Riding a Sunbeam to Paris
By Andrew R. Barron

Having driven a Seven from London to Cannes, an Elise from Houston to Boston, and using an Esprit as a daily driver for the last 10 years, I have been interested in acquiring a suitable classic sports car for all seasons and to use it whenever I am back on the other side of the pond. It has to be a Lotus, but what to buy?

Despite what we may all say (and do) Lotus cars are not the most practical form of transportation. However, during its years as a manufacturer Lotus has collaborated with three of the major auto makers to turn one of their mundane cars into something special. The first was with Ford in turning the humble Cortina into a racecar. Then Chrysler approached Lotus to create a winning rally car from the Sunbeam hatchback. Finally, the Vauxhall (UK wing of GM) Carlton was turned from a reps car into the fastest saloon car in the world. Each one has 4 seats and is able to cruise long distances without being cramped and carrying luggage for several weeks. So which one?

Cortinas in even OK condition are reaching silly money in the UK (actually significantly higher than an equivalent condition Elan!) while Carltons have not depreciated significantly (and their insurance is high). That leaves the Sunbeam which are available for modest costs and have good technical and parts support.

Most people in the US will not have not seen a Sunbeam Lotus since they were never sold this side of the Atlantic. In the late 70’s Chrysler UK were interested in challenging the Ford Escort RS and Vauxhall Chevette HS in the World Rally Championship. They already had a suitable car in the shape of their new hatchback – the Sunbeam, named after a part of the Rootes Group that became Chrysler UK.

The Sunbeam was a 2 door, rear wheel drive hatchback that had not made a significant sales impact versus Ford’s Fiesta and VW’s Golf. It was a tidy shape, but nothing exciting. In fact the Sunbeam shared its bodyshell with the Plymouth Omni and Dodge Horizon (although these were both front wheel drive). Chrysler’s Director of Motorsports, the dynamic Chris O’Dell, started to look for a possible high performance engine for his rally car that could be used in a homologation special for the street.

O’Dell approached Lotus to supply a rally-tuned 2L Type 907 engine from Lotus (as used in the Elite, Eclat and Esprit). It was shoehorned into a Sunbeam and was duly tested by Rally great Tony Pond who took it to second place in the 1978 Mille Pistes rally in France. On the strength of this one car O’Dell won approval from Chrysler to homologate the Chrysler Sunbeam-Lotus – 400 would have to be built before competition was allowed.

Now it transpired that this deal could not come at a better time since Lotus had recently lost a valuable customer for its engines with the failure of the Jensen Healy in 1976, and were in need of finding a replacement. Thus it was agreed that Lotus would develop and manufacture the cars (jointly with Chrysler) and they would even assign it a Lotus Type number (81). Since Chrysler required a 2.2L motor, Lotus developed a new engine (based upon the presently produced 2L type 907) which was designated the Type 911. The 911 motor is distinct from the later 2.2L Type 912 motor fitted to Esprits, Eclats and Excels, with different carburettor settings, ignition, lubrication system, main bearings, and sump. For the Sunbeam the engine was rated at 150 bhp at 5,750 rpm, while peak torque was 150 lb.ft at 4,500 rpm. In its class for rallying this gave the Sunbeam higher horsepower than its two UK built rivals: Escort RS1800 having 120 bhp and the Chevette HS having 135 bhp.

During the development of the Chrysler Sunbeam-Lotus, Chrysler of Detroit became tired of its European subsidiaries hemorrhaging cash and sold them, lock-stock and barrel, to Peugeot-Citren of France. Thus, all British Chryslers became Talbots and the name was changed to Talbot Sunbeam-Lotus.

The cars were built at Linewood in Scotland shipped to Lotus in Norfolk where Lotus set up a separate production line for the cars. In addition to fitting their engine, Lotus fitted a ZF 5 speed gearbox and strengthened the rear axle. As would be expected the suspension was also tweaked along with upgraded brakes. All the first series cars were painted black with a wide “boy racer” stripes down the sides (although a light blue version was available as a later option). The paint scheme echoed both the then current JPS sponsorship of Lotus F1 cars and the simplicity of the white/green scheme for the Lotus Cortina. The interior was standard Sunbeam, and the only Lotus badges were a pair of large emblems on the front wings within the side stripes.

As a rally car the Sunbeam-Lotus was a success, winning the world rally championship in 1981. This achievement is greater than it may first appear since the Sunbeams managed to beat the mighty factory Audi Quattro team, who had massive financial backing from sponsors Rothmans. As far as sales went the car was not as big a success. Of the expected 4,000 cars projected, only 2,298 were actually sold and the program was cancelled in 1981. However, the Sunbeam-Lotus remains an archetypal hot-hatch, and brought financial stability to Lotus and visibility to Talbot.

At the present, Sunbeam-Lotus have a minor cult following in the UK, but prices have not risen over the last few years. A good (but not concours) example can be purchased for about £3,000 (just under $6,000 with the present weak $. So armed with a computer

Riding A Sunbeam (Continued on page 5)
**LOTUS ReMARQUE**

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

MICHAEL GULLEY publisher;

ANKUSH BAHKUN contributing editor;

JUN KANGKAO contributing coordinators coordinator;

TONY VACCARO piloting editor;

PHIL CANNON illustrations;

ROBERT SZAKONYI layout;

FOSTER COOPERSTEIN magazine watch;

JIM MARDEN marsden on models;

PETER PEAL, the ex-fax files;

GORDON MORRIS european correspondent.

LOTUS ReMARQUE is published monthly by Lotus, Ltd., P.O. Box L, College Park, MD 20741, U.S.A., an independent car club not affiliated with Group Lotus U.S.A., Team Lotus, or any of their subsidiaries or affiliates. Lotus, Ltd. annual membership dues, which include a 12-issue subscription to LOTUS ReMARQUE, are $35 (new members) and $35 (renews) in the U.S., $40 (new members) and $30 (renews) elsewhere. All dues are payable in U.S. dollars by domestic check or international money order.

Your current membership expires with the newsletter issue date that appears directly above your name and mailing address. One separate renewal notice will be sent to you about the same time as your second-to-last issue. If your renewal has not been received by the time your final issue is mailed, EXP-THIS ISSUE will appear above your name and address.

24-HR. CLUB VOICE/FAX LINE: (301) 982-4554.

You can: (1) auto-send a fax, (2) leave a short voice message, (or dial in, leave a short voice message, or not), and then get a fax tone by pressing your asterisk key. Rules: (1) no “junk” fax mail, (2) no long voice-classifieds, (3) no tech questions (call reps below), (4) long-distance calls only returned collect.

**INTERNET:** World Wide Web — www.lotusltd.org

By Foster Cooperstein

**Election Notice for Lotus Ltd. Board Candidates**

Election time will be here again before we know it, so now is the time to step forward if you are interested in a position as an Officer or Director of Lotus Ltd.

Nominations are now being accepted for candidates to serve on the club’s Board of Directors for the 2005-2006 terms. Candidates must be members in good standing of Lotus Ltd. and reside in the U.S., Canada or Mexico. All eligible members may run for any position by having someone nominate them, or by placing themselves in nomination. The nomination must be for the specific position or office sought: (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary) or an at-large seat (four are available). Candidates may accept a nomination to no more than one specific position or office.

Nominations and acceptances must be received by the Corresponding Secretary no later than Friday, May 6, 2005. Election ballots will be printed in the June issue of ReMARQUE, and the new Board is expected to begin its term at or around LOG.

For more information on the issues currently before the board and the duties of the various board members, contact President David Hsu or any other board member (phone numbers are listed in the masthead). Nominations should be sent by mail to Lotus Ltd., P.O. Box L, College Park, MD 20741, U.S.A.; by email to hj@lotuscarclub.org; or by fax to (301) 982-4054.

**Updated Information Needed for Roster Printing**

Lotus Ltd. needs you to update your Roster information. Please fill out the membership form each time you change jobs, cars, mailing addresses, or email addresses. You may forward this information to Lotus, Ltd. at P.O. Box L, College Park, MD 20741, U.S.A. or you may email hj@lotuscarclub.org with corrections.

**Magazine Watch**

By Foster Cooperstein

(UK)

The Lotus Carlton was picked as the 21st most outrageous car ever and the 1980 Turbo Esprit the 43rd. Caterham’s R500 was chosen as the 44th one of the 59 named.

January issue of EVO features the EVO car of the year for 2004. The Exige S2, Elise 111R and Vauxhall VXR220 are among the contenders. The Elise was described as the best Elise yet but the rev happy engine didn’t please all of the drivers. “If you crave tactility, delicacy and deftness the Elise can’t be touched” said one of the reviewers. As to the Exige, described as a baby Le Mans car, one writer said “It genuinely feels like you’re driving a perfectly set up racing car.” The Vauxhall’s extra stiff, and twitchy suspension, bothered some of the testers. When the smoke cleared, the choice was the Porsche 911S, with the Exige 2nd and the Elise 5th.

EVO’s February issue features a report on the cars in its long term test fleet during a 2 day trip to France. An Elise (S1) and Exige are included in the drive. One writer described the Exige as being an acceptable substitute for those who can’t afford a Lamborghini Murcielago!

The February issue of Octane includes a page comparison of an Elan and a Frogeye (Bueye) Sprite. But these weren’t ordinary cars – rather they were modified cars. The Elan coupe has a Spyder chassis with a Ford Zetec engine and Ford 5 speed gearbox. The Sprite is powered by a K series engine mated to a 5 speed box. The Elan is more of an all around car as compared to the modified Sprite which is more of a track day car. The author thinks that Colin Chapman would approve of the Spyder modified Elan.

A feature of the March issue of EVO is a 6 page article about the “Lotus Sport Exige”. This is presently a one-off customer car. With 400 bhp from a normally aspirated V6 engine developed by GM for SR2 sports prototype racing, the car should fly as expected. The power to weight ratio is 478bhp/ton. Got some spare change and want to blow some everyone off the track on track days? Contact Lotus Sport!

(US)

Jim Clark fans shouldn’t miss the January/February issue of Vintage Motorsport as it contains a 4 page article about the Jim Clark room in Duns, Scotland.
Let’s Race A Europa

By Gary David

I first started SCCA production car racing in 1969. I drove a Bugeye Sprite prepared more or less to the rules at the time. This was not the misty eyed era of driving the cars to the races and then taping over the headlights but the cars did still have lights, passenger seats and most other stock parts. My current Sprite’s Hewland based gearbox is worth much more than the entire car cost when I began.

Lotus Ltd club member Martin Dodenhoff started racing seven years before me and was my instructor in driver’s school. He also drove a Bugeye till 1975, then switched to a much faster factory backed Triumph TR7. This was followed by an even faster 1100 Sprite (mine) which he used to take the pole position and lap record at the SCCA Runoffs. After that he had a few outings in showroom stock Alfas, followed by an aborted fling with a vintage racing Bobsy SR-6 sports racer.

But the pull of production car racing was still there and in 1994 it overwhelmed reason and Martin decided he needed to build an E Production Renault-powered Europa. He started normally enough by purchasing a stalled restoration project in California, flying out to load it in a rental truck and driving the truck back across country. I took Sandy with me the night we unloaded the boxes of bits, as it helps to have your spouse realize that there are other people just as crazy as her husband.

Many others, in past years, have tried racing the Europa with little positive results. They typically took the approach of modifying the various parts of the car to be stronger and faster. Martin took a different approach. He had a professional racecar engineer design a chassis and suspension and built it around the stock chassis (rules state it must be there). A great deal of effort went into studying and modifying the Renault engine followed by many sessions on the dyno. The Europa is allowed a Hewland Mk9 Gearbox which solves another weak link and the rear brakes can be discs.

The suspension looks perfectly normal if you spend much time around formula Atlantic racecars. The wheels are held on with one center-lock nut.

Just a short 11 years later, the Gold Leaf colored car was ready to roll onto the racetrack. A November testing session at nearby Nelsons Ledges showed a few problems, but nothing too daunting. Plus, the 28 channels of data-logging have provided Martin with hours of graphs to study over the winter.

Some of the details of the building process involved developing a dry sump system for the engine, machining an adaptor to mate the engine to the gearbox, and using the original S1 body to make a mold for an entirely new lightweight body shell. Somewhere in that process he found time to construct a flywheel that is so light that it is scary to look at.

Should you be interested in duplicating an effort such as this, be prepared to spend a few dollars. Assuming you already have a laptop computer for downloading information from the data-logger, you’ll only need the car, enclosed trailer and a Ford Dually to tow with. Something into six figures should cover it nicely assuming you will do most of the labor yourself. If you have to question the sanity of this type of expense you don’t want to do it badly enough.

Next year’s Central Division National races should feature this Lotus contender in the E Production battles. Any Lotus Ltd members wanting to come to the races will be more than welcome and probably coerced into being crew members or sponsors.
The moral to this story? There are two really. Firstly, if something new happens, think back to when you last worked on, or disturbed, the area of the fault. What did you do, and could it be the cause of today’s problem? Secondly, take a good look at the Workshop Manual, or in this case, the Parts List with its exploded diagrams, and work out what’s causing the problem and what needs to be done to put it right.

Most Elans, Plus Twos and Europas use the Triumph Herald, Vitesse and GT6 steering column – to say nothing of the steering rack, suspension uprights, steering arm and front brakes as well – so the easy fix I’ve just described should work on other early Lotus’s. So now you know where to look and what to do if your horn sounds when you don’t want it to and when you get odd looks and gestures from other drivers.

Then a friend told me of a problem he had recently experienced on his Elan, which is fitted with the standard knock on wheels. During his winter service, he had conscientiously applied Copaslip – a copper based grease I use regularly – to the spinner threads. The service completed, the spinners hammered tight and the service schedule ticked in the appropriate areas, our hero set off on a successful test run. All was well, so he put the car away in his nice warm garage for a week or so. Then he set off in the winter sunshine to the same Car Show I mentioned earlier when, just as he turned into the Show, the car seemed to be “a bit wobbly” as he described it to me.

I had experienced the same wobbliness a few years ago, so I asked him if he’d checked that his wheel spinners were tight. “Of course I did” he said, giving me an old fashioned look. “I hammered them tight when I finished the service only a few weeks ago”. “Hmm” said I in a moment of inspiration. “Did you grease the spinner threads?” “Of course” he said again, beginning to lose patience. Thereby lay the problem. The threads need nothing more than a light lubrication – certainly not a annual liberal dab of grease – so what our hero had done with the best intentions was to help his spinners work themselves loose, even though they’re designed to be self tightening. Sure enough, each wheel took a few thumps of the hammer to tighten up again; when he got home he wiped the excessive grease off each thread and now checks the spinners at regular intervals.

Another three morals from this story – all perhaps what we Brits describe as a blinding glimpse of the clearly obvious. Firstly, don’t over grease the spinner threads, secondly, stop at once if the car feels “wobbly” and finally, check that those pretty spinners are nice and tight before each journey. Not even the clever Mr Chapman could design a car that corners well with one wheel heading for the undergrowth.

I would hate my readers to think that every journey in my cars ends up by the roadside, even though they may have got that impression from this month’s column. My earlier life, working in three dimensions, made me acutely aware that you have to think and work quite hard sometimes to make sure that each trip is boring and uneventful. I carried that principle forward to my now largely two dimensional methods of travel and am pleased to say that, most of the time, my journeys are more uneventful than boring.
RIDING A SUNBEAM (Cont. from page 1)

I started to search for examples for sale. Through one of the UK cars for sale web sites I found what appeared to be a relatively clean example with a good history and recent engine work and partial restoration. The car “MUF380W” has even featured in a Club Lotus magazine article and the late Graham Arnold’s book ‘Lotus’, part of the Sutton Photographic History of Transport Series. So it was famous – after a fashion!

After arranging for someone to check the car and talking extensively with the owner, it was possible to determine what would be needed immediately and what was going to need work. Now, who could I get to work on the car?

While the Sunbeam was in production, a firm called Skip Brown Cars developed performance parts for the car (from handling to engine work), and although the founder passed away, his wife (Del) and son (Paul) continue to provide an extensive service (011-44-(0)1829-720492). I had arranged with one of Skip Brown’s customers who run a transport service, ADTrans (011-44-(0)1926-512705) to collect the car and take it to Skip Brown for a service and general check over prior to the trip. In general had been looked after, but it was going to need some work.

Since my girlfriend, Merrie, and I had previously decided to spend Christmas in the UK, we decided that it would be fun to collect the car and drive to Paris for a few days as well. With that in mind I informed Del of the plan to drive almost 1000 miles in a car that had done less than 200 miles in 3 years! Del and Paul are great and were able to work out what was needed for safety and what could be done in stages.

Taking the train and taxi to Skip Brown Cars (just outside Crewe in the Midlands of England) on the 21st of December, we met with Del and Paul and talked through their findings from the last time I had seen the car. Despite what seemed like a long list Paul said, “except for a recently found one of Skip Brown’s customers who run a transport service, ADTrans (011-44-(0)1926-512705) to collect the car and take it to Skip Brown for a service and general check over prior to the trip. In general had been looked after, but it was going to need some work.

The journey back to my parents house near the south coast of England was uneventful, but provided a good chance to get used to the car on the motorway and in stop and go traffic (due to rush hour on the M25). The next days journey to Boulogne in the North of France, via ferry to Calais, was shorter and further tested the heater and space for maps etc. But it was the drive from Boulogne to Paris along the A16 that really gave me a chance to assess the car’s potential.

Unlike a typical Lotus, driving the Sunbeam puts you on a similar eye level with other drivers. You sit high up with excellent visibility, despite what seemed like a long list. Paul said, “except for a recently

Fortunately we found that the radio didn’t work, but the engine noise was music enough. The car is not loud although with the windows down (and one of the reasons I purchased it) exhaust (a Skip Brown after-market product) made itself known. Windows up the most intrusive noise came from wind at the B-pillars and road noise through the rather chunky tires. I think the use of a more modern (softer compound) tire will solve this latter problem.

While the weather in UK had been cold and sunny, the trip to Paris produced everything from sun, to rain to high cross winds. Irrespective, the Sunbeam cruised along without missing a beat. The engine had been dyno’d at Skip Brown to be 151 bhp at 5,000 rpm and for a car weighing just over 2100 lbs, the performance is there on demand. It is actually quiet given the UK’s 70 mph speed limit in 5th gear, the car just wants to go faster. I found myself constantly slowing down. The 130 kph (about 81 mph) speed limit on much of Frances highways is much easier to maintain. In fact on taking a series of trucks I reached 100 mph without any effort – the car clearly has more. On the highway overtaking does not require gear changes since the torque is sufficient to pull the car past almost anything we encountered, including a couple of brand new 5-series BMWs.

We had made a major error in our timing on the day we were first in Paris. Arriving in rush hour! Now having been used to London driving (very fast, close but courteous, except for tourists), having lived in Boston (bad, fast and rude), and living in Houston (very bad, no signals, and drafting like NASCAR), you would think I would be prepared… but no! Paris driving is not for the faint of heart. It is like racing amongst a group of novice drivers who you are not sure of their ability, and who think they are driving a demolition derby. The secret was to just go, and not worry if they were going to hit you or lent on the horn! Now this would be fine, except in rush hour it was even worse. In stop and go traffic lane changes are made with a frequency that remind you of a school kid desperate for the bathroom hunting from one foot to the other seeking relief while waiting for the teacher’s permission to go!

Over 2 hours to go about 10 miles is a potential disaster for many old Lotus, but the car didn’t overheat, although the temperature did get close to the red zone. Once we were off the Paris ring road, we started to follow the directions provided by the Hotel. A blind dyslexic would have given better map directions. Like one of those instruction manuals translated from Chinese into English, there was some confusion. When it states that road A is supposed to “turn into” road B, it actually means you are supposed to turn left at a junction it doesn’t mention! So we got lost.

Now the traditional approach for any male driver to drive in circles using four letter Anglo Saxon words at any approach. Well I tried that. Then decided once we had gone past the same roundabout twice to find a map or get directions. Stopping at a bus stop (Parisian bus stops all have street maps) I was looking at the map, when the owner of a restaurant nearby offered directions to (a) the hotel and (b) a source of ‘benzene’ (French for petrol or gas) which we were running desperately low. Getting back in the car, it would not start and attempts to crank it over resulted in the battery getting weaker and weaker. The restaurateur and his friend pushed us to a parking space where with soothing words from Merrie, we waited until the carbs had cleared themselves and we could start again.

First stop was the gas station, then back to that often visited roundabout to ask directions in a bar. Success, the barman actually knew where we were going- well actually he had a map and could help much. With much hand waving and poor French (me, not the barman), I got the idea. Finally, hours later than we expected we arrived at the hotel – parked the car and headed for the bar!

After an all-to brief few days walking around Paris, just sufficient to counteract the excessive eating and drinking, we prepared to head back to England on Christmas eve. Paris’ signs caught us out once more and we stopped along a nice road for about 30 miles, before I realized I had driven this route before on the vintage Monte Carlo Rally, and it was heading South not North! With a quick turn around and a high-speed dash back to Calais we made the ferry.

The car certainly attracted much attention during the journey. Many guys my own age remember these cars when new and gave the traditional ‘thumbs up’. While the immigration man in Dover commented on the classic status and the unsuitable roar of the exhaust. The black and silver paint scheme is not as unsuitable as modern cars but it is definitely distinctive.

Arriving in England during a heavy rainstorm on a cold night tested the handling of the Sunbeam. The addition of a limited slip differential was seen as a necessity even when the cars were new. The short wheelbase (7’11”) and narrow track (4’ 3”) resulted in a tendency to have snap oversteer. When I had already found that the car understeers at medium speed corners but was neutral at higher speeds. In order to limit the noise of the limited slip, I found that kicking the back end out of corners resulted in a comfortable drive. It is not quite so docile in the wet. However, only once did the car show signs of stepping out, and that was around a sharp roundabout, at a higher than necessary speed in the rain. In general the car inspires more confidence than it was given credit for by the motor press when the car was new. It certainly will be interesting to autocross the car at some point. Despite unassisted and therefore very heavy steering, the Sunbeam-Lotus is a fun car to drive.

After 960 miles I have fallen in love with the handling, the power and the overall ease of driving the Sunbeam-Lotus. So what is next? Well the car is in storage near Gatwick airport at present, and as you read this I will have already gone back to England at the end of January for a business trip for which I will make further use of this interesting piece of Lotus history. Eventually I may bring the car to the US, but until then, no more will I have Lotus history. Eventually I may bring the car to the US, but until then, no more will I have
r.d. enterprises, ltd.

290 Raub Road, Quakertown, PA 18951 USA
Phone 215-538-9323
Fax 215-538-0158
E-Mail rdent@rdent.com
www.rdent.com

r.d. enterprises has been supplying parts for your Lotus since 1976. Contact us by phone, fax, or e-mail for your Lotus parts needs, and check our our web site for detailed information and monthly specials!

Lotus Parts Specialists

Visa, M/C, Discover & Amex accepted
Business Hours: 8:30 - 5:00 Monday - Thursday, 8:30 - 4:00 Friday

---

Tech Tip: Replacing Elan Windshields
By Gilbert Bohen

I’ve always wanted to write a Tech Tip and now I’ve finally got one. Unfortunately, it’s a couple of decades too late and way too easy.

After struggling mightily with 3 windshield replacements (no, not all on my car), I came upon the secret.

**Parts & tools required:**
- Windshield, preferably new
- Windshield surround molding (buy the one-piece version; no mitering required)
- Weird little chrome-like plastic strip that goes in the molding. (WLCPS)
- Silicone spray lubricant (Better, as silicone makes fiberglass hard to repaint) Alternatively, dish detergent, RuGlyde.
- 3-4 Stella Artois beers
- Factory tool for inserting weird little chrome-like plastic strip, or the alternative: beer can opener.

**Step 1:** Loosen the chrome strut that runs from the dash to the top of the windshield. Loosen this at the top, where it meets the windshield. Feel free to use Liquid Wrench or something similar, but not WD40 which is more of a desiccant.

Uh, that’s pretty much the heart of this tech tip. But, you won’t believe how easy this makes the job. See “example,” below.

**Step 2:** Remove wlcps.

**Step 3:** Pop out windshield.

**Step 4:** Remove molding.

**Step 5:** Assembly is the reverse of disassembly. (Don’t you love it when your manual tells you that?) But, start with the lower corners of the windshield, after the surround molding is in place.

**Step 5a:** Liberally (if you’re in a blue state) apply one of the above lubricants to the rubber surround molding to make it easier to jack the windshield around and get it into the molding groove.

**Step 6:** The church key is to spread the molding so you can press the wlcps into place.

**Example:** Those first 3 windshields took us (Gary Thomas, an actually good mechanic, and me, an actually inept one) at least a couple of hours each. But, when I figured out the secret, the last one took 30 minutes, from the time the car pulled in to us pressing in the wlcps.

**Note:** If you keep detailed cost records, mark the Stella Artois as “lubricant.”

**Note:** If you don’t like the wlcps, use it anyway. It’s what holds the windshield in. But, I guess if you don’t wear seatbelts, you should leave it out so the windshield will pop out when your face impacts it.

---

RAGTOPS & ROADSTERS INC.

Restoration and Repair of all Lotus Automobiles

www.ragtops.com
Perkasie, PA 18944

(215) 257-1202
Suppose you drive that beautifully restored 67 Elan or perhaps that commemorative Esprit or even a brand new screaming Elise. While we all spend a great deal of time listening to our engines and our exhaust notes, most of us do have radios mounted in our dashboards. If you are like me, on some longer trips you will occasionally roll up the windows and use that radio to fill the cabin with everything from Pink Floyd to Boston Pops.

Now, if you have a CD player or cassette player you have some options but neither can provide the endless selection and continuous play capability of the latest generation of MP3 players. So, what do you do if your radio is not the most state of the art MP3 capable?

If you have an MP3 player like an iPod, you may have been tempted by the promise of the small FM transmitter sold in many forms. They all operate on the premise that you plug your MP3 player’s headphone jack into them and they broadcast the music on one of a number of FM frequencies. Most have a switch to allow you to pick a frequency not used in your area so the music is received interference free.

The theory is sound, but the reality is far from perfect. If you live in an area with lots of radio stations, like New York, you can set a frequency in one location and long before you get to your destination, another station begins to interfere with the signal. This is because the FM device is transmitting to the antenna outside your car. The very same antenna designed to pick up distant stations. Because of the units’ FCC mandated low power level it can have a tough time overpowering your local radio stations.

The solution to the connection of that MP3 player turns out to be a variation on the same device called an FM Modulator. The key difference in this device is that it has a hard wired antenna connection. It is placed in line with the radio and the external antenna. When it is activated not only does the music get placed on an FM radio frequency, the device disconnects the external antenna, thus eliminating any interference.

Since the device is relatively small, as it is produced by a number of manufacturers, it can be hidden under the dash or almost anywhere. Search on “FM Modulators” on Ebay and you’ll find them ranging from $20 to $30US. (Picture 1)

A switch you wire into the power lead allows the device to be turned off and lets the radio operate normally. A male antenna cable goes into your radio in place of the antenna lead, while the antenna cable is installed in a female connector on the modulator. Selector switches on the modulator let your select the broadcast frequency to use. (Picture 2)

Dual female phono jacks provide the stereo audio input to the modulator from your MP3 player. A quick trip to any audio store will yield a cable to connect from the modulator audio jacks to the connector required by your MP3 player such as a standard stereo headphone jack. (Picture 3)

Position the FM modulator unit, connect the antenna leads and find a discrete place for the unit’s power switch. Then, find the optimal place to put your iPod and run the input cable there. Finally, connect the cable from your iPod to the FM modulator’s audio input jack.

That’s it. Now all that is left is to sit back and listen to those 5,000 songs you’ve (legally) downloaded into your iPod on your way to the next LOG.

The Great, Sedate TLC Going-out-of-Business Sale

It’s been fun, but the time is coming for TLC to abandon the field to the other reMarque advertisers.

What do you need? If I have it in stock, it’s all paid for and I can sell it cheap. (Ask me.) If it isn’t in stock, I can probably get it for you.

Tingle’s Lotus Center
1615 Shawsheen St.
Tewksbury, MA 01876
(978) 851-8370
(978) 640-0889 fax
tingletlc@aol.com

MC / Visa / Discover / AmEx accepted
Pit Stops

(Submit Local Group Events to Tony Vaccaro, (716) 689-8644, e-mail: tvacc@lotusowners.com)

March (Every Sat.) Asiamagalated Lotus Owners, (Kansas City area), very informal breakfast with other like-minded folks at Sharpis 63St. Grill from 8:00am to approx 10:00am. Sharpis is at 63rd St. and Brookside Plaza in the Brookside area near the middle of the city. Contact Mark Bracewell (816) 459-7707 or mbracewell@kc.rr.com

March 1, 15 (Tue.) CLNW bi-monthly meeting at McTarnahanís Brewpub, 6:30 till ??, First and third Tuesdays of every month. Contact webmaster@clnw.org for details or http://www.clnw.org for this and other activities.

March 6 (Sun.) Cleveland Area Lotus Ltd. (CALL) Annual Meeting at 3pm, at Cleats Club Seat Grill in Strongsville. (Same location as the last couple of years.) Please RSVP your attendance plans to Roy Collins <rlotus@alltel.net>. As usual, new ideas are always welcome for events. Bring them with you to the meeting or if you would like, contact Roy Collins before then. This will also be your one opportunity to purchase your CALL apparel for the year.

March 8 (Tue.) Alabama Lotus Car Club monthly meeting at Buster’s, off US 31 in Hoover Square Shopping Center. Plans for Barber HSR will be discussed as well as review of Champion Motorcar trip in February.

March 12 (Sun.) Texas Lotus Club -- Dallas. Sunday Brunch at the Cracker Barrel in Greenville, TX. For more information, contact: thomas.bohmier@broadwing.com.

March 15 (Tue.) Texas Lotus Club -- Dallas. Regular Third-Tues.-of-the-Month Pub Night -- The Londoner, Beltway at Midway, Addison TX -- 7 p.m. e-mail: mathavlinkscale@yahoo.com

March 17-19 ( Thur.- Sat.) Florida Lotus Club attending the 53rd Annual 12 Hrs. of Sebring, Sebring Intl. Raceway, www.sebringraceway.com For more info, contact Peter: lotus_esprit@adelphia.net

March 19 (Sat.) Lotus Limited South East (LLSE) Car show and dinner at Giovannís Pizza in Duluth GA. 3:00 to 5:00, All car clubs welcome. Contact Brian Skeoch at 770-844-6939

March 19 (Sat.) Texas Lotus Club -- Dallas. Texas Hill Country Tour. Information: thomas.bohmier@broadwing.com.

March 19 (Sat.) (PALS) Planning Meeting 10:30 A.M. at Mark and Rose Terlecky’s in Wayne, PA. Please reply to Mark Terlecky by the 12th. Contact him at m_terlecky@yahoo.com

March 20 (Sun.) Lotus Enthusiast’s Organization, NJ/NYCArea (LEO). Annual Driving Fever Party at the home of David and Sandy Nagler, 8 Vincent Drive, Chester, NY, 12:30 PM. Slot Cars and X-Box racing, planning for the coming year! Bring your appetite. RSVP by March 14. For more information, contact David or Sandy: Lotushead@lotuswners.com or 845-469-6001.

April 14 (Sat.- Sun.) Alabama Lotus Car Club will to park in the Sports Car Corral at Barber Motorsport Park for the HSR event. Discounted tickets available. We will support our own Jim Robert's who will compete in his Lotus 47 and 7. Corral will be in the Expo Center with secured parking (LOG 24 Concours site).