

CLUB ELITE OF NORTH AMERICA  
(Affiliate of Club Elite of Great Britain)

Volume 1 No 1

March 8th, 1971.

Dear Club Member and Register Member,

Since our last letter, we have added ten more members to the Register bringing it to a total of 59, and we have heard of quite a few more Elite Owners to whom we are writing regarding the Register. We are adding an Appendix to this letter, to keep you up to date.

It seems appropriate now to clarify any confusion because the possibility had arisen that two Elite Clubs were to be formed. You may remember that Mr. Charles Miller of Springfield, Ohio, advertized last year for the names of Elite owners with the intention of forming an Elite Club. He was quite successful, and at that time I gave him the names of the people on my Register. However, Mr. Miller could not pursue his idea because of business commitments. Earlier this year, he was contacted by Dr. Lindquist of Philadelphia, who encouraged him to start again. Charles Miller, Dr. Lindquist, Tom Sergeant and Mr. Greene of California, met in Stanton, Pa, on February 18th. Mr. Miller and Dr. Lindquist have informed us in a telephone conversation that they will combine their efforts with this Club, believing that one Club will best serve the interests of Elite Owners. Mr. Miller has volunteered to help organize meetings at races, Dr. Lindquist will reproduce the Newsletter to improve its form and presentation. Mr. Greene has offered to catalog the parts required by members and those for sale.

Several members had queried the effectiveness of two Clubs, and we are glad that we have now been able to join together. We shall certainly appreciate the help, time, and contributions from these people.

As far as our Club Members are concerned, we have had an interesting idea from James M. Goodman, Pinney Brook, Apt. 9, Ellington, Conn.06029. He has suggested encouraging a Club Member to race an Elite, as this would promote Elite interest, and Member interest as well. It would also promote updating of Elites and development if the information could be passed around. We would welcome the thoughts of our other members to see if we can pursue this idea, how the sponsorship should best be conducted, and which gallant driver we should encourage.

Mr. Goodman also passes along this interesting story.

#1775

"A few months after buying my car, another sports car nut and myself drove the car to Sebring for the 12-Hour Race. We camped while at Sebring, so for the two weeks before leaving we measured out a duplicate trunk in our living room and packed and repacked to fit the tent, sleeping bags, Coleman Stove, utensils and our own gear to fit! It must have been the best trunk packing job ever. During one of the practice sessions we were quite thrilled to see Chapman and Jim Clark in the same Grand-Stand. Jim was driving a Cortina that year (1964). On the trip back to Hartford, Conn, a distance of almost 1350 miles, we drove straight through, completing the trip in just over 23 hours, or averaging about 57 miles mph. We kept track of all fuel and mileages and also averaged over 36 mpg! I wonder if the combination of speed and miles per gallon has ever been beaten? The car was still new to me at the time and I just couldn't believe it. "

For those of you who have Weber carburettors installed, instead of S.U.'s, we have some Weber jet settings you might find useful. These were written up in the English Club Newsletter by two of the Club Members.

	<u>Ratcliffe</u>	<u>Taverner</u>
CHOKE	32	33
MAIN JET	120	125
IDLE JET	50 F 9	50 F 9
PUMP JET	40	35
STARTING JET	60 F 5	60 F 5
EMULSION TUBE	F16	F16
AIR CORRECTER	180	180
AUXILIARY VENTURI	-	4.50

It may seem academic, but some confusion does seem to exist regarding the stage of tune and so we give below the following general clarification from Mr. John Berry of Lotus Cars Ltd., England.

Series I - 1 carb.

Series II

Stage I - two S.U. carbs; .310" lift cam, 3 bearings.

Stage II - two S.U. carbs; .360" lift cam, 3 bearings.

Super 95 - two S.U. carbs; .360" lift cam; 3 bearings, modified head.

Stage III - two S.U. carbs or two Webers; .360" lift cam, five bearings, bigger valve springs.

For those owners who wish to know if their car is Stage I or II and do not wish to measure the camshaft, Stage I models had main jet needles marked BQ, and Stage II models had main jet needles marked BF.

During the past month, I have had letters and telephone calls from people requesting information on a General Lotus Club, and I give below the names and addresses of several Clubs.

1. Lotus West, 18405 Valerio #19, Roseda, California 91335.  
They are well organized and have been doing a good job in California for about two years. Contact Denis Ortenburger. Dues \$10.00
2. Club Lotus, 14630 Southlawn Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Dues \$10.
3. The Sports Car Collectors Society of America, Inc.  
USNS Box 21  
FPO New York N.Y. 09550. Mr. Daniel G. Badger.  
This is a Directory and the dues are \$3.00

#### PARTS REQUIRED:

Mr. Peter Jensen of North Pownal, Vermont, 05260, wishes to know where he can purchase a hand brake cable, and if the part is interchangeable

Dr. T.A. Munson of 7255 Girard Avenue, La Jolla, California, has had his spare wheel stolen, and would like to know if anyone has one for sale. If so, please give him a quotation.

I have written to a publishing house to see if we can obtain a discount on shop manuals. I will buy and send everyone a copy of Profile Publication No. 48 entitled "Lotus Elite" which is a very good history of the car.

#### RECORDS:

Mr. R.J. McKernon of 8552 Elmer Lane, Garden Grove, California, has an Elite with 88,000 on the original engine and still going strong.

#### POSSIBLE MEMBERS:

I have inserted this section, as I know of two men who have done some interesting things to their Elites.

Mr. Glen Anderson of 1062 El Camino Lane, Santa Ana, California 92700. has installed a Ford 1600 Cross Flow engine which is quite successful.

I hope that someone out that way can contact him and persuade him to join the Club, as I should like to publish details of his installation.

Mr. Larry Dent of 7505 Grenada Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana. (tel. 219-485-5971)

Mr. Dent has raced and owned three Elites. He would certainly be an interesting member and perhaps someone in that area could persuade him to join the Club.

Because of the Mail Strike, we have not heard from the Club Elite in England for some time, but we thought you might find the following anecdote from an earlier letter rather amusing, which was contributed by a Mr. Colin Ratcliff.

"More recently I was trying to get the Citroen going after a short outdoor storage period (about 5 winter months) and had the Lotus parked nearby since it carried my tools and other odds and ends. Now the Lotus causes many enquiries since it carried no name plate except on the Steering Wheel boss. While I tinkered with the Citroen two young boys made their way amongst the cars on the car park. One of them was an authority on cars and was successfully impressing his partner with his wide knowledge of car recognition. Ah! this is interesting.....he would say as he came to each car "A Renault 16, you can change the seats around about 300 different ways.....Ah, this is an ordinary 1100 which has 'Hydelastic' suspension.....and so it went on. Soon our two friends came to the Lotus 'Ah, began the Authority - pause - shuffle feet, 'Ah..... a Sports Car' he said, filling in time. His eyes frantically searched for some clue as to the make of this car, until they settled on the out of date taxation disc with the letters NOV for November. 'Ah, says the boy with great confidence, you won't see many of these about, this is a 'NOVE' and he hurriedly moved his friend on to a more familiar car.'

Finally, we are attaching a write-up from Motor Sport of December 1962 dealing with the Automatic gearbox. Only three models were made, one for David Hobbs who helped with the design, one for Stirling Moss and one for Jim Clark. I drove the one for Jim Clark in England in 1965 and found it to be smooth and responsive. We think you might find it interesting.

Just a reminder to those Register Members who would like to join the Club and have not yet paid the dues; we will not be able to publish and distribute the newsletter to all Register Members unless dues are paid. Five smackers please!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara & Bill". The letters are fluid and connected, with a large initial 'B' for Barbara and a smaller 'B' for Bill.

Barbara and Bill Hutton.

P.O. Box 351  
Clarksville. Tenn. 37040.

## LOTUS ELITE - MECHA MATIC TRANSMISSION

Some competition cars which are outwardly similar to others in their class win far more races than their competitors.. This is very often due to the car having a superior driver or a more powerful engine, or better "sorted" handling, but very rarely is the success of the car attributed in part to its gearbox. When the gearbox is an automatic one, then the chances of success appear to be remote indeed, however good the driver or the car may be. In the case of David Hobbs and his Lotus Elite fitted with the Hobbs Mecha-Matic automatic transmission one can merely let the results speak for themselves. Apart from success in International competition during 1961 and 1962, he has won numerous Club and National events, including a run of 14 successive wins during 1961.

The history of the red and blue Elite 5649 UE began as far as David Hobbs was concerned in November 1960 when the car was purchased from Chequered Flag sports-car garage in Chiswick. The engine was removed and sent to Lotus for Cosworth to bring to Stage III tune and when it was returned it was giving 108 b.h.p. Meanwhile, a standard Hobbs 1015 automatic box as made for the Ford Anglia was prepared for the Elite. The main preparation consisted of removal of the safety jets which limit the rpm at which downward changes occur. On the standard Box this ensures that the engine cannot be overrevved but in competition it is sometimes necessary to get into a lowgear really quickly in the event of brake failure, etc. The tow start valve was also removed. Other work on the Elite consisted of stripping out all non-essential trim and sound deadening material, including some of the double skinning of the glass fibre chassis/body unit in parts where stresses are not high. The sidescreens and rear window were removed and replaced by perspex ones, although the laminated wind-screen was of course retained. The seats were removed and replaced by lightweight glass fibre seats as used in the Lotus Formula Junior cars. The driver's seat was fitted with a shoulder harness safety belt. The battery was removed from the boot to the floor in front of the passenger as the voltage drop along the cables gave the battery little chance of turning over the engine with its 11 : 1 compression ratio. A 15 gal. fuel tank was fitted in anticipation of long distance racing and a large petrol filler cap was fitted. Twin S.U. electric petrol pumps fitted in the boot above the tank ensure that full fuel pressure is maintained all times.

In the interior the speedometer was replaced by a Key Leather 9,000 rpm electronic rev. counter although the standard Smiths rev counter was retained. All the switches on the facia were retained but there is no heater or direction indicator and the hooter is now a pipsqueak of a thing from a Mini Minor. On the vertical face of the gearbox tunnel 2 temperature gauges are fitted, one for the engine oil and one for transmission oil.

Having carried out all these modifications, David Hobbs entered the car for its first race at Mallory Park on Easter Monday, 1961 with no success at all. This was followed by a Silverstone meeting on the long circuit with no great success the car doing about 2 min. 12 sec. against 1min. 55 sec. of David Buxton's Team Elite car. At the next Mallory Park meeting, he was 3rd behind a Team Elite car and Fergusons very quick Turner. At Snetterton the following week David Hobbs thought he would be clever and put only three gallons of fuel in the tank for a short race, but on the corners the fuel surged away from the pumps and the engine cut out when the car was in the lead. At Brands Hatch throttle linkage trouble forced the car to retire. At a Silverstone Club Meeting, the Elite indulged in a dice with a Lotus XI. Hobbs leading the XI all the way round except on the long straight into Woodcote to rob him of his first win. He was also second in several other races that day. At the Lords Taverner Meeting at Brands Hatch he got his first big win by defeating Les Leston in another Lotus Elite. This led to his run of 14 successive wins in GT races in this country.

The first foreign outing was at Nurburgring 1,000 kilometres, where the car was protested out of the GT class into the Sports Car category. Hobbs and co-driver Bill Pinkney limited themselves to 6500 rpm but managed to lap every other Elite except the Lumsden/Riley car, which beat them, as well as many Porsches and Alfa Romeos. They finished 20th overall and won the 1,600 c.c. sports car class after Heini Walter RS61 Porsche had crashed. The car had no less than 7 stops for oil which lost them a lot of time. Straight from there, Hobbs went to Oulton Park and in the wet using Michilin "X" tyres, won three races including one for unlimited sports cars. Many other Club Races came his way, including the Astley Trophy at Aintree. The next foreign trip was to Pescara for the 4-hour race. In practice Hobbs and Pinkney were miles faster than the hot Alfas in their class, so were moved by the organizers into the 2 litre sports car class! Pinkney started the Race and was out after 1½ laps with a rod through the block due to a big end bolt failure. The Season wound up with the Clubman's championship in which David Hobbs finished 4th in the G.T. race despite losing a lot of oil from the gearbox.

1962 started with a couple of class wins, but Hobbs was now driving E-Type Jaguar for the Peter Berry Racing Team and had little time left for the Elite/ he did manage a return trip to Nurburgring where he finished 9th on the first lap in front of Ferraris and Porsches. They had been put into the 2-litre sports car class against Works Flat-eight Forsches. When in 12th position and after 5½ hour racing and having lapped all other Elites, the cylinder head cracked due to over heating and they were forced to retire. In this race they used 7,000 rpm as against 6500 of the previous year. This brings us practically up to date, the last outing of the car was at the Guild of Motoring Writers test day at Goodwood, when dozens of journalists thrashed the car round Goodwood, completely ignoring the owner's plea not to exceed 6500 rpm.

This short trip whetted out appetite for more experience with this car, and David Hobbs readily agreed to our suggestion to carry out a test on the Elite. On a sunny but cold day in Early November, we met at Silverstone where the car was to be put through its paces on the Club circuit.

The Elite has a normal looking gear lever in the usual position but this moves only in a fore and aft plane, and a plate on the gearbox tunnel shows the gear positions. Reverse is obtained by lifting the gearknob and pushing the lever right forward, with neutral being selected by bringing the lever back one notch. The forward gears are then selected by bringing the lever back one notch further for each higher gear. The rearmost position of the lever selects the top gear and is also the position for fully automatic operation of the gearbox. For road use the lever can be left in this position and the gearobx will do all the work. On a light throttle upward changes occur at 15,30 and 53 mph but the Hobbs box can have its gear-change speeds adjusted to suit the customer. The 53 mph at which this particular car changes is rather higher than would normally be the case but this is done on the racing Elite to eliminate any chance of plug wetting due to lugging in top gear at low speeds. On the circuit David Hobbs selects the gear manually so that he hold any gear to any revs he likes and in moments of stress in Club races he has seen 8,000 rpm in top although he does not exceed 7,500 rpm normally.

Having warmed the war up on soft plugs a set of hard plugs were inserted, which promptly refused to fire more than 2 cylinders, so the soft plugs were reinserted which meant that the high revs could not be indulged in for long period as the points have a habit of disintergrating. Acceleration and top speed is also adversely affected. David Hobbs took me round for a few laps to show me his technique with the automatic box. Racing starts are made by holding 5,000 rpm on the tachometer with the box in neutral, then pulling the lever back to first gear. After a momentary pause the car screams away up to a maximum revs in first, the lever being pulled back into the next higher gear with the throttle flat on the floor, only a mild jerk and a drop in revs. indicacting that the box has changed gear. Procedure to downward changes follows normal pactice to a certain extent as David Hobbs brakes to the required speed, pushes the lever to the lower gear then blips the throttle with his heel which has the effect of engaging the lower gear slightly quicker than if we had waited for it to change itself.

ACCELERATION FROM REST

0 - 30 mph	4.3 sec
40 mph	5.9
50	7.8
60	9.9
70	12.7
80	16.2
90	21.9
100	29.1

SPEEDS IN THE GEARS

	<u>Manual</u>	<u>Automatic</u>
First	44	15
Second	62	30
Third	82	53
Top	106	106