popper parts. Boot cover in situ



MY SEVEN STORY (SO FAR)

Paul Irish recounts his Seven ownership history

100 miles, 6°C, drizzle, no roof, no heater, full cage, 6 point harnesses, and a bag seat that was no doubt fantastic back in 2001 but was now like a bag of out-of-date Cornflakes. Welcome to Caterham ownership!

It had all started once our builders had finished their work, packed their tools into their vans and left for good. They'd added an extension to our kitchen, a utility room and a very narrow 'garage' that would just be for storage... or would it? I gazed at the garage space and immediately went to find a tape measure. Wow - 1,700mm wide and a Caterham measures just 1,575mm - now I was getting excited...

I thought it only right and proper to share this incredibly exciting news with my wife and really couldn't understand her somewhat nonplussed reaction to my fascinating discovery, ah well...

I grabbed the laptop and started searching on Pistonheads, eBay and Autotrader, only to find that most Sevens were priced rather higher than I had anticipated. With our extension only just completed, funds were somewhat running on empty, but it didn't stop me looking.

Eventually a car came up — ex-Academy, red, never been raced, straight enough and at a decent price. It was Brian James Trailers' car from the 2001 Academy, and so my Caterham story began.



The 2001 ex-academy car, my first Caterham.

Yes, it was a sunny mid-November morning when I set off by train to collect the Seven from somewhere near Hereford, but only 10 minutes after I'd parted with my money and started the exciting drive home, the drizzle began. With no roof, after 10 miles I thought the windscreen wipers must be shot until I realised that the rain was on the *inside* of the screen.

My seller hadn't promised a full tank of gas into the bargain, so during the journey I needed to feed the new addition to the family some fuel. I pulled into a petrol station and extracted myself from the six-point harness and climbed vertically out of the cage from my old bag seat of Cornflakes and did my best (but failed) to descend onto the forecourt in a graceful manner. I



My new Green 125 Sigma, in the not-so-wide garage



With one of my daughters, Amber, on a blat out to Osprey in St Albans

advised the driver behind me in the queue he would probably be better off waiting behind a normal tintop rather than have to watch me perform the same manoeuvre in reverse to get back on my way.

Somehow, with only 25 miles left to get home and with rain dripping on my legs through the louvres in the bonnet, I thought to myself 'this is fun'. I didn't know why, but strange but true, it was!

I finally arrived home, to the delight of my kids that Daddy had a new 'toy' we could all play with. My wife was more relieved that I wasn't dead; cold, wet and tired yes, but still alive...

Over the next couple of years, the cage was replaced with a standard bar, the seats were replaced with leather ones, and finally an engine upgrade when the head gasket went. With uprated cams and a re-map by the great guys at Kmaps, what more could I possibly want?

And it would have been fine, but for an April morning last year when I had to be in South London at St Georges to make a hospital visit when to make the outing a little more enjoyable, I dropped into Caterham Crawley for a test drive of a new 270R Sigma.

I was impressed — not bowled over, but impressed; my K series was fab but I had owned it for five years now and liked the prospect of a newer toy. On my journey back home around the 'sticky ring doughnut' known as the M25, I called Jon at Millwood just to get an idea of what my car might be worth. I had spoken with Jon on numerous occasions and always appreciated his friendly advice and wealth of Seven knowledge. He advised me that he had just got off the phone to a guy in Germany who was looking for my exact spec car. I laughed, but within a couple of hours, pictures had been sent and a deal had been negotiated. I was asked to drop the car off with Boss Racing at Brands Hatch a few days later and handed over the keys. One minute I'm a happy Caterham K Series owner, the next I'm a pedestrian looking for a new toy.

I took out 310s, 360s, 270s, a Sigma 150, (which was more noise than go) and eventually a Sigma 125 which I thought was fab and ended up buying — classic British Racing Green with a yellow noseband, and I love it. I've had it a few months now and done nearly 3,000 miles. I am very surprised by its torquey nature, let alone its 40mpg. The only time I feel the need for an engine upgrade at the moment is when I take out one of my 'not so svelte' friends, when the nimble sure-footedness of the car seems to feel more bogged-down than revved-up. So an upgrade may well be on the cards, but only to find thinner friends!

Here's looking forward to the return of the blating season everyone! **LF**

LOCKDOWN PROJECT: MAINTAINING THE QUICKSHIFT GEARLEVER

These excellent gearlever assemblies are fitted to Sevens supplied with the 6-speed box and also fit the Ford Type 9 5-speed. One shortcoming (compared to the standard Ford Sierra gear lever) is a lack of protective bellows, which can lead to contamination by road dirt and water. In this article, **John Vine** explains how to dismantle one, and suggests a way to keep the internals clean and dry.



My 2008 R400 Duratec came as standard with Caterham's excellent 6-speed box and a super-smooth gearchange. But now that the car's mileage was approaching 50K, I thought it was time to check that the Quickshift assembly was up to scratch.

This was already on my list of "when-I-get-around-to-it" jobs. However, now that the Covid-19 lockdown was keeping my Seven off the road, the opportunity had arrived to get on and do the work.

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Socket wrench, 13mm socket, extension piece
- Two Circlip pliers: one internal, one external (I used a Draper set with interchangeable heads)
- Torque wrench with range 10+ lb/ft (optional, really)

THE QUICKSHIFT

The Quickshift is a beautifully-crafted piece of engineering, manufactured for Caterham by Quaife Engineering, with a lever machined from solid steel billet and a silky-smooth spherical rose bearing. Judging by the price (well over £100), I believe it was fitted only to the upper echelons of the Seven range.

REMOVING THE GEARLEVER ASSEMBLY

Start by removing the tunnel top:

1. Move both seats as far forward as possible.
2. Unscrew the gearlever knob.
3. Slacken off the handbrake cable adjuster — a white plastic knurled nut plus locknut adjacent to the differential. Count the clicks (100 in my case), so you can easily reinstate the setting later.
4. Raise the handbrake to its highest point, and lift out the tunnel top.

The gearlever assembly is attached to the gearbox tail by three M8 setscrews, each (in my Seven at least) with a plain and spring washer. Remove the screws with a 13mm socket plus extension, and lift out the assembly.

At this point, you'll be able to see the nylon saddle attached to the selector rod, where the end of the gear lever engages. This can wear over time, causing the gearchange action to become less precise, so I planned to renew this as well.

TAKING THE QUICKSHIFT APART

Although my lever moved freely in the spherical bearing, there was quite a bit of accumulated road dirt around, so I opted to dismantle and clean the whole assembly.

1. Clamp the forked end of the lever firmly in a vice, with the lever vertical.
2. Press down on the upper collar (an open-ended spanner works well).
3. Remove the small circlip using the external circlip pliers.
4. Lift off the upper collar, spring, lower collar, and spacer.
5. Release the lever, turn the assembly over, and clamp the mounting in the vice.
6. Remove the large circlip using the internal circlip pliers.
7. Push out the spherical bearing from the mounting, and slide it off the lever.

At this point, I cleaned all the components, and lubricated everything except the spherical bearing with a light smear of Castrol LM. Note that the bearing itself does not need to be lubricated as it runs in a special low-friction housing.

QUICKSHIFT MODES

The Quickshift has two operating modes:

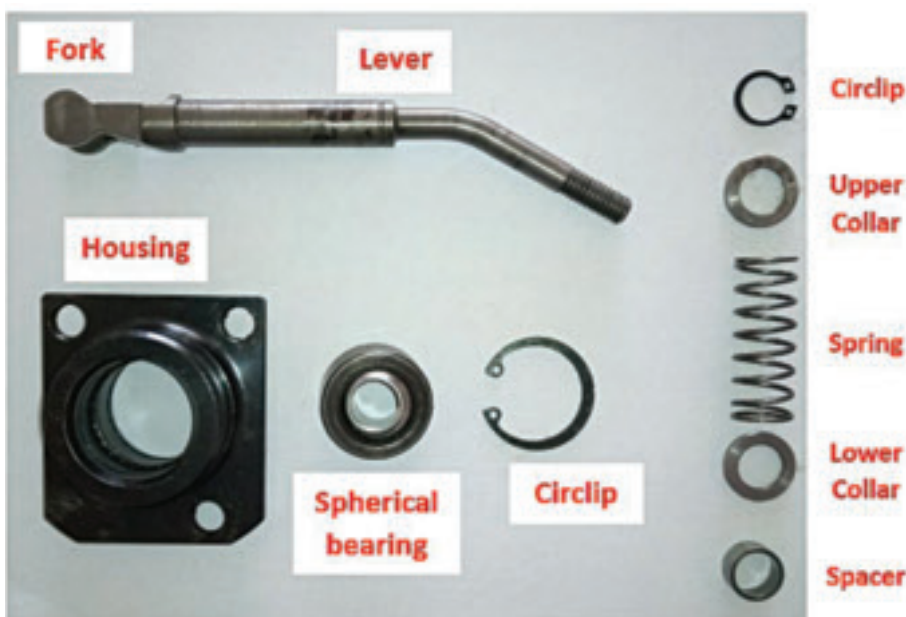
- Standard (with the spherical bearing in the lower position in the housing)
- Quick (with the spherical bearing in the upper position in the housing)

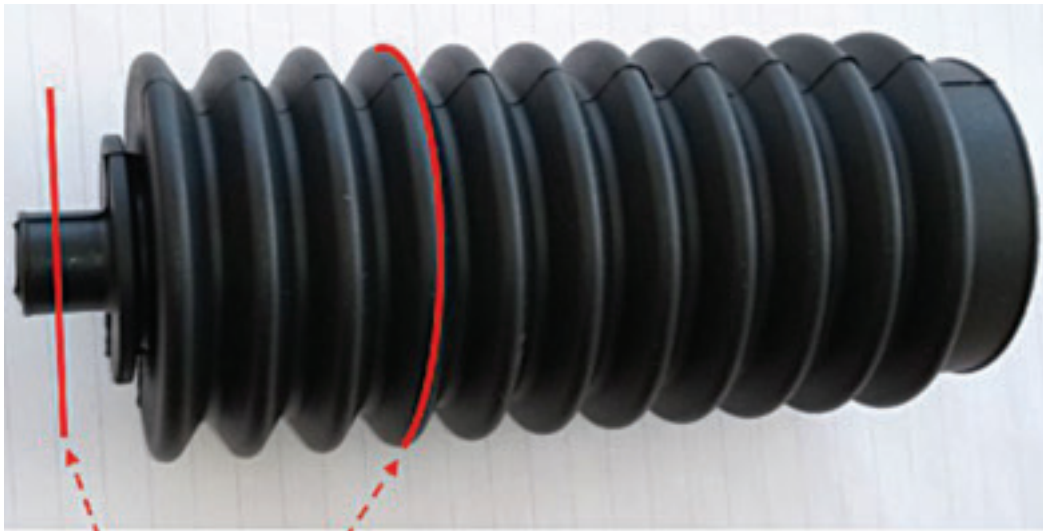
The position of the bearing governs the "throw" of the lever (that is, how far the gearlever fork moves in relation to the gear knob), with the Quick setting giving a faster action. The Caterham application uses Standard mode because (so I'm reliably informed):

- The change action is fast anyway because the lever itself is much shorter than the standard Ford part
 - Having too fast an action is likely to be detrimental to the synchromesh, especially with the very quick changes typical in racing
- However, should you want to make use of the Quick mode, insert the spherical bearing in the upper position in the housing, with the spacer below.

PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

Re-assembly is simply the reverse of dismantling (as frequently noted in Haynes manuals)





Borg & Beck steering rack gaiter - where to cut

Cut here and here



Gear lever with bellows fitted

KEEPING ROAD DIRT AND WATER OUT

Because the Quickshift has no protective cover, it's exposed to road dirt and water, and this can lead to corrosion of the spherical bearing.

One well-tryed solution is to make up and fit suitable bellows. I can't claim that my particular design is in any way original as previous BlatChat posts (notably from DJ and Mechanical Moz) suggested the same years ago.

Two possible candidates are the Constant-Velocity joint (CV) gaiters from a classic Mini, and the steering rack gaiters from the Rover SD1. Something with a neck of about 10mm I/D and a body of about 50mm I/D is likely to fit best. The Borg and Beck BSG3156 steering rack gaiter (a pair) comes closest and is available for

around £10 (eBay). Note that both gaiters have an I/D of 10mm at one end and a body of I/D 50mm, so you'll have a spare in case you make a mess of cutting the first one (as I did).

The important thing is to leave a trough wide enough to accommodate a cable tie around the base.

Slide the bellows over the gear stick, and then fix tightly with cable ties around the top and base. Note that I also trimmed off part of the rubber collar (arrowed) as it does nothing useful here, but this isn't essential.

RENEWING THE NYLON SADDLE

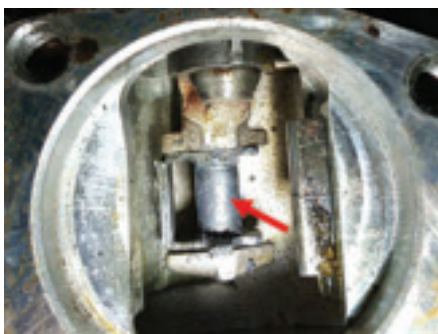
Now is a good time to renew the nylon saddle, if it's worn. This is Ford part 1522783 and is

widely available for around £10 - £18.

Pull out the old one using long-nosed pliers. This can be a little tricky as it's important to keep the saddle aligned vertically. Then ease the new saddle over the selector rod and press gently into place (there should be an audible click as it snaps into position).

REFITTING THE QUICKSHIFT

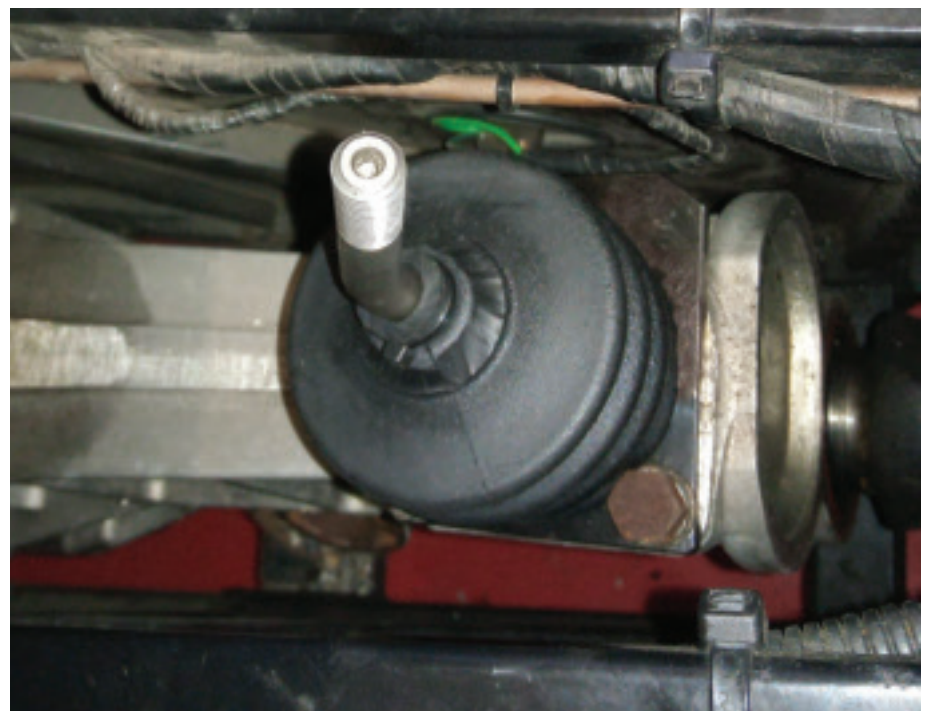
First, apply Castrol LM to the bottom of the gear stick where it engages with the saddle. Then apply a little copper grease around the base of the housing to discourage electrolytic corrosion between the housing and the gearbox tail. Insert the assembly and tighten the three setscrews to 15lbf (20 Nm). Job done! **LF**



Nylon saddle arrowed



New nylon saddle



Gear lever plus bellows installed



A VERY SPECIAL 'CAR SOS'

Graham Jones reports on the restoration of a 1975 Seven for its owner Stuart Wylie

I had called in to see my friend Andy Belcher of Tech 7 and whilst in his workshop, he had shown me his latest project, a S3 Seven from 1975 that he and his son Tim had started to recommission after it had been in storage for 25 years. As a 1975 car (so after Caterham Cars had taken over the rights to the Seven from Lotus) it's arguable whether it should be referred to as a Lotus or a Caterham, but as this story will reveal, despite the Lotus name on the registration document, its VIN plate actually offers another title entirely!

Having spoken enthusiastically about this project, Andy asked me if I would be willing to record the work he was doing and write an article to appear in *Lowflying*, so here is my report on Andy and Tim Belcher's restoration of this rare 1975 S3 Seven. It's been a thoroughly enjoyable project for me too,

having been able to witness the progression of all their hard work.

It all started when Andy received a phone call from Jane Wylie, the wife of Stuart of Woodcote Sports Cars who built and sold Lotus and Caterham Sevens for many years. Stuart sadly suffered a stroke in early 2019 and his wife Jane thought that getting this car refurbished and roadworthy for him might perhaps aid greatly in his recovery to full health. Stuart had always hoped to get the car back on the road himself but the planned project that he had briefly started ended up being shelved due to his many other commitments.

Andy was keen to help Jane, but unlike TV's 'Car SOS' where the vehicle gets taken away and the work is done in secret, away from the owner, Andy asked if Stuart could be kept fully informed before proceeding on such a

major project. With Stuart on board with Jane's original idea, it was then he who contacted Andy with a very enthusiastic response.

With the car moved to Andy's workshop, it was time for a full inspection of what would be required to bring Stuart's 7 back to full working order. The Lotus Twin Cam engine, having done 28,000 miles and been left standing unused for many years, received a compression test which revealed that compression was down significantly on all of the cylinders. It was therefore decided that the first task would be to remove the engine for a refresh and to overhaul the gearbox at the same time. Andy's choice was to send the engine to Boss Racing in Fawkham, Kent and the gearbox to Road & Race Transmissions in Shoreham, Kent.

While this work was being done, Andy and Tim were free to concentrate on many other



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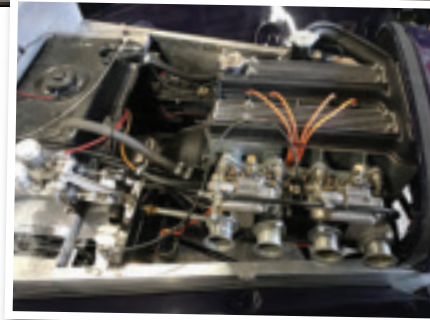
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Nearing completion with its original full hood cleaned & stretched



Engine and gearbox re-installed with upgrades of electronic ignition, electric fuel pump and an extra radiator fan to improve the cooling

important jobs including stripping out the suspension and overhauling the brakes, back axle, petrol tank, etc. If corrosion was found on any of the removed parts, these were sent off to Foremost Coatings in Lingfield, Surrey to be shot-blasted and powder-coated.

Parts that were non-repairable were supplied by the ever-helpful Chris Mintoft at Redline Components. Many of the parts that Andy had assumed would be very difficult to obtain were in fact rather impressively available from Redline's stock.

The original Goodyear wheels were sent off to be refurbished and to be fitted with new tyres. The exhaust system was stripped from the car, a broken exhaust hanger was repaired then the whole system, including manifold pipes and silencer, was sent off for polishing.

Although in reasonable condition, the chassis needed some attention including treating some surface rust before repainting. The unpainted aluminium body needed cleaning and polishing. The nosecone, rear wings and clamshell front wings arrived separately from the car and in bubble wrap, as it was revealed that Stuart had had them resprayed many years before, in a beautiful Aubergine finish which back in the late '60s had been a popular Ford colour, typically used on cars such as the 1600E.

A rollover bar was only offered as an optional extra when the car when originally built, and so hadn't been fitted. With safety in mind, Andy and Tim decided it was now time to fit one, which meant that a new bespoke rear boot cover would be required, so the old system of a zipped tonneau cover that fitted from the bulkhead right over the bench seat to the back of the car would have to be scrapped.

To their surprise, the VIN plate on the car read 'Seven Cars Ltd', which we believe was the name used before the company transitioned to the Caterham Cars we know today. This was probably in the interim period

when Graham Nearn was about to buy the rights to build the Seven from Colin Chapman. At that time, in the early '70s, Graham would have been selling Sevens from his premises in Caterham on the Hill.

Club Treasurer and Caterham Cars Archivist Martin Phipps visited Andy to view the restoration and was able to check back into the history of the car and produce a complete verified account of the newly-restored Seven.

With the project nearing completion, despite a few unexpected problems, the overall restoration had gone pretty well. When Andy thought they were on the home straight however, a trickier issue cropped up. Although everything felt great with the steering, suspension, road holding etc. when road-testing the car, the engine suffered an occasional misfire. Back in the workshop, following a thorough inspection of fuel lines and carburettors, it was thought that the problem might be that the manual fuel pump was not up to the job. An electric pump with an inline filter would be more efficient, but unfortunately the misfiring problem still remained.

Close inspection of the fuel tank revealed the actual cause of the problem. Although it had been thoroughly internally cleaned and the exterior newly powder coated, closer inspection revealed that the pickup pipe had corroded and become perforated, allowing air to be sucked from the tank through the fuel system. This wouldn't be a simple fix, so it was time to contact chassis manufacturers Arch Motors to see if they could help. A Lotus petrol tank

is a completely different size to that of a Caterham and can be a difficult to obtain. Bruce Robinson at Arch Motors checked his stock and reported that he had a half-completed Lotus 7 tank on the shelf that he said he could finish within a couple of weeks. With the new tank fitted, the misfire was completely cured when the car was road tested again and Andy was finally ready to deliver the newly-restored Seven back to its excited owner, Stuart Wylie.

The day eventually arrived for Andy and Tim to hand over the keys of the beautifully restored car, the completion of a project that may have taken slightly longer than originally expected, but that had been a labour of love from start to finish. It was an overwhelming 'CAR SOS Success' when an emotional Stuart and Jane Wylie took back possession back his beautiful car. It was also an emotional day for Andy and Tim Belcher who were very happy with the outcome and extremely proud of what they had achieved for Stuart and Jane. **LF**



A very happy Stuart Wylie (left) receives the keys to his newly-restored Seven from Andy Belcher

THE BIG CLUB QUIZ

With thanks to **Stephen Hubbard** and **Tony Pashley** for helping with the questions...

How well do you know your Sevens? Test your knowledge against our quiz for the chance to win a framed and professionally-printed A3 picture of your pride and joy.

We have a range of questions of varying difficulties across five categories. As a hint – the majority (but not necessarily all) answers can be found within the Club's online Lowflying archive, which can be reached through our homepage or directly at: lowflying.lotus7.club/lowflying/search.jsp

PRIZE – A framed print of your pride and joy from artmycar.co.uk which will look great on the wall of your garage, office or even your living room (some may need to clear this with their other half first!)

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You will receive a PDF proof of your A3 print to check before we produce the finished item.

Entries must be in by 22nd May 2020 to lowflying@lotus7.club. If multiple entries share the top score, the winner will be chosen out of a hat.



All questions are worth one point unless otherwise indicated and there are **50 points on offer**

ROUND 1 KNOW YOUR CARS (10 POINTS)

1. Name the pared-back model introduced in 1996 that listed the optional extras both by cost and by weight.



2. Which model of Seven carries the name of a former British Formula One racing driver?

3. What do the S and the R packs signify on modern Sevens?

4. What names were given to the two models of Suzuki-powered special edition cars launched to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Seven? (2 points)

5. Name the car.



6. What do Avos, Quantums and Nitrons typically refer to?

7. With which product used on Sevens is Mike Barnby generally associated?

8. Name new Seven model range introduced in 2004 that featured independent rear suspension and an optional redesigned dashboard format.

9. According to Caterham Cars' launch literature, how much lighter was the R500 than a Superlight R?

ROUND 2 TRIVIA (19 POINTS)

10. What is the significance of KAR120C?

11. Where did Club members congregate for the Graham Nearn Memorial Blat 2019?

12. Name the location?



13. The cover of the April 2004 edition of Low Flying comprised a large number of pictures; but one was deliberately an oddity. Please identify it, and its location within the display. (2 marks)

14. How many hood poppers are there around the windscreen frame of an S3 Caterham, an SV and a Lotus Seven S4? (3 marks)

15. Who described Caterham Cars as "Custodians of the legend"?

16. Before cars such as the Seven were disallowed, the original Caterham Blackbird (of Doug Newman's GoldArts team) completed

the Nürburgring 24 hours; how many brake pad changes did the car need during the race?

17. In 1957, what was the significance of 29.72secs?

18. Who is credited with founding the modern Lotus Seven Club?

19. Name the circuit (7,4) and the topographical feature just passed (2 points)

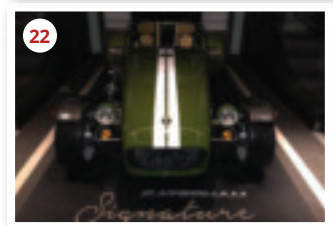
20. How was this Seven, that was built from donated parts and raffled for charity generally referred to?

21. Which famous car designer, interviewed for Lowflying in 2015, started his career by designing this Seven-esque car that he called the IGM?

22. Which high-end London store featured this Seven in 2016?

23. Name the winner of the inaugural W Series championship, interviewed for Lowflying in 2019.

24. Which former WWII airstrip has been used in recent years for the Club's popular handling days?



ROUND 3 - HISTORY (9 POINTS)

25. Which Series of Seven did Caterham Cars first build after taking over production rights from Lotus?

26. When and where was the first Club "International" meeting in the UK held?

27. Which month and year was the first Club magazine called "Low Flying"?

28. When did Jez Coates start work at Caterham Cars?

29. Edmonton in Middlesex (later Greater London) has played a significant role in the history of the Seven. What is the connection?

30. Amongst racing Sevens the "Black Brick" has near legendary status. Who drove it for five successful years, including to many wins in 1988/1989?

31. The true "Lotus Mk VII", designed in 1952, was the first Lotus-built single seater - a sophisticated Formula 2 car. By what name did it become known?

32. How did Nelson Ledges spread the fame and enhance the reputation of the Caterham Seven?

33. Name the company Caterham collaborated with on the development of the SP/300.R.

ROUND 4 SPECIAL MODELS (6 POINTS)

34. Name the concept car unveiled by Caterham in 2013.

35. How many cars authentic "Freestyle" cars with Duratec engines and inboard, pushrod suspension were built?

36. In 2014, Lowflying made a reference to a Caterham X330 concept car; in which country does it reside?

37. Which major manufacturer did Caterham Cars collaborate with from 2012 on a new development known as the C120 project?

38. Who was responsible for the Fireblade Sevens, named as EVO Magazine's first track-day Car of the Year?

39. What was special about the engine used in the R500 Evolution?



ROUND 5 FAMOUS DRIVERS AND OWNERS (6 POINTS)

40. Name this famous Seven owner.

41. Which of these Grand Prix drivers did not race a Lotus Seven in their earlier careers? Graham Hill; Jim Clark; Piers Courage; Derek Bell; Patrick Depailler.

43. Which famous Seven owner and musician released an album featuring a picture of a blue Seven on its cover?

44. Who drove an R500 around the Top Gear in a time faster than a Bugatti Veyron?

45. Name the "Britain's Got Talent" presenter who took delivery of a Seven in California.

46. Which Japanese racer's name appeared on this limited edition Seven released in 2014?



Remember: Entries must be in by 22/5/20 to lowflying@lotus7.club

MAIDEN FLIGHTS: WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS

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- Richard Bolingbroke, *Plymouth*
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- Lee Rayment, *Southampton*
- Brian Mitchell, *Abingdon*
- David Thomas, *Caldicot*
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- Paul Macey, *Llangollen*
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- Andy Hubbard, *Ashington*
- Mike Bullock, *Leicester*
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- Andrew Gibbs, *Isle of Wight*
- George Hought, *Batley*
- Nicholas May, *Kintbury*
- Mike Lee, *Cornwall*
- Peter Killefer, *Jackson, USA*
- Simon Cuthbert - *Horley*
- Brian Kilmartin - *Swaffham*

RETURNING

- Geoffrey Carlton-Smith, *Turre*
- Simon Barter, *Southampton*
- Bradley Apps, *Eastleigh*
- Harrie Kandola, *Lymm*
- Mike Riley, *Bakewell*



Lotus Seven Club
for Caterham and Lotus Seven enthusiasts

RACE AGAINST DEMENTIA CHARITY UPDATE

Members can submit donations to the Club charity Race Against Dementia, through a "Justgiving" page: www.justgiving.com/7club Although the Justgiving website is ideal for handling individual donations, areas and event organisers looking to submit larger collections are encouraged to send these directly to Club Treasurer Martin Phipps who will ensure that they are accounted for, with the total raised by Club members tracked and reported centrally.

Donations to Race Against Dementia

Sep-19	Christopher Burr	£20
Sep-19	Steve Cragg 1/2 marathon	£533
Sep-19	GNMB raffle	£1,450
Sep-19	GNMB donations	£470
Oct-19	Simon Melrose	£50
Oct-19	Alan Reeves	£62
Oct-19	S Wright	£30
Oct-19	Dan	£38
Nov-19	Simon Houghton	£18
Nov-19	Femi	£38
Dec-19	Sheila A	£25
Dec-19	Sue	£12
Dec-19	Carole & David Warren	£25
Dec-19	Giles Hudson	£25
Dec-19	LADS Christmas auction	£130
Dec-19	LADS various meetings	£50
Dec-19	Northants, Beds & Bucks	£110
Dec-19	NE Yorkshire area	£135
Jan-20	Rhuari Moncrieff	£56
Jan-20	Steve Motts	£20
Feb-20	Keith	£25
Feb-20	Andy Perry	£13
Mar-20	Paul P	£25
Mar-20	Jerry Auton	undisclosed
Mar-20	Jonathan Kay	undisclosed
Apr-20	Ian Saunders	£12
Various	Anonymous & undisclosed	£154
Carried Forward total:		£15,628

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