

The Lotus Legend Special 2017

The Lotus Legend

Special Edition 2017



Celebrating 60 years of the Lotus Type 14 Elite and
The Lotus Seven



Pic above is of a modified S1 Lotus Seven and cover pic is of a Type 14 Elite. On the next page is an often-photographed example of an S1 Seven which is probably closer to original than the one above. These cars photographed by the editor at the 2004 Le Mans Classic



Cars of 1957



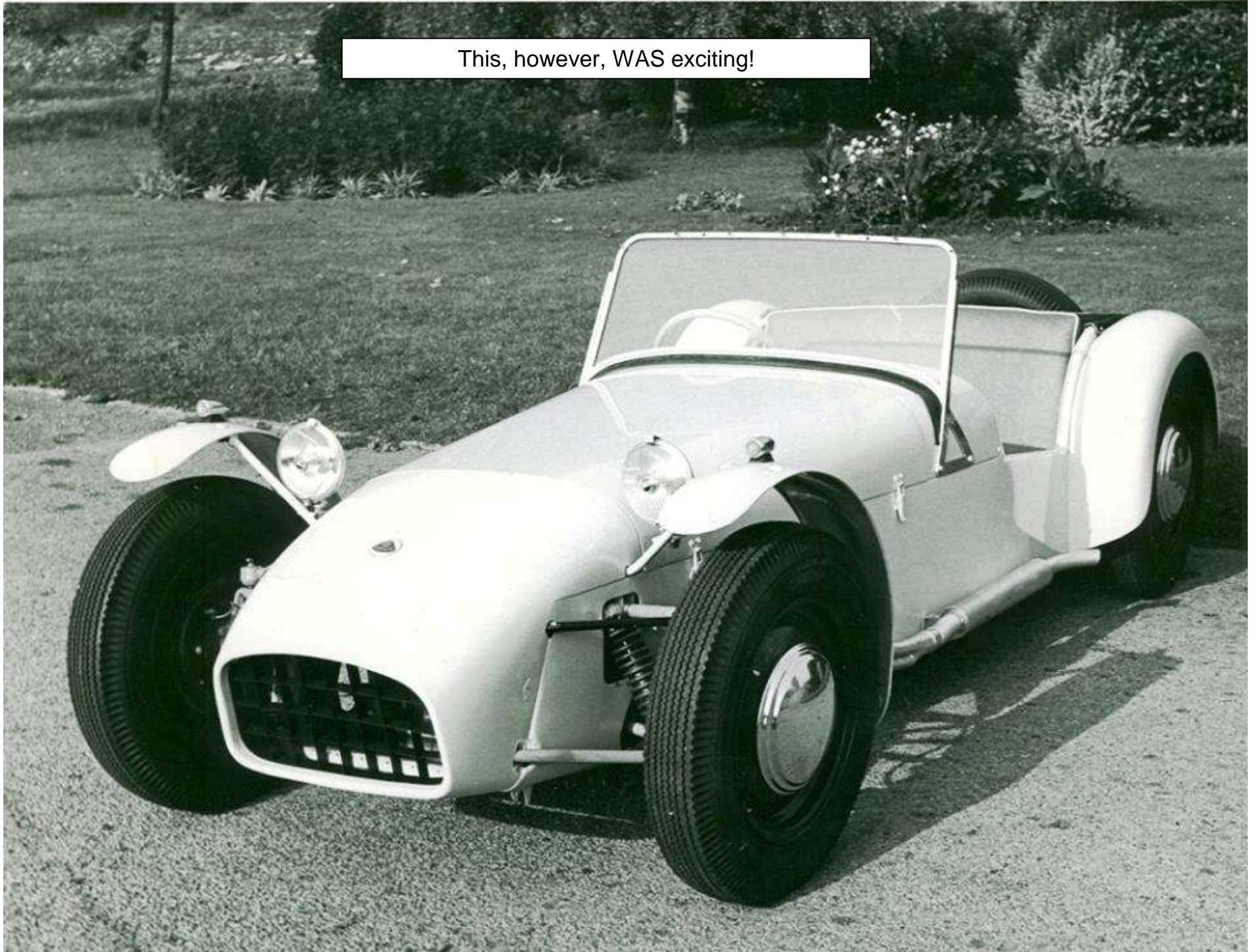
1957 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer
Dodge image at allpar.com

This is what our American cousins thought a convertible should look like in 1957... Despite making fun of the Yanks, a car like this would be worth mega-\$\$\$ if one owned it now! The advert on the following page shows what 1957 had to offer the Brits

Exciting? Really?



This, however, WAS exciting!







As was this – ground breaking, beautiful, economical, fast – and *truly* exciting!

1957

So what else happened in 1957 – apart from Lotus launching some very interesting new models?

- The Soviet Union sent the first space satellite into orbit - Sputnik 1.
- Movies included "Twelve Angry Men" and "The Bridge Over the River Kwai"
- Pop music continued to be Rock and Roll with artists like Little Richard and Elvis, whose movie *Loving you* opened in cinemas
- Slinkys and Hula Hoops were popular and the first Frisbee saw the light of day
- The European Community (EEC) was formed
- Test pilot and future astronaut, John Glenn Jr. set a new US transcontinental speed record in an F8U Crusader from Los Angeles to New York, becoming the first pilot to average supersonic speed during a transcontinental flight which took three hours and twenty-three minutes to complete
- 1957 was the peak of the Baby Boomer years (think about it – all those Boomers are now aged 60+).
- Ghana became the first country in colonial Africa to gain independence
- The Soviets launched the second Sputnik in November. It carried a dog named Laika into space.
- The Americans tried to launch their own satellite but it failed.
- US President was Dwight D Eisenhower
- The laser was invented by Gordon Gould
- The Boeing 707 had its first flight

In South Africa, the Prime Minister was J.G. Strijdom (remember him? No?). We had a Governor General back then – E.G. Jansen – but Queen Elizabeth was still our official Monarch. *Die Stem* became the official anthem of the Union of SA in 1957. The ANC was still a legal organisation – it held its 45th Annual Conference in Orlando, Johannesburg

And for Lotus?

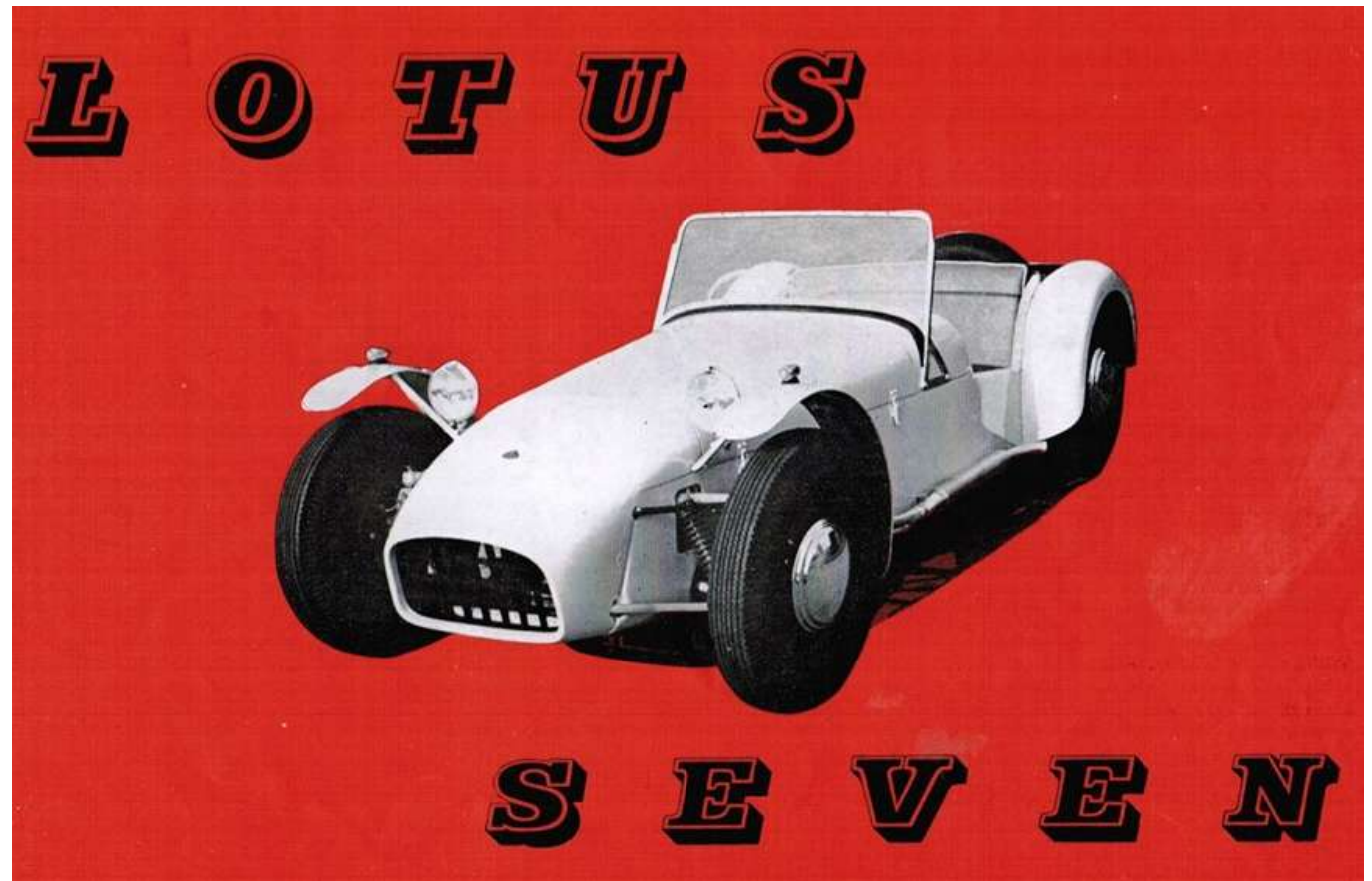
1957 was a pretty special year in Lotus history, reflects Jeff Wolfson. It marked the move from a company that produced small numbers of specialised cars for a specific market, to one that was going into car production (if not mass-production!). That year saw the launch of two important new models, one of which was ground breaking in technical terms and the other was not particularly so. One was exquisite, the other not particularly so.

It is well known that the Elite used revolutionary construction methods by applying the then new medium of glass fibre in a monocoque shell, with steel inserts bonded into strategic places. The concept was sound but Lotus made developmental errors in working with this new material that had to be put right in production to the detriment of company image and actual cost in terms of real money.

While the company was focussing a lot of resources on the technically advanced, breath-takingly gorgeous Type 14 Elite with all its expensive production headaches, the Seven by way of contrast, was relatively simple, developing existing Lotus designs of a space frame with aluminium cladding, mated to proprietary engines, gear boxes and axles. Its immediate predecessor, the Lotus Six, set the scene for the Seven and the family resemblance is obvious when one looks at pictures of the two models. One area where the cars are different, however, is in the front suspension: the earlier cars used a swinging arm axle – which Colin Chapman used on other models as well. Essentially, this was a beam axle usually from an early “puddle jumper” Ford but split in the middle. Pics of such Lotus models on track show the frightening-looking camber angles on the front wheels but despite this, Lotus handling remained a standard for other manufacturers. Of course, the split axle was a compromise which was developed on the Seven to use a different system where the front wheels remained (more or less) vertical by use of coil springs and wishbones. There were still some compromises – for example, Chapman designed the front anti-roll bar in such a way that it formed the front portion of the upper wishbone (see diagram on next page). If one part could perform two functions, so much the better – it saved weight and pennies!

This is one of the compromises that was later changed as revised models featured full wishbones and a separate anti-roll bar: a worthwhile improvement in the opinion of this writer.

I happen to be one those who think that although the Seven is not in the same beauty-league as the Elite, it is nonetheless a beautiful little car in its own right. And amazingly, it has remained so to this day – sixty years later. And of course, most remarkably, it is still in production through companies like Caterham, Birkin and countless others who produce similar – if not identical – looking cars. The Lotus Register of South Africa came up with the “twenty foot rule” (some say “forty foot”!) in that if it looks like a Lotus from twenty feet away, it is acceptable to the club. The more recent Locosts and Millennium Sevens would fit into this old classification, along with the many home-builts.



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LOTUS



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WALTHAM CROSS
2 6 1 8 1

Years ago, I wrote a piece titled "The car the bean counters couldn't kill" which developed this theme of how the Seven remains with us in its different guises to this day and it is this that we explore further as we look back at the history of the model on its milestone birthday. Here is South Africa, we do not have many early Sevens (see list below) and unlike some other classic car marques, few survive in their original form (I've written before about a particular concours d'etat winning Austin Healy whose owner confessed that he felt like a fraud because he'd used 1/2" bolts somewhere in his car when he knew they should have been 7/16"). One doesn't find pursuit of this level of originality in our club! The point is that our original Sevens have been pretty much mucked about with down the years because that is the sort of car the Seven is – a rough, tough, easily modified sports cum racing car and not a concours trailer queen.

By the way, note the driver in the sketch in this old advert – flat cap and pipe! Do you think he could have kept the pipe afloat as he drove? I reckon the lady passenger would have had major problems with her hair in that car – not to mention getting burning pipe tobacco and ash all over her frock!

And you could even take them on *really* long distance trips! 50 years ago – a Seven on a Continental honeymoon

While this charming story has nothing to do with The Lotus Register in South Africa, it does illustrate something of the attitude of Lotus Seven lovers, writes Dr Jeff. I found it in the letters to the editor page in the May 1999 issue of *Classic and Sportscar*. I acknowledge both the source and the authorship of this piece by Duncan Sutton.



LOTUS 7 AMERICA

The author describes the Continental honeymoon trip that was begun 50 years ago (in 1967) by his parents Julia and Scilla Sutton, in a Series 1 Lotus Seven America. This was the S1 with a BMC engine, clamshells and proper headlights (as opposed to a fog lamp and a long-range driving lamp).

To save space for their tent, they sacrificed the car's hood and sidescreens for their Continental journey, with just a tonneau cover under which his mother would sleep during long stretches. As it was before the luxury of tunnels under the Alps, they took the St Gottard Pass and the only way to stay warm was to drive wearing sleeping bags. Too cold to stop, mother brewed coffee on the transmission tunnel while dad was at the wheel... [how on earth did they manage that? Ed]

They then caught a boat to Patras, Greece where, enjoying a few hours rest on the beach, they were disturbed by a military landing craft arriving with all its troops, unaware that a revolution was in progress. They made a quick exit to Albania and Yugoslavia and a place called Skopje, from which the only route out of town was a dried river bed which they took under bridges crowded with disbelieving Yugoslavs. As they gunned toward a proper road, there was a sickening crunch as the sump hit a boulder. Dad jacked the car up on bricks, removed the sump and, proffering his AA 5-star travel companion, put the sump in the hands of an Albanian truck mechanic. Armed with an acetylene welder mated to a pair of blacksmith's bellows, rudimentary repairs were made. It was there that the Seven received a set of Russian tractor plugs which it was still running on 10 years later.

Their path homewards was over the Dolomites and into Austria. Through the tunnels, the lights began to self-dip: in fact one of them worked its way completely loose and eventually fell off, the car running over it. That wasn't a problem until the German border where the guard refused them entry because of it. Tired and hungry, having spent the last of their money on petrol coupons rather than food, they made their way to the next check point and crossed into Germany under cover of darkness. However, the steering became strangely progressively stiffer. It was only once they were back in England that they realised that one of the engine mountings had collapsed and was resting on the steering column, gently sawing its way through it.

Duncan Sutton concludes: Our Seven is sadly no longer with us but I was still being driven to school in it 15 years later. Oh yes, and my parents are still happily married 30 years later but now enjoy the thrills of a Lotus 11.

But what about South Africa?

Now Rudi Botha takes up the tale. He writes: The original Lotus Sevens I know of in South Africa belong to:

- Jannie Van Aswegen (S2 – see below)
- Klaas Kramer (S2)
- Gerry Kramer (S3)
- John Barty (S2)
- Derek Nightingale (S4)
- André du Plessis (in Pretoria) (S3)
- Ross Ward (S2) in Howick KZN
- Joe dos Santos (S1 and S2 – see below)
- Rudi Botha (S2) in Pretoria
- John Amm (S2) in Cape Town

Rudi also mentions early Caterhams. He writes, I know of one original, early Caterham: a 1974 Caterham Twin Cam which has had one owner car from new (Chris Beyers). The editor adds: Graham White of Johannesburg owned a red and aluminium Caterham with the 1700 135 bhp Kent engine and clamshell wings. I have lost touch with Graham and don't know if he still owns the car.

Rudi has been rebuilding his own Seven and on the next page, he kicks off our look at the few original Sevens still in SA. If there are other cars we have overlooked, please fill in the blanks so we can include them in our history in subsequent issues.

Note: as one can see from the accounts that follow, few early Lotus Sevens remained in original condition during their life span although current owners try to get them back to original.

Rudi has acquired an early S2 Seven himself and tells us a bit about its history. Scroll down...

1961 Lotus 7 S2 1340 cc Super Seven (SB1363)

Rudi writes: The history of SB1363 is as follows:



SB1363's frame was built on 18 January 1961 although the Lotus factory did not finish the car until later in 1961. It was sold to a Mr. L.E Selby by The Chequered Flag Motors in England with a Cosworth 1340 cc engine to Super Seven specifications.

This vehicle (SB1363) as well as a sister vehicle now owned by Ross Ward ended up in Southern Africa towards the end of the sixties. Jannie van Aswegen knew about this vehicle's history dating back to the late sixties and it was owned by a family member of his, Errol Laubscher. SB1363 was raced extensively by Errol Laubscher who owned a garage /service station in Johannesburg at the time. Mr Laubscher used it for drag racing for many years and at one stage, fitted a V8 engine to the

little car. According to Jannie van Aswegen, a 100 kg cement block was strapped to the differential (which had been upgraded to an Anglia unit) to get better traction.

The Lotus was very successful in the hands of Errol Laubscher and was renowned for decimating very powerful and fast motorcars and motorcycles on the drag strips and on open roads in and around the old Transvaal. During the late seventies, Mr Laubscher stripped the car for a total rebuild but unfortunately he did not get to finish the project.

During the eighties, Joe dos Santos came to hear about the Lotus and bought it from Mr Laubscher's widow. The Lotus stayed in Joe's garage until 2010 – because of his many other projects, he did not get time to start with the project. In the meanwhile, however, he showed the stripped project vehicle to Jannie van Aswegen who identified the vehicle as the Errol Laubscher Lotus 7. I got to hear that the project was for sale, and bought the Seven in August 2010.

Once I got the car home I began an inventory of what I had and what would be needed. Fortunately, many of the original parts came with the project and I was able to make a start sourcing the parts that were not included or not usable, as well as refurbish those that were usable. By 2017, a total rebuild was well under way. When members of The Lotus Register heard that I had the vehicle, many people offered their help to get it back to its original state. I really appreciate the way so many people rallied around

to give assistance, share information and provide me with very rare and sort after parts. One such was the late Sean Allen who enthusiastically obtained information from some of the old drag racers about my Lotus.

SB1363 is now being lovingly rebuild by Neil le Blanc and it will be back on the road in original condition in the near future.

It is a privilege and honour to be a custodian of such a significant vehicle with such remarkable racing history.

NB:

A big word of thanks must go to the following TLR members/individuals for their assistance, support, encouragement and enthusiasm with the project (please forgive me if I left anybody out):

Michelle Botha (my wife for your continuous support, understanding and love), Jannie van Aswegen, Joe dos Santos, Neil le Blanc, Klippies Krige, Oom Hendrik Pieterse, Derek van der Merwe, Steve Crook, Derek Nightingale, John Barty, Lotus Seven Club (lotus7.club), Neville Reed, Johan Nel, Clive Wilmot, Ron Liddiard, Dr Jeff Wolfson, Gerry Kramer, Klaas Kramer, Ken Cloud, Andre Lamprecht (Oom Lammies), Jaco Geyser, Guy Descroizilles, Andre Ten Krooden, Selwyn Kerr, Koos Roets and the late Grass Gordon, Sean Allen and Howard Robinson.

This project would never have been possible without you and I thank you all

- Rudi Botha



Which is where we hand the story-teller mantle to Jannie van Aswegen...

Jannie van Aswegen's Seven

Jannie is the owner of an original Series 2 Lotus Seven and he tells us something about the origins of his particular car.



In 1962, the agents for Lotus and Holbay Engines from the UK was a company called Speedparts, based on the Reef in South Africa . The partners were Mr Aubrey Gunning and a Mr Cohen. Mr Gunning was a real motor enthusiast and also had other financial interests in the motoring world, like being the “G” in tuning company A and G Conversions .

For the 1962 season, Speedparts brought in two Lotus Super 7s and also a Lotus 23 racing car to be sold in South Africa. The cars arrived in time to be exhibited at the April 1962 Rand Easter Show which was then held at the Milpark

Show Grounds in Braamfontein [now the University of the Witwatersrand West Campus – editor]. The two Lotus 7s were Series

two cars with the chassis numbers SB1608 and SB1609 – the Lotus 23 being 23/S/4 . These cars were much admired by the public but by the end of the show, only one car had been sold – the Lotus 7 chassis no SB1609. The other two cars remained in stock at Speedparts, so to relieve the financial strain of holding these cars, Mr Gunning agreed to take over the two remaining cars.

Aubrey Gunning decided to race both these cars at the old Kyalami and also at various other events like the Krugersdorp Hill-climb and at the drag races which were held at the old Rainbow drag strip on the way to Heidelberg. During a club racing event at Kyalami, he had a bad accident with the Lotus 23 and was hospitalised for some time with broken legs. While he was in hospital, his wife sold the Lotus 23 to Lukie Botha, who rebuilt the car and raced it afterwards.

On Mr Gunning's return to full health, he returned to racing the Lotus 7 chassis no SB1608 in club events at Kyalami and also the Krugersdorp hill climb. He felt that he needed more power in the car, so replaced the original 1340 cc 109E Ford engine with a Holbay-built racing unit number 5 63 81. The Holbay engine was built on a 109E Ford block consisting of a three main bearing steel crankshaft, steel rods, forged 85 mm pistons, Holbay aluminium pre-crossflow cylinderhead and a dry sump system for the oil. The engine capacity was now 1475 cc and was producing 140 HP running 45 side-draught Weber carburettors . The car was then also fitted with Lotus wobbly web wheels and steel side-shafts in the Standard 10 differential. The original gearbox was fitted with close ratio gears. (In the pic on the page above, the car is wearing steel wheels and hub caps)

In this form the car was drag raced mainly and managed to do a 13,1 second at Rainbow Drag Strip for the quarter mile (a standard Capri Perana V8 only managed 15,2 seconds). At the 1963 Krugersdorp Hill-climb he came third with a time of 54,53 seconds against the winning Formula One car of Rauten Hartman called the Netuar of 50,91 seconds ["Netuar" is his first name reversed – editor]. The car which came second was the Tojeiro-Bristol with a time of 54,45 seconds. This was a UK-built, top of the range sports racing car which was only a fraction faster. All of this in 1963 which was not too shabby for a cheap sports car.

When Mr Gunning stopped racing in 1976, the Lotus was parked in the basement of one of the apartment blocks which he owned at the time, aptly called Silverstone Apartments. In 1986 when he passed away, I asked his wife if I could buy the car and she agreed. The car was stripped to be totally rebuilt like it was when he last raced it, except that we returned the Holbay race engine to a wet sump engine as the car is not being raced. I finished the car in 1987 and it was the only original Lotus 7 at the 40th anniversary in the Drakensberg in 1997 and one of only two originals which turned up for the 50th anniversary in Clarence in 2007 (the other being the John Amm car).

- Jannie van Aswegen

The Niemand Lotus Seven: the “fastest Lotus Seven in the world!”

Here is Jannie van Aswegen again as he gives us the low down on one of the very special early cars, now lost for ever?

The Lotus Seven was designed by Colin Chapman to be a cheap but quick road sports car which could also be used for club racing . The Series 1 car saw the light of day in 1957 and since then have been the most copied car in the world . During 1960 Willie Meissner from Cape Town, who later would become known as the best racing development engineer in South Africa, imported a second hand Lotus 7 S1. Meissner was perhaps better known for his involvement with the GSM Dart and Flamingo projects, as well as the Meissner Escort, which he developed for Peter Gough to drive and win the South African saloon car championship. He fitted the Lotus Seven (which came with a Ford side valve engine), with the latest Ford 105E 1000cc engine and made some modifications to it and started racing the car himself.

When he started Meissner Motors his time was limited but he had a young hot-shot mechanic working for him called Brausch Niemand, who drove the Lotus and eventually the took over car as well. However, neither Meissner nor Brausch was happy to run the car only in club events. They decided to modify it so that it could run in Formula one races and also in sports car races. Series 1 Lotus Sevens are 35 inches across the back of the chassis (from S2 cars Lotus 7s are 37 inches). When they looked at the regulations for formula one cars they realised that they would need to narrow the chassis to comply, so they cut the chassis length-wise and took out two inches all the way along so it complied with F1 rules. Willie then built a super 109E engine of 1475 cc with all the modifications they could make at the time, running 4 Amal motorbike carburettors. They fitted front drum brakes from a Mercedes 180 to the front suspension as they were bigger and finned for cooling. They changed the Standard 10 differential to an Austin diff which gave them the possibility of many different ratios available from the various BMC cars. It also had the benefit of full-floating side shafts which do not allow the car to lose a wheel if the side shaft breaks. There was no limited slip centre in the differential – not sure if they could not afford one or if none were available for this particular differential. However, they solved this by fitting fiddler brakes on each of the rear wheels so that on going through a corner and the inside wheel starts spinning, the driver could minimise that wheel spinning with the fiddler brake so the other wheel then had traction – a system which they copied from the off-road trials cars in the UK. This must have been observed by Willie in his time he spent in the UK, when he and Bob van Niekerk were building the Dart mould, before shipping it to South Africa .

The Lotus now had a different look as the mudguards were removed for the FI races and a different nose cone fitted. With Brausch driving the car it became a regular in the local F1 races and did some respectable times on the local circuits, beating some of the real F1 cars in the field . For the sports car races, the mudguards were fitted with wing nuts so they could be removed and refitted in a short time. They had also been modified to be more streamlined, the nosecone for the sports car races had the lights fared into the nose cone .

During the 1962 Rand Grand Prix at Kyalami, Colin Chapman was standing in the pits when Jim Clark passed the pits on the Kyalami straight with Brausch in the Lotus 7 almost sticking to the back of Clark's Lotus 25 F1 car. Chapman commented to the bystanders: "That must be the fastest Lotus 7 in the world!". Brausch was timed at 127 MPH down the Kyalami straight . Unfortunately this car has disappeared and the last place it was seen, many years ago, was in the East London area .

- Jannie van Aswegen

Joe dos Santos' feature on the Schultz Special follows – one of the cars that some thought may have been the Niemand Seven

Another Lotus 7 – the "Schultz Special"

Joe dos Santos writes about what he now believes is another original Lotus 7 in SA – the car known as the "Schultz Special"

I bought the "Schultz Special" from John Barty in about 1988. He told me at the time that this was a track car which had a racing history and was not fit for road use, so I decided to join the Historic Racing Car Register. John also told me that Denzil Schultz had built the car, hence the name.



I competed in various races with the Schultz Special in about '88 and '89 and after allowing an unethical "business partner" to perform some work on the car, my last race in it involved an accident, where I drove straight in the door of an Alfa on the first corner of Midvaal on the opening lap, finding out that the splined steering shaft was loose and the wheel nuts on both the front wheels were also loose. Let us just say that I never saw this person again, after he disappeared overseas with huge debts and not honouring his partnership to me.

The rules in my first race allowed me to wear a helmet, gloves, jeans and a leather jacket – no race suit. The stewards were more concerned that I needed a safety pin on the front wheel bearing nuts. It meant an awful lot of sweaty work in the sun with the use of a hand drill in the pits in the

middle of nowhere. The car was initially competitive with the Avon tyres that were fitted when I got it but it became a handful by the end of the race as the sidewalls leaked pressure, allowing for the very sideways Seven. Another entry in a Seven was Colin Burford (who later emigrated) who chided me after the race for blocking him with my sideways oversteer! I had managed to stay ahead of a yellow Lotus Europa which was driven by one Dawie in the Roger Pearce-owned Rolo Motors colours.

I competed in two Krugersdorp hillclimbs, getting a 3rd overall in one, while half going over the edge of the first corner in the second one. I also competed in various gymkhanas doing well and having fun. I remember also doing one in the Eastern Transvaal as we knew it then at the Numbi Hotel, on an airstrip behind the hotel. All that was seen of my face were the white eyes amidst the sandy face and hair. What a sight!

It was only about in January 2013 when I asked Ken Cloud to re-skin the car, that I called Denzil and asked him to give me some of its history. To my absolute amazement he told me he had found the car on a scrap heap in Durban in 1969 . although he later said he found it in a Mobil Service station on Ridge Road. He claimed to have bought it from the owner called Philip Schutte for R400.00 At the time it had a Ford 1100 cc wet sump engine which had been badly damaged as a result of hitting a brick or something on the road.

It was then that I started the quest of finding its true history. I approached Gordon Murray through his secretary, thinking of the possibility of it being his lost car, as he had left Durban in 1969 for Europe. It was soon denied. John Barty bought the car from the owner of Central African Road Services, with a damaged front right side – the company owner may have been an ex-Zimbabwean called Eddie Lawrence according to Denzil. Denzil damaged the car by catching a low solid steel door guide which broke the bell housing and tunnel area, so he removed the aluminium tunnel pre-stressed section and replaced it with its present square tube units. Denzil advised me that he made some very drastic changes to the car in the chassis and drive train department, especially after returning from Lotus Canada and seeing what was done on Sevens there. He dry sumped the engine with a Cosworth pump and used a pre crossflow 1300 head for higher compression. He also fitted a 5-speed Alfa gearbox and lengthened the trailing arms, fitted a Ford back axle, along with an F1 type steering rack (which has since disappeared). The front suspension was altered to 2 wishbones per side.

The day that he finished the car, both Denzil and Lew Baker drove the car to Johannesburg to start a business together. The car sat in the back of the business premises until they closed the business and it went back to Durban where it lay at a friend's house. Denzil competed in various hillclimbs and won a championship in either 1970 or 1971.

Finally, early in 2017 Klaas and Gerry Kramer came to pay me a visit, that Klaas immediately declared that it was an original car, giving his reasons. On approaching John Watson in the UK, it now seems to be very likely that it is the missing frame number "415"

as per the numbered plate welded under the passenger seat area. Jannie van Aswegen has now also seen this chassis and concurs.

I nicknamed this car “Cachorro” (which means “pavement special dog” in Portuguese) and quoted numerous times by the then TLR chairman, Des Caine and his wife, Zez Caine.

Happy memories are associated with this little car. The present idea is to keep the car in the same condition as purchased by me.

- Joe dos Santos

Early Caterhams?

Rudi Botha referred to early Caterhams in his articles above. Publishing deadlines for this issue have been unkind with regard to these cars but I would really like to have a feature on early Caterhams to continue the history of the Seven. There will be space in future issues of *The Lotus Legend* for features and pictures of these cars if anyone would like to send material (PLEASE do!)

- Editor Jeffw@iafrica.com

Seven S1 - Registration "MYSEVEN GP"

And Joe tells us about a second interesting car ...



I bought this car through Graham Clayton, but paid Thomas David Williams on 28 October 1989, whose family had a farm in Northern Rhodesia. It had been advertised amongst TLR fraternity but no one wanted to buy it as, despite its having a Lotus Twin

Cam engine, it had no power and it would not brake properly. However, it had been beautifully restored by someone who had spent a lot of time on it: I even found some of the jets in the carbs had been polished.

It had clearly been raced at some time in its life as the rear drum brakes had been drilled for cooling and had a very different suspension, especially at the back. The battery was very strangely placed behind the radiator, not only becoming very hot, but limiting the air flow to cool the engine [The battery on my early Birkin is similarly placed behind the rad – Editor]

The car was not used much for the above reasons, and I was not able to establish why it would not brake, mainly because of all my other activities at the time such as building a home and some motor racing. It was necessary to park it at various locations such as in my mother-in-law's back yard, scantily covered with plastic that deteriorated in the sun, and later in a neighbour's garage. It also spent some time in my half-built home during which time the steering wheel was stolen by some kids.

It was taken out occasionally and on one of the outings, the engine sump was damaged, causing a small oil leak. I was not aware that the good neighbour just cleaned up the oil and did not mention it to me. When I did take it for a ride in 1992 – without having checked the oil level - it ran its bearings, so out came the engine. I then discovered the source of low power. The carb butterfly valves were opening only about 25% due to the short travel of the throttle link cable on a flat accelerator pedal. This was rectified by adding an extension arm to the end of the pedal allowing for more travel and a fully opened throttle.

Now comes an amazing twist to the story. Many years later, having moved into my newly built home, I was paid a visit by the steering wheel thief, who humbly returned the stolen property. He was now a young adult and his conscience bothered him. I sent this story to our local newspaper, omitting the name of the person, and it was published.

The car was not often used due to the bad brakes as well as a starting problem caused by an older-style starter motor without the solenoid. Jannie van Aswegen saw the car at my home and advised me that it had the original petrol tank and windscreen. I tried to obtain information about the origins of this car and published an article in our TLR magazine and that of the Seven Car Club of Natal but received no information. I did find that Roy Carr had raced a Seven with a twin cam engine in Zambia in the early 80s and asked him to look at the car, but again, no further ground gained, as he did not recognise its rather unique suspension.

At some stage we had a talk at The Lotus Register by Koos Roets looking for the very famous Meissner Lotus Seven which beat some factory teams in a F1 race at Kyalami, and mentioned that it had been cut down the middle and narrowed by 2" to meet the rules (see Jannie's article above). I was very excited when I discovered that my car was 2 inches narrower than my racing Seven and the spare original chassis which I had stored away. Upon phoning Jannie, I was advised that I had one of only 3 Series One Sevens which came into Southern Africa.

At some stage, I was travelling in the car with my wife when a rose joint popped out of its very worn encapsulation in the back suspension, leaving it with an instant back wheel steering and at close to 100 km/h, turned us into the side Armco barrier which caused quite a bit of damage. During my rebuild I found that the chassis had been brazed. The rear wheel fenders had been widened in fibre glass and were extremely heavy, and had multiple colours of paint below. When the car was fixed it was resprayed in a different yellow.

The brakes were still problematic, so I tried to replace the brake master cylinders with smaller diameter ones for higher pressures but this made only a marginal difference. So as a final desperate attempt, I replaced the brake pads and all of a sudden there were good brakes. It turned out that it still had racing pads!

It would still be great to find out more about this car's history, so if anyone can add to its story, I'd love to hear from you.

- Joe dos Santos

More to come?

My thanks to all those who wrote and sent pics of their cars for this special feature on the Seven and the Type 14. I do understand that there are others who have stories to tell but for whom the deadline for this special edition was impractical.

Please do not let that stop you sending your articles and pics to me for inclusion in a later issue of *The Lotus Legend*

- Editor jeffw@iafrica.com

Lotus Mk Six (right rear) to Mk Nine



The Lotus 7 was a development of the Lotus 6 (at the back in this pic from the UK. The influence of the aeronautical aerodynamicists who used to hang around the Lotus works after working hours and who collaborated with Chapman is obvious when one looks at the streamliners which were being built at more or less the same time as the Seven

Two Series 4 Sevens

There are not many S4 Sevens in South Africa and here two owners tell us about their cars: Derek Nightingale and Richard Buckley.

1. Derek Nightingale's S4

Derek writes:

According to my research, Chassis no. S4 3523 was one of eight cars built with a Lotus Twin Cam engine in the UK by Sevens Cars Limited, which was the registered name for those cars that were built by Caterham Engineering. As many readers will know, Colin Chapman handed over the Lotus 7 business to Graham Nearn in 1973. Caterham continued production of Lotus Series 4 cars until all the Series 4 components were used up, after which they concentrated on Series 3 cars.

This particular car was imported from the UK, and many years later, in 2001, was spotted by Jannie van Aswegen at Fred van Heerden's FvH Sevens workshop in Cape Town. Fred – unfortunately now deceased – was a Lotus 7 replica builder and repairer. The car had been renovated by Fred but some months later suffered an engine bay fire. Lotus Twin Cams had a habit of catching fire as the carburettors were situated above the distributor, and if the carburettors leaked petrol, it would invariably go up in flames. This appeared to be the case with my car. It was badly damaged, destroying most of the front body work right up to the dashboard. I purchased the car in this fire-damaged (and stripped down) condition. It needed a total restoration and was rebuilt as a part-time project, which therefore took a few years to complete.

The car and its components are original except for the 1600 cc engine sub-assembly, and the inertia reel seat belts which were fitted for road use.

The car has a current licence and has now been on the road for over two years.

- Derek Nightingale

2. Lotus 7 Series 4 S4 3083 TCU

Richard Buckley has another of the very few S4 Sevens in South Africa and has embarked on a very comprehensive rebuild, which he tells us about in the following article. Space constraints mean that we cannot include all the very considerable detail that Richard gave us in his original piece but readers who want to know more may contact him at richard@scamont.co.za

1. Details

Manufacturer:	Lotus Norwich, England
Chassis No:	S4 3083 TCU
Engine Number:	25340
Year of Manufacture:	1971
First Registered in SA:	1972
Engine:	Lotus Big Valve Twin Cam 1599cc
Carburation:	2 x Weber 40 DCOE 31 (No. 24564 & 24531)
Gearbox:	Ford 2821E 4 speed
Rear Axle:	Ford Escort (Ratio 3.77)
Colour:	Originally pigmented yellow gel coat, currently Black
Wheels:	Brand Lotus alloy wheels
Chassis Manufacturer:	Arch Motors UK (No. 237)

I believe that the vehicle is totally original except for the distributor and oil pressure gauge, both of which I plan to replace. I have replaced the front shocks with later manufactured Spax versions

2. History

1971-1991	Details Unknown
1991-1996	Mr. Alan Cook purchased the vehicle from Aloes Motors in Witbank on 13/12/1991. Registration no. DFD515T
1996-2013	Mr. Brett Pollington purchased the vehicle from Mr. Cook on 11/15/1996. The vehicle had already been restored and the colour changed to black. The vehicle was used recreationally and kept in Johannesburg over the entire period. The registration no was now MDN976GP. Mr. Pollington was a member of the Lotus Register Member no. M163.

2013-present

I purchased the vehicle from Mr. Pollington (father in-law) on 6 June 2013. I have since been in the process of restoring the vehicle.



Restored chassis and brake lines



Front suspension after power coating, electro plated discs, new hub bearings, vertical links, trunnion, bushes and dampers.

This happy band from the UK Historic Lotus Register are seen with assorted early Lotus Sixes and a fore runner of the Seven, the Clairmonte Special (front right). This is the car that was to have been named the "Mk VII" until ACBC changed his mind



And now, on to the Type 14 Elite...



A victorious Ian Frazer Jones in the Type 14 Elite, later to be owned by Richard Clarke. Here seen at the Lourenco Marques GT event on 21 July 1963

The Lotus Type 14 Elite (#1680)

Richard Clarke of Cape Town owns one of only two Lotus Elites known to be in South Africa (the other being the pale yellow ex-Howard Robinson car now in the hands of Lynton Lomas)

The Lotus 14 Climax Elite Chassis Number 1680 was imported to South Africa by Mark Zoccla. Mark had previously raced an Austin Healey Sprite and an MGA Twin Cam – mainly in the Cape.

Mark actually helped build #1680 at Lotus in early 1962, working alongside a Team Elite car destined for Le Mans next to his bay in the factory. Once the car was finished, he partly disassembled it again prior to shipping to Cape Town so that it could be brought into South Africa at a lower rate of taxation. The guy working next to him was Jim Clarke's mechanic – Cedric Seltzer, a South African from Cape Town – who befriended Mark. As a result, motor #10472 was sent off to BRM for head work and tuning along with the Team Elite motor. #1680 had other race bits attached to bring it up to "full race" trim such a 5 bearing camshaft carrier, steel timing chain sprocket, twin 1½" SUs, performance exhaust manifold, light weight brakes, close ratio ZF gearbox, rear differential straps, rear disc brake heat shields etc.

Elites were raced with full interiors and original glass in those days. It was found that there was little power difference between SUs and Webers especially when running at full throttle – their times at Le Mans were similar. As a matter of interest, Elites at Le Mans were reaching speeds in excess of 140 mph in 1958 – their lap times at Le Mans exceeded 100 mph with a 1216 cc motor developing 104 bhp. In fact, Elites have one of the best all time records of any car at Le Mans – they won the prestigious "Index of Performance" twice and they won their class 6 years on a row and finished in the top 10 three times – twice they were eighth and once tenth – 1958 to 1963. Considering the cars they were competing against, this certainly is an achievement.

Almost immediately on its arrival in Cape Town, Mark sold #1680 to Ian Fraser-Jones who at that time held the Lotus agency for South Africa under the banner of "Team Competition Cars". Ian was twice SA Motor Racing Champion and had also raced F1 in Europe. He told me that #1680 was the most successful race car he ever owned. In 1958 the Elite far and away outclassed all GT cars in its class, this included the Porsche. Ian remarked when I met him at his home in Johannesburg in the mid 1990s that the Elite never finished lower than first in class – and finished every race. Finishing every race in a Lotus Elite must be a record.

#1680 required a complete rebuild when I got it because the car was in a series of boxes stripped to bits of parts. It took 2000+ hours to restore #1680: every nut and bolt was wire brushed and plated, every piece was inspected and restored. I travelled to the UK and stayed with Miles Wilkins in Sussex from whom I purchased many bits and pieces. Miles is recognized as the official Lotus Elite man in the UK – he was given all the original factory body moulds and can supply anything that might be required.

I have now been the custodian of #1680 for more than 40 years, covering only about 3,500 miles. More recently I have been fortunate to have had the assistance of Cape Town based Richard Twell who is a top-line engineer and engine builder. A great amount of work was done on the motor and Richard feels that the Coventry Climax motor should now be safe to 9,000 rpm. We suspect that the current motor (which is original to the car) has in excess of 120 bhp.

The ZF gearbox was also rebuilt by Richard Twell as was the differential.

Some information pertaining to Engine Number 10472 – the original motor:

The head had extensive work done on the ports, the back of the throats were re-profiled for improved flow and swirl by adding material. The valve seats were profiled and Honda valves are used, providing lightness, improved head shape and a slight increase in size from standard. With Honda cotters, the valve stem reduction is 25% with altered shimming arrangement to save additional weight, Cosworth valve-spring retainers, VW Golf GTI double valve springs, improved high-lift Climax 5 bearing camshaft imported from the UK, resized valve guides, 5 bearing Climax camshaft carrier, aluminium flywheel, up-rated pressure plate, solid billet steel crankshaft with later oil seal arrangement, steel rods, up-rated rod bolts, forged pistons, steel timing gear, fitted and redesigned sump splash tray, redesigned sump gasket arrangement (no more paper gaskets), threaded dip-stick (was push-in), redesigned sump oil pickup arrangement, fully balanced motor, altered Climax crank bearing setup to run standard bearing sizes on crank (no Std-sized Climax big-end bearing shells are available anywhere in the world), made and fitted oversized high tensile main bearing studs, fitted steel strap to centre main bearing cap, redesigned exhaust manifold to fall in with engine modifications and expected high RPM, twin 1½" SU carburetors modified for flow, head modified for flow, oil cooler.

After rebuilding the motor, Richard Twell drove the car first time out at the Killarney David Piper weekend in early 2000 – we used 8,000 rpm with 60 psi oil pressure even though the ambient heat was extreme and we had not calculated the additional under bonnet heat generated by the new/ longer exhaust manifold. We lifted the rear of the bonnet to improve matters – now no longer an issue after additional modifications.

On the road, the Elite is a revelation. The driving experience is surprising in that the first impression is of the car being softly sprung. Elites are very light and the braking is superb, they weigh less than 600 kg with discs all around. The car handles like a well sorted modern GT and the combination of light weight and a low drag coefficient of just 0.29 produces superb acceleration in all gears.

There is also no under-steer or over-steer in a Elite, the car will simply slide or drift sideways when the tires exceed their ability to provide adhesion and it is possible to use the accelerator pedal to control the slide while feeling in complete control. Using 8,000

rpm, acceleration from 0 to 60 mph is close on 6 seconds with a 4:55 diff ratio. With the Le Mans diff ratio of 3:77 (in its current form), the car will just about touch on 100 mph in 2nd gear, with 4th gear achieving close on 160 mph “estimated”.

On track

Being a “race car for the road”, Elites have always done well on track. In 1957 the Elite was technically in advance of any other GT in design and ability and this was demonstrated by being able to compete at the top end of the international GT table. Only cars with much bigger engine capacity and power were able to stay with the Elite – Elites dominated their racing class and were virtually unbeatable for a considerable period.

In 1960 Colin Chapman attempted to win Le Mans with a specially prepared Elite. Lotus built a one-off Elite, Chassis #1255 using the 2 litre FPF twin-overhead camshaft Coventry Climax motor. The project was sponsored by Jonathan Sieff of the Marks & Spencer retail family. The car was to have been driven by Alan Stacey and Innes Ireland – both Lotus F1 drivers – and the expectation of an outright Le Mans win was high. The suspension and brakes were taken off the Lotus 18 Formula 1 car to cope with the additional power and front-end weight, and other changes such as bigger wheels were made. The car weighed in at 712 kg and was fast enough to scare most sane people who attempted to drive it. A wolf in sheep skin – other than the slightly wider wheels, it looked like any other standard Elite.

This 2 litre Elite was timed at 174 mph during Le Mans practice and the potential was certainly there for the win. Unfortunately Lotus was hit by a number of unfortunate accidents at this time. Alan Stacey was killed in the Belgium Grand Prix after being hit in the face by a bird causing him to lose control of his Lotus 18 and Jonathan Sieff crashed his standard Elite during Le Mans practice and was badly injured. He was airlifted to hospital (the first time a helicopter was used in this way at Le Mans). The 2 litre Elite was later smashed in a club race in England in 1961, it was dismantled and never raced after this. It was recently put back together and in 2014 sold on auction in England for £124,700.

Car:	Lotus 14 Coventry Climax Elite Series 2
Year:	1962
Engine:	1216 cc Coventry Climax: FWE - SOHC
Engine number:	10472
Chassis number:	1680
Steering:	RHD
Engine tune:	Stage 3 Full Race
Carburettors:	Twin 1½" SU
Gearbox:	ZF
Mileage:	±26,000
Condition:	Restored
Original colour:	White
Original interior:	Red and grey carpets



3rd August 1963
Rand Winter Races - Bardahl GT Race
George van Straaten - Nick Kingwill - Ian Frazer-Jones
(Porsche Carrera - Cortina Lotus - Lotus Elite)



Left - Kyalami 1963

Right – Angolan GP GT race in 1962





The Elite at Kyalami 1963



Pics and captions from Richard Clarke



Killarney - the David Piper event circa 2000





Interior of Richard's Elite. This pic, the one of the engine above and those that follow are from Ron Liddiard



The refurbished ex-Howard Robinson Elite after he had sold it to Rodney Green

The editor acknowledges with grateful thanks the contributions to this special issue made by:

- Rudi Botha
- Jannie van Aswegen
- Richard Clarke
- Ron Liddiard
- Joe dos Santos



This pic from the 1957 Brighton Speed Trials – Edward Lewis in chassis 400
Thanks to Historic Lotus Register, UK

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