



KIT LOTUS

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SMTS - LOTUS 63 1:43 Use it or lose it

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SAVE THE DATE
RACE RETRO 2019
 22 - 24 FEBRUARY
 TICKETS ON SALE SOON

Here we are, back again with Kit Lotus Volume 11 Issue 3 and the main theme this issue is the traditional 1:43 scale which so often gets lost amongst the large scale projects so often described in these pages. It wasn't planned that way but lets enjoy it and celebrate the traditional collectors scale.

I built the 1:43 SMTS Lotus 63 and it is reviewed this time along with a cautionary tale:

Use is or lose it : You've heard the cliché before and for so many things it is a true statement, if something never gets used it becomes obsolete and with it the potential for disposal. In this case I'm making the plea for our hobby. In this edition of Kit Lotus, we have two extremes both representing areas of our interest with differing levels of consumer (that's us) enthusiasm. On one level we have the super Oxford Diecast Team Lotus Thames 400E van in 1:43 scale representing great value for the diecast collector at less than £14 and on the other we have a limited run hand-built, 1:43 scale Lotus 63 built from a SMTS Kit costing £50 or so for the kit or around £120 for a factory- built model. Again, great value for a specialist subject from a business whose structure includes enthusiasm and is renowned for its attention to detail both under the skin in how the kits are presented to the builder, as well as how the finished article looks.

Unfortunately, the super quality low cost resin cast models available through the advent of digital technology and hi-tech manufacturing techniques are killing the kit market. Coming on the back of a dwindling number of kit builders these days it maybe the days of the kit maker is also numbered.

Building kits seems to be the domain of middle age and beyond, a theory borne out by the age group of visitors to our displays and whilst apologising to younger kit builders (there are some), you do appear to be in the minority, yet we need you, you are the ones who have to 'use it or lose it'.

Where are the new artisans producing the kits? Only recently Roger retired his AxleR line of kits and just a few days ago Colin Fraser, proprietor of Formula Models passed away. No one is taking over.

My pessimistic angst is the result of me building the Lotus 63. As with any new SMTS model Lotus, it was bound to be good,

so I lost no time in getting hold of one to review for Kit Lotus. Kit Lotus is a hobby, for people like Keith who runs SMTS it is a livelihood, so review kits are purchased. I also took the opportunity to quiz Keith on how things were, and I was concerned to hear that this Lotus 63 may possibly be the last single seat Lotus produced by SMTS.

Keith said *"Unfortunately the market is so small now and reducing each year. Spark have killed the built model market altogether, we only pre-sold 9 built Lotus 63s and 30 kits, it used to be several hundred."* I had a visit the other day from a guy who publishes a number of magazines on classic trucks, tractors, construction machinery etc., his circulation is reducing 8% year on year.

We are seeing much the same as our collectors get older, the generation following just don't relate to the same things as us.

I really worry for all those museums and preservation societies that rely on volunteers as they will not be able to operate in a few years' time.

And all those classic car collectors, like me, will have nobody to pass their cars on to.

I expected a surge in interest following the death of Dan Gurney and the 50th anniversary of Jim Clark's passing, but nothing.....

Luckily, we are fairly busy with road cars, construction equipment and especially aircraft "

I wouldn't advocate we all boycott the resincast market, for many collectors who have neither the inclination nor the time to build kits, it satisfies their instant gratification unlike the slow build of a kit. However, we do need to enjoy what we have got whilst we have it but like Keith, I'm not sure how we attract the next generation of model builders to our hobby.

Whilst not trying to make this a trial of conscience , Kit Lotus will do its best to attract younger model builders but at the same time continue to celebrate everything relating to scale model Lotus.

So here is the latest issue, hopefully you will find plenty to enjoy and maybe question. But the same thing goes, I enjoy putting it all together.

SMTS Lotus 63

It's always a delight to open a new Lotus Kit produced by SMTS, I sincerely hope it won't be the last (see separate article). This kit is the 1:43 scale Lotus 63, a rarity in anybody's language and a subject typically suited for artisan model producers, it having limited scope for variants, although various sets of wings and wing endplates are included in this kit to offer Graham Hill and Jochen Rindt versions as well as John Miles

I opened the box to examine the parts and check out the assembly instructions and quickly drew the conclusion that this was typical SMTS. Assembly instruction merely confirmed that the best way to build it would be to assemble in the same order as the numbers on the exploded diagram. It usually works so why shouldn't I put complete trust in the instructions?

An exploded view with numbered parts is the general method by which SMTS intend us to assemble their kits with the part numbers set in the recommended sequence of assembly. However, with every kit the first thing is to study the assembly and it is often the case that some parts are an obvious sub-assembly that can be worked on simultaneously whilst still working through the instructions.

A lot of thought always goes in to the way SMTS kits are presented for fixing and the 63 is no different and only a minimal amount of fitting, cutting and filing is required to get the parts together as intended. Assembly overall was straightforward.



Generally you will find good quality castings requiring minimal flash removal, leaving parts cleaning and polishing as the main manual labour. I have to say though in this case, the body casting had some pitting across the front to contend with, right on the visible part of car which needed attention but not too much to cause any concern or that couldn't be easily fixed with a

little model putty. Careful rubbing down with fine grade paper and few light coats of Tamiya Fine Primer rubbed down each time, did the trick.

When it came to painting, SMTS have put a lot of effort in to providing the model builder with easy steps to follow by including pre-cut paint masks for the three colours of the car, white, red and gold. Not only that, they have provided options so that different variants of the car driven by Rindt and Hill and also the version driven by John Miles and this is the version I chose to build in tribute to John who passed away recently but was a stalwart of Lotus through most of his career.



The paint masks need to be complimented with extra masking to cover the whole car but the sequence is to paint a white base, apply the main masks and the underside front mask then spray the car red. Lastly, the top front mask to get the gold nose detail is added which allows the gold nose cone detail to be applied. A word of warning here. I generally leave paint a day or so before applying any other colour. When I removed the masking, it left rather a sticky residue on the paint underneath which needed careful removal. I used a cotton bud and some 3M FINESSE which worked fine but be careful what you use. I used Tamiya Masking Film for the rest which never lets you down and removes quite easily. Maybe it was down to the paint I used? In this case Tamiya Spray Paint although some modellers prefer car spray paint.



SMTS Lotus 63 continued.....

Once you have all of your ducks in a row, the final assembly is pretty straightforward leaving just the decals to apply before the exhausts. The decals are very finely printed, laser no doubt, and they have a cover coat over the whole sheet that is 'kiss-cut' around each decal which needs careful removal when applying the decal. I prefer to cut decals as close as possible and found this to be the best remedy. Anyhow, they are quite easy to apply and to their eternal credit SMTS realised that none of us will be tempted to rush out and buy a packet of fags and so the Gold Leaf Team Lotus panel is intact and we don't have to look to China for some aftermarket additions. Hurrah, hurrah, sense rules at last. Once again, three car options are provided.



One small criticism is the Firestone tyre rings, like the rest of the decals there is no white backing relying mainly on the white bits of the car to compensate. This means the tyre rings aren't bright enough when applied to each tyre and are largely invisible so if you can find a spare set from a kit with traditional screen printed decals, that might be the way to go.

I always find those tiny vac-formed windshields a pain to cut and this one for me was no exception. However, another nice touch is two vac-forms just in case you cack (technical term) one up.

What a nice kit to build, it sits very well against the previous SMTS Lotus 64 representing Colin Chapman's foray into petrol driven four wheel drive, demonstrating his willingness to challenge the technical aspects of Formula One.

I truly hope this won't be the last SMTS single seater (see other article then get you cash out and buy

Eddie Keizan - Lotus 72C



Claudio Gionnone sent me these pictures of his latest 1:43 Lotus conversion, Claudio says : "As you know I'm interested in all the Lotus, this is why the friend of mine who made the Mk.18 Borgward you already published, Paolo Giardino, did for me this very nice car starting from a Quartzo 1/43 Lotus Mk.72c.

In the pictures showed in the LOTUS72 book, the original car seems to be a little bit darker, but searching for the "Embassy" cigarette brand we found the right blue. "

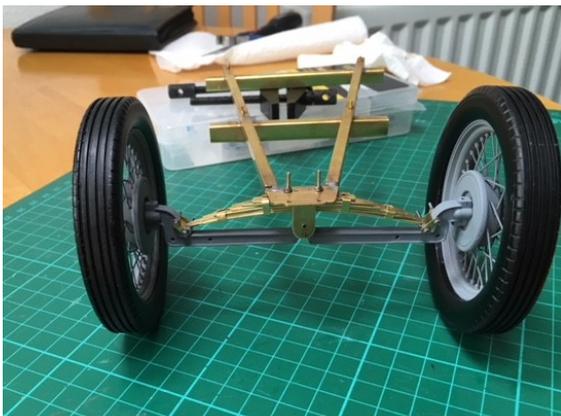
"Paolo is also doing other two special versions: A special Mk.79 used by Andretti during the practice in Monaco 1978 (it was a Mk.79 with the hook and air scope of Mk.78), A special white Mk.78 #10 used by Londono in the F. Aurora championship."



Project 1 at 70

Anyone have a 12BA socket set they aren't using? If so let me know as 12BA or British Association to give its correct title, has become the fastener of choice for my Mark 1 Lotus 1:8 scale replica. A steady stream of 12BA nuts, bolts and washers has been heading to my mail box as work on the Lotus 1 starts to progress.

Metal cutting, soldering and folding has finally begun on my Mark 1 Lotus replica. My attempt at making leaf springs out of brass appears to be working and I have managed to mate the front transverse leaf spring with the two halves of the front swing axle. My very own *jelly joint* is beginning to emerge. Whilst working in 1:8 means more detail, making 8 shackle plates from thin brass was a little fiddly, still, that too appears to have worked so I can move on to the friction arms that are visible from the front. Once assembled the degree of positive camber looks about right, however, the camera says otherwise.



Assembly is very loose at the moment, and all held together just enough to get the next measurement looking something like. Having got the front axle into some sort of location attention will turn to the rear but already the temptation to stray into other areas is great. So much so I have had to put away the body materials and work on an 'out of sight, out of mind' principle whilst I concentrate on the chassis. The leaf spring is made from 0.8mm thick brass sheet. I thought I would cut it with tin snips because I knew that cutting thin (5mm wide) strips will inevitably be bowed and this will help form the springs natural shape. It worked so I built it up in layers and made the clamping straps from much thinner brass. It isn't fixed yet but I will probably use only a thin layer of epoxy and rely on the clips and shackles to retain it in its final position. Soldering a couple of 2.5mm dia

tubes on each end for the shackle bolts.

The rear end comes next with the intention of completing the main chassis frame and suspension so that at least the car can sit on its wheels and I can turn my attention to steering and brakes.



Probably the cars prominent feature is the almost Rolls Royce shaped radiator surround which is made of copper, and I have to confess to having already cut and folded the metal from copper sheet. All I need now is the bravery to tackle soldering it together. It is easy to let the hours pass without much progress as I find myself questioning everything and checking then revisiting and then making no progress at all, so it is definitely time to quit whilst you are ahead and put it down for a while.

It is incredible how such a flimsy structure came to be the embryo of everything we enthuse over yet it has along with the other early Lotus models, been largely overlooked by the model world, so it is fitting that someone should pay tribute to the very beginning with a hopefully decent scale model of the real thing (replica) in the photo below.



Kit Lotus the first ten years, episode 3 , into the groove.....

How do we follow that? Snetterton was a brilliant experience and a show that is unlikely ever to be repeated. We had been treated to something special and even been allowed to take part in a small way, for Kit Lotus the only way forward was to carefully respect that opportunity in everything we did thereafter.

Putting Kit Lotus on the road was a fresh but welcome experience for me, especially as that part of the operation now had a team which was separate from the magazine but reassuringly a big part of the whole idea. The magazine continued to attract slow but loyal attention with more contributors and more eclectic Lotus model or model related subjects popping up. Someone who produces amazing cutaway drawings for example or a Lotus 49B made of Lego, pedal cars, models made of dental amalgam and models made of wood and paper all began to appear in the magazine because Lotus enthusiasts would say: "have you heard of so and so, he does" This is how things spread.



Looking neat and tidy even back in 2011—Kit Lotus debuts its display Donington 2011 Club Lotus Festival. Look, carpet even then.

Amongst the niche of Lotus enthusiasts who picked up Kit Lotus, there are regulars who correspond from all over the world. The USA, Finland, South Africa, Australia, France and all of them ready and willing to share their hobby, to point out my errors which I do confess and own up to, but above all to continue being part of the whole thing. I have been fortunate to have met a couple of them face to face having now made three trips to the USA with specific Kit Lotus topics in mind.

That first weekend in April 2009 at the Lotus Club event in the Donington Exhibition Centre was the first real chance to meet other Lotus organisations, and being cast into the autojumble area, some of my neighbours were model vendors. Getting less and less these days by the way. There was a level of scepticism which suggested no one would be interested and that the Kit Lotus idea would soon fade away, and to some extent, getting only six new registrations from the whole weekend did put a damper on things until I met Clive and Pete as I described in *KL Vol11 Issue 2*.



Scratch built Lotus 40

So what next after Snetterton? Why, lobby Club Lotus of course to see if we could get ourselves elevated away from autojumble to exhibitor. To his great credit, Alan Morgan, Chairman of Club Lotus put his faith in us and we were allocated exhibition space. OK so it was out to the edge of the main show and next to the Toilets (guaranteed a lot of footfall). It was also next to the roller shutter door which when lifted, ensured so would a few 1:43rds which became vertical take off and landing objects each time. But still we persevered and put on a decent display including the debut of Pete's 1:8 scratch- built Lotus 40 which guaranteed loads of attention. Following that, opportunities to exhibit were limited and it wasn't until Race Retro 2013 that we hit the road again. The headliners at 2013 Race Retro were CTL making a fabulous central display with the race transporter and some really iconic motor cars, all of which we are now more than a little familiar with. We had also by then paid a couple of visits to CTL so weren't complete strangers in fact we were very grateful for the help we got from CTL in persuading the organisers to let us exhibit our Lotus models.

Kit Lotus the first 10 years



Artist Michael Turner masquerading as 'Len Terry' talking to the real Clive Chapman at Race Retro 2013 shortly before the case of the Steve Allen "lets dupe those Kit Lotus bods into thinking this is Len Terry" plot.

The CTL works tours are now a regular feature of Kit Lotus life, and when anyone goes to a CTL works tour, you come away with some really nice anecdotal moments that have more than likely been recounted by Steve Allen, the accountant at CTL since 1975. His knowledge of the marque is phenomenal and his tour guiding skills are excellent. These anecdotes include tails of the pranks both CTL drivers and mechanics were to play on each other over the years, and during Race Retro 2013, we couldn't help thinking that Steve had grasped an opportunity to play a similar prank on us Kit Lotus interlopers. It entailed the Amalgam 1:8 scale Lotus 49B exhibited on the CTL stand alongside the Lotus 38 of the same scale. Apparently, Len Terry was coming to the show to see the 38. Whilst on the CTL stand, we spied an elderly gentleman talking with Clive by the said model car, it was Len Terry, or so we thought. Seizing the opportunity, we solicited Steve's help in getting Len over to the Kit Lotus stand to see Pete's 1:8 Scale Lotus 40, a car Len was famous for in his opinions about the car. Sure enough, a short while later, said Mr Terry appeared at our stand and we showed him the models for which he was very impressed and we were delighted he had taken the time to visit. So much so were we delighted we asked him to sign our guest book against a picture of the Lotus he is most associated with.....

He duly signed the book MICHAEL TURNER, the artist, and here are us calling him Mr Terry but we all had a chuckle at our expense and we reckoned we had been had by Steve Allen. So incensed were we about the incident we invited Steve and the CTL crew for dinner that evening where he denied everything. Still, the real Len Terry did visit and as with Michael, we were truly honoured to show them our work and to get their signatures in the guest book.

One of the themes that used to run when we first appeared is that it wouldn't last long, yet now ten years on I still pinch myself that Kit Lotus is very much alive and kicking and with plans for the future. Looking back on this though, I think the correlation with time is the Kit Lotus business model. There isn't one, if there was, it would have folded long ago. I initially put a charge on the magazine of just £1 per issue, just to get something back for the time devoted to it, however, rapidly I realised that it takes more time to remind people to subscribe than is worth the effort. On top of this many readers got it free in any case for chipping in with articles and pictures and trade organisations also get it for free and so I made it free to all and that is where any pressure to meet deadlines and targets ended. It started as a hobby and is now firmly entrenched in that genre and it is great.

Moving on from that fantastic 2013 Race Retro, Kit Lotus put on another great show for Club Lotus at Donington. Now appearing at the centre of the show, many visitors enjoyed our more professional set up, we were even accused by Clive Chapman of being flash for having carpets on our display area. After all it was green, but designed to help keep the exhibitor feet from seizing up over two days on a concrete floor. Kit Lotus now displays for Malcolm Ricketts at his annual Lotus open day and at Race Retro for Clarion Events. Each time we strive to include something new and more special than before and judging by the amount of interest, the formula appears to work. The interest in the magazine increased by almost 50% after 2018 Race Retro and we are committed to being there next February.

So that is about where we are after ten years. I think we have more or less arrived and it is nice to be generally accepted by the Lotus movement. Every conversation we have with a Lotus owner, enthusiast, modeller or restorer makes everything worthwhile. It has been an absolute pleasure and I hope to continue for however long, long is.

Tamiya 1:12 Lotus 78

The 1:12 Lotus 78 has been part of Tamiya's range for many years and has like many of their kits, been re-released recently with upgraded photo etch parts. To date a big scale Lotus 78 is missing from Kit Lotus displays and so I decided it is time to build one. My kit is the older version without photo etch and I decided to build it in the Imperial Tobacco livery run by Gunnar Nilsson at the 1977 Japanese Grand Prix. The subject choice is two-fold, firstly Gunnar was an important part of the Team Lotus revival backing Mario Andretti in the first year of ground effect and scoring his sole Formula One victory after astute tyre choices in the 1977 Belgian Grand Prix at Zolder. Secondly, having different subjects on display will always generate discussion and conversation and whilst Lotus models with red paint on them isn't a new thing, this one off livery may make a couple of heads do a double take.

This livery has been modelled before and in other scales but there has been a lack of consistency as to which bit of the car is brighter and which is darker. I've tried to stick closely to the photographs of the car that are available. And will be using Italian Red for the main body (like the Gold Leaf cars) and Maroon for the side pods.

Already on the lookout for those after market detailing bits, the model has been treated to an EJAN DFV throttle side set, but the lack of photo etch won't be a massive issue.



Cracking on with the bare metal foiling, have to confess that I am finding it heavy going but we will get there.

The Tamiya kit is moulded in black plastic, itself an obstacle if a lighter colour is intended, coupled with various panel difficulties, the inevitable problem of plastic injection moulding which can't cope with undercuts, means some complex curves like the cockpit surround and the air box has to be made in several pieces. Joining these satisfactorily can be



Plenty of modelling putty required to fill the gaps

difficult and it is necessary to resort to model putty or similar in order to fill the lines.

When starting this model I broke one of my rules to try and make one model at a time, now, all of a sudden I had four on the go including the Mark 1, the SMTS Lotus 63 and the Nichimo 1:12 Lotus Europa which needed scratch built engine mounts missing from the kit. My excuse is A) I had to build a the 63 to review it for Kit Lotus anyway, B) being able to put down the Mk 1 and pick up something where someone has done most of the thinking for me counts as relaxation. So really, now the 63 is done I only have a couple on the go at once whilst one of the three is rested.

Back to the 78 and I'm not making any fast progress on the tub because I'm trying my hand at a larger scale bare metal foiling exercise and I'm not sure if it is going to work. To be continued.....



2008-2018

Lotus transporters - Ford Thames 400E van by Oxford Diecast and the Ford Thames Trader courtesy of Eddie Stobart

The Ford Motor Company in Britain used the Thames name on its commercial vehicles during the fifties sixties and their Thames 400E van became the forerunner of the ubiquitous Transit, (sometimes referred to as the 'backbone of Britain') with Ford producing 187000 of these between 1957 and 1965. The Thames 400E van makes a return to Kit Lotus in the guise of the Lotus Racing Services run-around produced in 1:43 scale by Oxford Diecast, the prolific UK based company. I have featured the superb SMTS 400E transporter in previous editions.

Racing transporters are quite popular at the moment and so the spin off for vans appears to be a natural progression. Our subject is very nicely turned out in authentic Lotus livery. Probably from the Cheshunt era as there is no Tottenham Lane address on the van.



From the outset, I have to say what tremendous value these models are. You have to ask yourself, how can they possibly do it for £13.95? Not only do you get a very nice model, it is presented in hard Perspex case with very professional packaging. It is difficult to fault anything about the model, the overall shape, the finish, the detail is incredible for the money. For Oxford, this is their Model T, in model van terms the variants are endless. I remember many people collecting Lledo and Matchbox model T vans with endless liveries. This van is the equivalent and the options for colour schemes is endless and we have to be grateful that someone spotted the Thames in Lotus livery and decided to put it into production.

The second Ford Thames in one issue of Kit Lotus! Carrying on the Lotus Transporter theme, this one started its model life as a 1:50 scale Eddie Stobart Thames Trader which Pete spotted on a model vendor's stand at Race Retro back in February. He immediately connected with a photograph in Michael Oliver's book *Tales from the Toolbox* which showed a Red and Grey Thames Trader flat bed truck with 'judiciously' positioned scaffolding tube supporting the Lotus 18's of Alan Stacey and John Surtees. Lord knows how they were loaded/unloaded, at the first opportunity I will ask Bob Dance he must know.

Anyhow, Pete took said Eddie Stobart model back to his Kit Lotus Piggery and transmogrified it into this neat model.

As far as Eddie Stobart goes, I recall my travels working in Cumbria in the nineties and often calling in at Tebay Services on the M6 where there was an Eddie Stobart shop. Interesting though the subject may be to others the only connection I have is my wife Sue who always points out the Eddies when we travel anywhere, so I bought her an Eddie Stobart Spotters book for an anniversary gift. Who said Romance was dead??



Before—above, after—below. Just how did they load/unload?



Classic Team Lotus visit—May 2018

Without wishing to sound repetitive, the opportunity to visit Classic Team Lotus can't be passed over because of what will be there to see and, potentially, the days of this historic workshop may be numbered as the brand new hi-tech headquarters next door takes its final shape.

As we have always said, a warm welcome is guaranteed and this time was no exception with Steve Allen leading the tour once again, ably assisted by the youngsters Tom and Olivia.

It is always hard to imagine that the famous race cars we see on track, in books and photographs are here in this workshop, in pieces, with engine over here, gearbox over there and tub on the stand in the middle. Very rarely do we see a complete car especially since the CTL workload increased. This year for example, CTL took 12 cars to the Monaco Historique with the ex Jim Clark 1963 Lotus 25 claiming its fourth win in the 1961-1966 category. As for the others, at least a couple ended their race in the barrier.



Bit of filler and a rub down will sort that little lot out, not sure what happened to my nose cone!!

Keeping up with the busy schedule, the Brands Hatch Masters provided Greg Thornton with second in class, Pre-78, in the Andretti Lotus 77 but not before the Lotus 81 had taken out the Lotus 91 at druids, launching the 91 onto its back trapping the driver who was soon released by the Marshal, unharmed. Back at the ranch by the time we visitors arrived, the car was stripped to its unmarked tub, requiring only a check and a polish before reassembly can commence. A real test for such a small workforce in the true tradition of Team Lotus, turning round race ready cars in such a short space of time.



Whoops, how did that tyre mark appear on my sidepod and why is that upright at such a drunken angle

Fixing bumps and bangs aside, which in any case shows the true mettle of the organisation, the works tour is always fascinating and some of the intriguing stuff is above the bench line in the rafters. Ageing winners laurels hang in the rafters along with posters and pictures which are often covered in cheeky graffiti.



It's unsure yet what will happen to the old workshops when the new one opens, no doubt there is a plan we onlookers will know when it is time to know, but whatever the case the memories the old one has provided are priceless. As for the new workshop, it is just a new chapter in a history book that continues to write itself and will no doubt not only continue the tradition of turning out race winning cars, but will delight Lotus fans for years to come.

You heard it hear first—Spark 1963 Bedford Team Lotus Transporter

It came as quite a surprise to the model retailers when Spark announced their 1963 Bedford Lotus Team Transporter to an unsuspecting market having been a secret for some while. It also came as a surprise to Kit Lotus but not in the same way, we were expecting it but not just now.

Less than two years ago, on a private visit to CTL we talked to Bob Dance about his enthusiasm for transporters and, as we were packed and loaded on the way home from a display, we mentioned to Bob that we had a special one in the car. Pete Pedroza's paddock diorama of the transporter (rear end) and two Lotus 25s. Bob described the transporter and revealed he had photographs. To cut a long story short, in no time at all Pete had scratch built one for Bob (*Kit Lotus Volume 10 issue 2*) and took it over to Hethel to present to him.

Jeremy Pierson the man who deals with CTL product licencing took it up with Spark as a potential model. Pete's photographs and his drawings found their way to Spark and hey presto, here it is.....

Clive Rigby from Spark said "we decided to model the 1963 to 67 twin headlamp version but sadly there will be no opening doors as the cost would be far too expensive"

We didn't expect to see it yet, release date is October, but it is entirely down to Pete's brilliance through Kit Lotus and Jeremy at CTL that this model will hit the shops. Another milestone for Kit Lotus having at last influenced a manufacturer, another great celebration of our 10th birthday.



Pete's scratch built stands up well against the Spark prototype—left, Pete's above and below, can't wait to see the finished article.

JT



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