



KIT LOTUS

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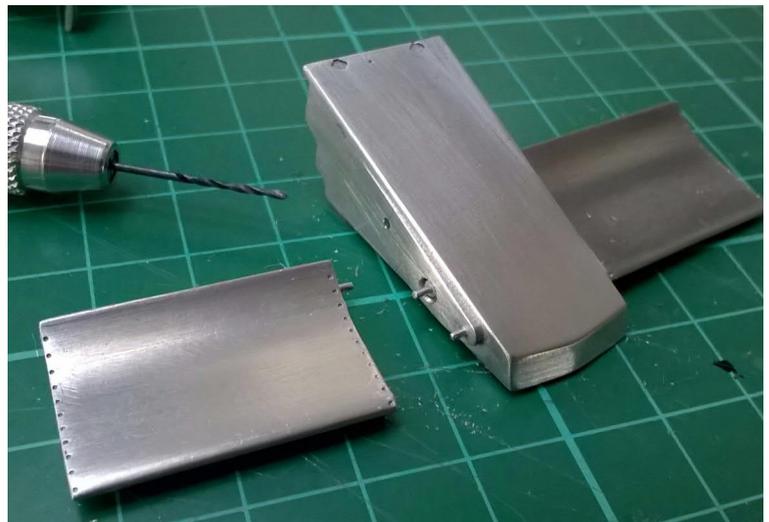


MHF Lotus 79 takes shape in big scale 1:12

Kit Building is always a "work in progress" - Model Factory Hiro provides the challenge this time

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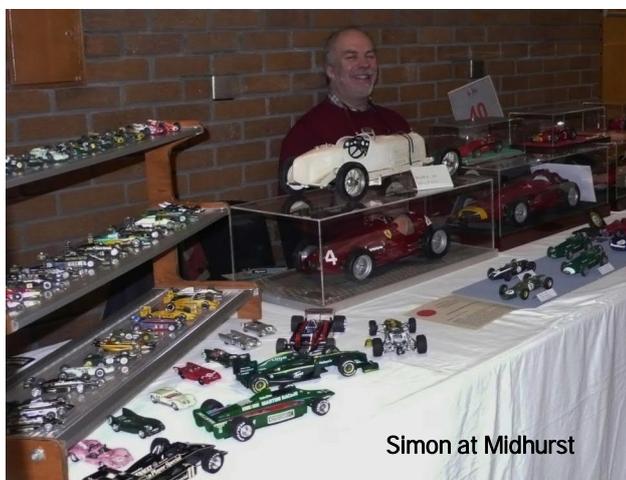


MFH Lotus 77 drops down a scale to 1:20 but still complex

Kit Lotus editorial - "the worlds only magazine dedicated solely to scale model Lotus"

Here we are again, April already and Kit Lotus has already been on the road, showing off as usual ! Race Retro, or to give it its official title, the International Historic Motorsports Show, has become the most significant show in the historic motorsport sector, ask the 29500 visitors. A report on the show follows.

Its not just the big shows where enthusiasts congregate but at much smaller dedicated shows as well. These are no exception and Kit Lotus was admirably represented on the South Coast by Simon Parssons who exhibited his wonderful collection of Lotus models at Brighton and at Midhurst model



Simon at Midhurst

shows.

Thank you to everyone who came to see us whatever the show, it is this enthusiasm which helps drive our passion and keeps us looking for opportunities to display and share our hobby.

We themed our Race Retro display on celebrating Lotus and Jim Clark's best ever season of 1965. It seems our favourite Lotus model makers SMTS intends to celebrate this and can offer some of the key Jim Clark cars from their range including the 25, the 33 and the 38. Their 24 and 33 have been recently re-tooled to offer greater engine detail, but aside from that, it is odds on they will be announcing something special to celebrate 1965. Watch this space very carefully.

Elsewhere in this issue of Kit Lotus, Peter Pedroza describes how he built three 1:5 scale Climax engines for the owner of Jim Clark's Lotus 25. Building for others on a commercial basis is not something we usually do but sometimes the opportunity to contribute something back to the Lotus heritage can't be ignored.

We are once again indebted to readers, this time Ray Fisher shares his collection and something more. He has compiled a set of statistics for every Lotus F1 race, by car, by driver, by result and he has kindly consented to share this list by a link on the Kit Lotus website, look for it on the links page.

Our cover picture comes this time from Australia, Chris Dhube shares pictures of his Model Factory Hiro Lotus 79 build. This is just a taste, the rest of the pictures will feature in the June issue.

It is a fact that we enjoy Lotus products from all around the world and internet aside, we don't get them without importers and wholesalers. This time in Kit Lotus The Hobby Company based in Milton Keynes is featured, what makes it tick and what drives them apart from the business opportunities to deliver models to us. They bring us Tamiya and Ebro amongst many other model and hobby ranges and are by far the biggest player in the UK.

The origins of Lotus models seems to know no bounds at the moment. Alongside the big boys such as The Hobby Company, those enthusiasts I am always banging on about continue to amaze. Take the Classic Model Museum for example, where is it? what is it? Well, it is briefly mentioned in this issue whilst I compile the information for the next issue to bring you an introduction to Lotus models from Mexico. Classic Model Museum works in 1:12 scale resin no less and has some fascinating subjects.

My own progress with the Model Factory Hiro Lotus 77 is described in this issue. A project I am enjoying immensely. Although some way off completion, I am looking forward to putting it on display. Talking of which, don't forget to put 17th May in your diary to come and see us at Automodellismo 5 in the Village Hall at Hanslope near Milton Keynes.

Your feedback is always appreciated so please keep it coming, we have come a long way together, and as we forge through our 8th year, I know there is loads more to come. I hope you enjoy the read.

JT



Race Retro 2015

We were quite lucky to have an invitation to display our Lotus models at the 2015 Race Retro over the weekend of 20th/21st/22nd February and as it turned out we became the Lotus flag flyer with Kelvedon Lotus being the only other Lotus related organisation there. Whether that was a disadvantage or not 25900 souls braved the cold and came to see what was on offer (but not all to us though).

Our display was housed in the Premier Speed Hall in a nice carpeted shell scheme environment and whilst quite small at 3 metres x 3 metres, we made it look as professional as we could with some special graphics to help celebrate Jim Clark and Team Lotus best ever season of 1965. Celebrated Jim Clark biographer Graham Gould kindly helped us with a stunning picture of Jim in the 1965 British Grand Prix from his own private collection. The television programme 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' also came to our assistance, well, the lady who fitted the covers has had a dress she made featured in the programme did by doing some fitting work on our racing green table covers. It was therefore very apt that I took a steam iron with me to make sure the display looked pristine (I have to issue a statement here that absolves me from undertaking any domestic laundry type of ironing both now or in the future on any shirt or garment – just to clear this up with Mrs T).



Getting the display right takes time especially having to assemble it first then take it to pieces to ensure it goes in the back of the car just to make sure we can reassemble on site. Packing the models carefully can take time but it is amazing how little time it takes to strip it all down at the end! Build up day on the Thursday gives us plenty of time to get it right despite leaving the top of the new Jim Clark display behind!

It is amazing how you can improvise when you need to and we were able to liberate some material from the display contractors to ensure no one spotted anything was missing!!

Race Retro is based at Stoneleigh Park near Leamington Spa and has a convenient guest house bang in the middle of the complex meaning we can unload and park the car for four days, walk 300 yards to the exhibition hall and 300 yards back to the bar in the evenings, making showing at Race Retro quite an easy thing. A big thing is having plenty of unloading and loading room and hardly a queue to get away afterwards. We cut the display cabinet building time to 15 minutes this time and only ten minutes to take it apart. The rest of the set up took nearly five hours to erect but only 55 minutes to take down! Just shows how experienced we become.

Race Retro always has a theme, usually a golden anniversary, this year Lola and Chevron were the signature cars. Other features included a tribute to the late Richard Burns, World Rally Champion who died very young. Some of his cars were on display. Very nice though they were, neither Lola or Chevron had anything like the display the Lotus theme provided two years ago and overall the show relied on a mish mash of individually interesting cars rather than a wider theme. Lotus cars were extremely thin on the ground with a 23B on the Cheshire Classics stand the only one of note.



The Lotus 23 is rare in any scale above 1:43 but I recently received a 1:24 resin body and vac form from Mike Serrurier down there in South Africa and so a spaceframe chassis with Twin Cam engine is on the cards for the build list, just got to sort out the four web wobblers for the front, any offers?

Race Retro continued.....

So, day one came and with it the crowds. Friday is the serious business day where most of the motorsport deals for the upcoming season are done. Nevertheless, we were very busy for most of the day. It is a measure of the interest model cars can hold with most blokes that Pete and I had to vacate the stand on many occasions during the day just to make sure there was more room for people viewing.

Missing Simon's 43rds this year, our display consisted of as many Jim Clark cars as possible and included his very first F1 win – Lotus 18 Pau GP – right through to his last ever win -Lotus 49 1968 Australian GP. We had as many 1965 cars as we could muster with Pete's 1:8 Lotus 40 ever popular, his three wheeling Lotus Cortina attracting lots of attention as did Lotus 38 and Lotus 25 sitting atop the Jim Clark display. Pete also had a replica full size Blue helmet of the type and colour worn by the great man complete with a pair of authentic goggles.



Race Retro for us is not just about showing off the models. This is of course the main purpose but, one of the things that drives us is the interaction with Lotus fans, particularly Jim Clark fans – and they are many- who take the time to examine the models and share their own experiences. Kit Lotus attracts a few celebrities as my guest book will testify. Anyone who is anyone in the world of Lotus and has visited one of our displays gets asked to sign the guest book. This time was no exception.

Our first celebrity visitors were Bob Dance and Richard Parramint, Bob, who we have met before on trips to CTL and at Race Retro, was admiring the scratch built engines Pete has built in 1:5 scale when we offered him a Classic Team Lotus brochure, his rather indignant “but I work there” retort put the joke firmly back on us. It was a pleasure talking to him as he shared some Lotus anecdotes with us. Lotus stalwart Richard too was very interested in our models sharing with us some of his marque knowledge. A former tour guide with Lotus Cars, there can't be much Richard doesn't know about anything Lotus but it was a pleasure to see both of them.

Later in the show, one visitor was taking a keen interest particularly in the Lotus 49 models we have on display, taking pictures and asking questions for some time before admitting to have written a book about the 49. It was of course that book Lotus 49 Story of a legend and our visitor was revealed as Michael Oliver, author of this work and the other well known volume Lotus 72 Grand Prix Icon. What followed was a fascinating half hour in which Michael told us about his work and how he gets many enquiries from Lotus fans about the 49 in particular but confessed to not being able to answer them all. I am guilty for a couple of those enquiries when building both the 1:12 Australian GP 49 and the 1:12 Jackie Oliver 49, Michael kindly confirmed some specification points I found invaluable. He paid particular attention to Pete's 1:8 scratch built 49 and of course, he signed the guest book.



The Lotus 49 is an ever popular exhibit

Race Retro 2015 continued

During our shows, and this one was no exception, we get asked many times "how much is this one", we could have sold some of the display times over. The response that we don't sell anything always brings an immediate change to the enquirer's expression. It always resembles a rather blank stare as if looking way into the distance, usually a little open mouthed and normally accompanied by a few seconds of deep stillness and thought. Most people have similar expressions as they walk away trying to figure out the business model. The fact is we don't sell we just build and then exhibit, we started building Airfix kits as kids and never grew up, deal with it.

One such enquiry came after a long chat with an Elite enthusiast who casually informed us he owned a Type 14, in fact the one Colin Chapman equipped with the big climax engine intended to go for the outright win at Le Mans no less and currently being restored at CTL. Nick May was in the book!

It is always a pleasure talking to enthusiasts but sometimes we are a bit naughty when we get the odd "Lotus bobble hat" come to see us who obviously knows far more about the subjects than we do. On more than one occasion we let them rabbit on, often about how wrong one of our models might be, for example one such "bobble hat" pulled us up because Jim Clark never drove a Gold Leaf 49, he went on for quite a while as there were one or two visitors listening to him. It was one of those listening visitors who corrected him leaving us with a wry smile whilst "bobble hat" quietly turned away and went.

Having frequented Race Retro for a number of years, I have witnessed change, there is less happening on the fringes such as the autojumble and vendors of quality goods. Whilst the main halls 1 and 2 remain the heart of the show and house the real specialists, there used to be a great selection of model vendors in 3 and 4 but nowadays there is more and more diecast volume but less and less quality. The goods are not displayed nicely, mostly jammed together and not looking appealing at all. Peter did slip away to the market area several times after exchanging secret text messages, returning with ominous shaped parcels under his coat so as not to offend my vision because he was buying Ferrari models on behalf of his son who is a fan of the red marque.

Many automotive artists have booths at Race Retro, one being Paul Dove who had an evocative water colour of Jim Clark racing at Barcelona in the Lotus 48, the artwork flanked in the same frame by two period photographs from the same race. Also sitting on his stand was a masterpiece created in hand beaten aluminium by his father, a 1:3 scale Lotus 25. The picture just doesn't do it justice (see separate item).

So that was it, Race Retro was a very good show for us with the stand crowded most of the time. We are grateful to the organisers for recognising our efforts and we are working with them already for next year. We hope that we can persuade them to let us have a shallower but longer stand as this will ease the pressure and allow more people to view our models close up leaving more people puzzled as to why their wallets are safe when they come to visit. It is all about celebrating Lotus and our hobby on behalf of all Kit Lotus supporters.

Race Retro has a regular following of high quality memorabilia, books and art aficionados, all clamouring for high quality items. One side of Hall 1 is set aside in a studio layout where various artists help satisfy this need, one such artist is the young Cornishman **Paul Dove**. His composition of Jim Clark in the Lotus 48 at Barcelona in 1968 caught my eye, the story continues on the next page.....

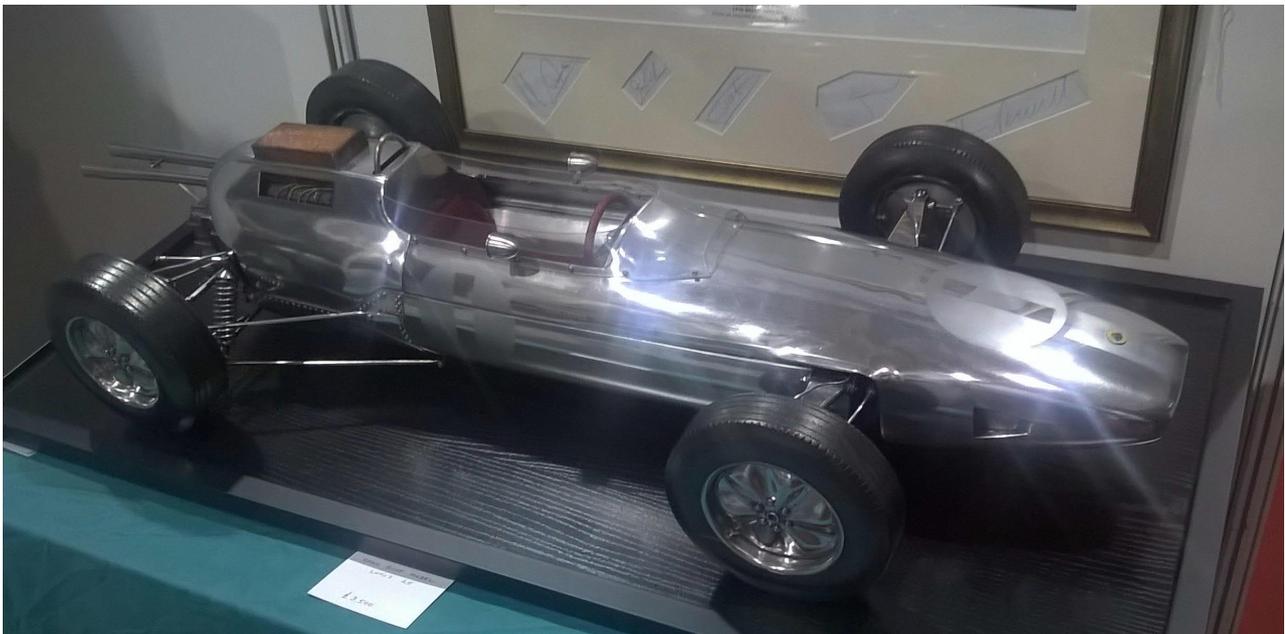


Paul Dove racing artist.

Paul's love of motor racing is expressed in his vibrant use of colour and dynamic compositions, complex crowd scenes and dramatic action filled paintings. His Jim Clark composition is acrylic on to board, which combined with the two period monochromes setting off a very nice piece of Lotus art.

His growing reputation and his work was enthusiastically praised, by Roy Salvadori, at the prestigious Maserati sponsored 4th International Motoring and Motor Racing Art Competition for the way he portrayed the Monaco scene that captured Paul the first prize. The judging panel also included Sir Stirling Moss, Derek Bell, Jackie Oliver and the actor Rowan Atkinson. His winning performance has proved to be the ideal exposure for this young Cornish based artist. Paul's paintings now feature in various collections around the world as well as the U.K. His paintings are not just accurate representational illustrations of motor races, they are works of art that give life and atmosphere, as well as having a great attention to detail. Paul works predominantly in oil and acrylics, starting with thumbnail sketches worked up from various reference materials ranging from books and film footage of the various great races of the past. He has exhibited his artwork at many Motor Racing events, including, Race Retro, Goodwood, Silverstone and Monaco.

He must inherit talent from his father Bruce Dove who's 1:5 Scale Lotus 25 was on display, the superb result of over 400 hours work using steel and hand beaten Aluminium. An obviously very talented family.



More images from the Kit Lotus display at the 2015 Race Retro celebrating Jim Clark

Building replicas - contributing to heritage

When, on behalf of all Kit Lotus members, I presented a 1:5 scale model of the Coventry Climax FWMV V8 engine to Clive Chapman back in March of last year, little did I know what lay ahead. Based on the one in the back of Lotus 25 R4 that Classic Team Lotus maintain and run, Clive must have liked the model as it remains on his desk to this day.

In September 2014 the owner of the car, John Bowers, was on a visit to the UK from his native Australia and had a meeting at Potash Lane. Sat opposite Clive he kept glancing at this model and finally commented that it looked very much like his own engine! Clive told him about how it came into being and about the help CTL and Steve Allen in particular had given me. Suffice it to say I got an email a few days later from Steve saying that John was impressed with what he had seen and would I be prepared to build him another three models!

Now I don't normally take commissions for model making, like the rest of us it's just a hobby, but having just finished the one-off Type 92 for Greg Thornton I was between projects anyway. I always have and always will be a Jim Clark/Team Lotus fan and with John Bowers being the ultimate JC/TL fan, owning R4 as he does, well, I couldn't say no could I. So after a few emails to down under, as John had returned home by this point, I agreed to his request.



The original build of the engine is covered in the December 2013 issue and these three followed exactly the same method so I won't waste space by going over it again.

The only difference is that on the original two models, although based on this particular engine I tried to give them a retro feel by picking out the Coventry Climax logos on the aluminium cam covers in and by fitting yellow plug leads, both of these being correct in period. On these later three, the cam covers are all black and the plug leads are red, as per the engine used today, otherwise the rest of the models are the same.

On the face of it making three scratch builds may seem a bit of a daunting prospect but actually it's not too bad. Sure, making three takes longer than one but not as long as you may think. Take the oil filters for example, one on each model, each one turned from aluminium and taking 7 cutting operations, therefore for all three a total of 21 ops. The time taken for these cutting ops is not that long, it's the setting of the lathe tools that takes the time. So if the lathe is set for a particular cut, such as the 45 degree chamfer at one end of the filters, then it's straightforward to do this op on all three before re-setting for the next one. Three oil filters is perhaps not the best example, but if you think of spinning out aluminium tubing for the injection trumpets, 24 of them plus a couple of spares, or the domed cylinder head bolts, 60 in total!!

The other time-saver on this project was the fact that I still had all the drawings, jigs and templates from the original build. I also had my own model to work from, built alongside the one we gave to Clive. Incidentally when we presented the model to him last year he asked me if it was unique, a one-off, and seemed a little disappointed when I told him it had a twin that I had kept for myself. I don't know how he will feel now that there are five of them in existence!



The reason that John wanted three models was that he intended to give two of them away as gifts whilst retaining the third for himself. They were put into acrylic display cases each with its own specific nameplate as per John's request. One model was to go to Tony Mantle who runs Climax Engine Services and rebuilds John's engine every winter while the second one was to go to someone who needs no introduction to any Team Lotus fan, Bob Dance. Bob is lead mechanic on R4 for John and his preparation is legendary as shown by the cars finishing record

Climax build continued.....

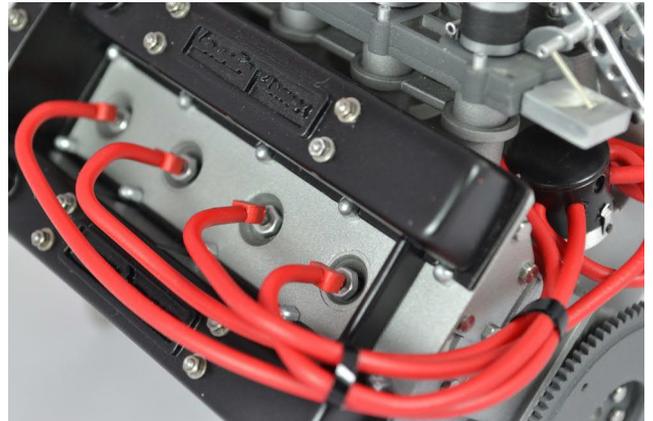
Twelve years ago after a lifetime of waiting I finally bought a Lotus, a 1998 Elise S1. I drove it for seven fabulous years but then took it off the road and laid it up, thinking that my "mid-life crisis" had passed! Last year my wife, quite rightly, persuaded me to start using it again, after all the best way to preserve a car is to use it.

It was transported to Lotus specialist Chris Foulds in the Yorkshire town of Huddersfield at the end of November and after a full brake overhaul, suspension upgrade and a "good dose of looking at" I collected it mid January and drove it home - two days before the heavy snow arrived!! Since then I've done a total of just 14 miles in it and so I thought a 450 mile round trip to it's spiritual home in Norfolk would be just what it, (and me), needed. Now the reason I'm telling you this is that on the day this car would become the "Kit Lotus Team Transporter" having to carry the three models, and this would pose a problem.

When Kit Lotus has appeared at various shows over the past few years we have inevitably sustained damage to our models no matter how well we pack them. The worst for me was coming back from Malcolm Ricketts charity open evening two years ago. A rear wheel detached itself from my 1:8 49, taking some of the rear suspension with it. Both Simon and John (Thornhill) have suffered similar breakages on their models and all this of course in modern softly sprung road cars. So for anyone who has ever been in an Elise they will know that although it really is a fabulous little car they do crash and bang at every slight change in road surface. Three delicate model engines were never going to survive that trip and so I thought what would Colin Chapman have done? Answer, reduce unsprung weight and add lightness!

After a bit of head scratching, a net and two rubber bungees solved the problem. With one end of the bungees hooked into the windscreen demister vents and the other ends wrapped around the passenger seat headrest the Prototype Lotus Hammock was born.

And so for the fourth time in the last twelve months I found myself in the car park at Classic Team Lotus. I think I probably need another couple of trips before I get my own parking space but what I did get was the usual very warm welcome from them all. I knew that the Team had been testing in France the previous day and thought that it would be comparatively quiet. Wrong! The place was very busy indeed, the transporter having travelled back through the night and was already unloading it's precious cargo as I arrived.



I finally got to meet John Bowers, as we had planned this particular day to fit in with his latest trip to the UK, and handed over the three models for which he was very grateful and pleased with. He told me how the 25 didn't get to run on the test day due to a broken fuel metering unit and Bob Dance was already on-site that morning starting to strip the engine to get at the faulty unit. Bob was also very pleased with the model when John handed it over to him, all of which was a relief I can tell you.

I couldn't spend that much time with John as he was only at CTL for a few hours and was finalising plans for the coming season with Clive but he did tell me he had driven his 25 around the Lotus test track some time ago. He also said that he owned one of the very first Lotus Elises to be imported into Australia, a yellow S1, just like mine! Quite obviously a man of impeccable taste!

P.S. Being quite a long journey I had travelled over to Norfolk the day before and checked into a hotel for the night. I unpacked all three models in my room to check for damage fearing the worst. I had even taken a small repair tool kit and a few spare bits with me just in case. Thankfully none of this was needed, the "Lotus Hammock" had worked perfectly. Patent Pending!!



MFH Lotus 77—the story unfolds

Sticking to my plan that nothing gets stuck, fixed or painted before a full dry run of the assembly or sub-assembly, the Lotus 77 is starting to resemble something tangible. I described the tub last time and since then, being only able to give a couple of hours a week to model building just now, I continued slowly and patiently cleaning, drilling and fitting the front suspension and brake assemblies and I have reached the part where some paint needs to be applied before I can finally assemble something.

Working on the front corners is like working on a kit in itself, such is the number of parts involved and the amount of fitting and drilling required. MFH has been very skilful in determining the order of build and their excellent instruction graphics are a massive improvement on earlier efforts. The use of 3D printing in the production of their Master Components is self-evident, it is possible to see where the material has built up layer by layer in the process as this has translated to a series of tiny lines across the majority of components. Not in itself an issue as they are easily cleaned up (more later), but what has happened is that the outcome is a set of really crisp cast metal components with a sharpness that would suggest some machining has taken place yet clearly this isn't the case.



mentioned the cleaning up. MFH components whilst need careful fitting, take very little effort to clean. My preference is to use fine grade steel wool and to clean/polish by hand using needle files to take away any unwanted flash, edges or split lines. The downside using the steel wool is the large amount of small 'iron filings' that results. The natural magnetic properties when using metal files attracts the filings to your tools and the small pieces,

in themselves hardly visible, and much to your annoyance can get painfully into your skin unless you are wearing latex gloves.

Cleaning the smaller parts can be a nuisance needing loads of patience. Amongst my armoury is a fibre glass propelling pencil I got some years ago from RS Components. I checked their online catalogue and discovered it is still available. It has lots of glass fibre strands which you adjust in length and is a great tool for polishing white metal. Getting into the webs of engine or gearbox castings for example is easy as is using it for more delicate components. It takes of the sharp edges, helps remove dried glue from the wrong place and has a brass strand refill as an option. It is much cleaner and easy to use. The part number in the RS Components catalogue is 514-868. Not cheap (nothing in the RS book is), about a tenner with VAT but worth considering for your toolbox



The detail in the kit is amazing, quite often photoetch means a sheet of flat parts, sometimes with detail but most times of a universal thickness throughout the kit. MFH on the other hand have used varying thicknesses depending on the scale with the end result of rear wing mountings for example looking correct in thickness and differing in thickness to say, the wing end plates. Here also detail has gone beyond the norm. The wing end plates also have individual fixings in the form of 0.5mm diameter x 4mm long rivets with flat heads. The front nose cone alone had 8 individual pieces, both cast and photo etch, then another 8 flat head rivets drilled horizontally in to the front wings



MFH Lotus 77 continued

I am on a sit down now, having come away from the model on a quit whilst ahead period, to write this and I can confirm at last some adhesive has been mixed and some bits put together.

The front nose cone is now ready to paint and the bare block of the Cosworth DFV awaits further treatment. So far I have used exclusively two pack epoxy resin with a 90 second bond. This means mixing very small quantities after first making sure the dry run works. All very well you might say and it always seems that no matter how many dry runs you might have, as soon as the adhesive is mixed, the assembly run goes straight downhill. If I can offer any advice, it is not to worry, so long as the bit sticks in the right place, bonds correctly and stays in place when fully cured, removing excess epoxy needn't be a trial. The RS brush I just mentioned gets into the smallest cavity and is good for removing extra glue spots from white metal. My next tip, always wear latex gloves and change them for each gluing operation. Or, make sure you wash your hands if you get the slightest bit of epoxy on your skin. It will stay sticky until the next millennium unless you get it off. Soapy water is Ok if you are only contaminated with one of the epoxy resins. If you have managed to get a mixed pair on you, you might need a better cleaner. I use wipes especially for silicone sealer to get rid of glue from my hands but if all else fails, I have been known to steal nail polish remover from Mrs T.

If I can offer another tip whilst building these fully detailed kits it is this: Work on a section of the instructions on whatever sub-assembly is relevant. The transmission for example, but, keep a close eye on what happens when that sub assembly gets attached to the main model. To do this read through the instructions further on to see where those attachments are. I found several more drillings to be made on the gearbox and on the base bracket used to secure the rear wing support frame. Because this kit uses small rivets, you need to be aware of where they fit and that they have been dry run fitted before you get to that part in the overall assembly or you could inadvertently fix something in place to one component only to find it needed more work elsewhere.



This print on canvas found it's way on to my staircase wall recently. A birthday gift from an obviously well briefed son. Unknown artist—it doesn't look like Kitson but could be Turner—but very colourful and depicts JC with Hill (BRM), Ginther (Honda) and Surtees (Ferrari) in vain pursuit and another celebration of 1965. Any thoughts on the artist ?

Stop Press From Rumour Control Headquarters.

Just before going to press with this issue and after a chat with Keith and John at SMTS about the 1965 celebration models for Jim Clark. Keith confirmed that the three car set will be a special run of:

Lotus 32B, Lotus 33, Lotus 38

The run will consist of just 50 sets (well actually just 49 remain because my name is on one) so get you name down now. A special presentation stand will be included.

An SMTS Lotus 32B has to be good news, it is one of the favourite cars in the Classic Team Lotus Collection and is sorely needed by we kit building enthusiasts in the popular 1:43 scale.

Watch out also for a 12 cat set of JC cars from SMTS spanning his entire race career. A unique subscription arrangement is rumoured.



The Hobby Company— importing our modelling needs

Where do all the models come from, or most of them in the UK at any rate? Think back a good few years and your first Tamiya model. On the box would be a RIKO label, the abbreviated name for Richard Kohnstam the importer with the franchise to distribute Tamiya in the UK. In fact it was one of Richard Kohnstam's employees Pete Binger who is attributed with persuading a youthful Tamiya model company that the UK would be an ideal recipient for their growing number of high quality models. Thus RIKO became the importer and enjoyed the franchise for many years. Becoming part of the ERA group of companies RIKO joined the retail arm Beatties and the group was able to both import and retail the Tamiya range of products.

The market declined in the nineties as video games grew in popularity and model kits started to drop off. Beatties were always on the back foot for retail sales by then and by 2000 RIKO no longer had the lucrative and biggest name as a distribution licence. Beatties were sold, some 13 of the loss making stores closed before the whole lot finally gave in.



For a while another company had the franchise for Tamiya but Pete Binger and his colleague Glyn Pearson, both keen enthusiasts, joined the Hobby Company in Milton Keynes and once again secured the Tamiya import licence rapidly building into the most important importer for the products we all enjoy and operating on a strictly business to business basis. Glyn in particular is a big Lotus fan.

The Hobby Company was incorporated in 1968 in Milton Keynes and is firmly established with a very strong trading background having both the resource and the muscle to ensure the latest ranges can be imported and maintained. Its operating base is from 40,000 square feet of office and warehousing in central Milton Keynes

I got in touch with Anthony Shaw the Marketing Manager at The Hobby Company, primarily to talk about how the business copes with the many pressures of ensuring we get our products but in particular, to talk about Lotus models and the usurper of the 1:20 market, Ebbro, who I'm told was started by a former Tamiya employee. This resonates with the comments often made about the build quality of the Ebbro kits and the efforts that have obviously gone in to stealing a march on the Tamiya catalogue. Ebbro was born in and still resides in the world epicentre of plastic models that is Shizuoka alongside most of the big name in Japanese model makers.

Tamiya is a staple ingredient of all we aspire to as modellers but for Lotus specialist like us, apart from the rebrands of old favourites like the 49, there doesn't appear to be anything new on the horizon. Popular rumour says that Tamiya has abandoned 1:20 scale formula one, how true this is may be difficult to establish. Ebbro on the other hand, a much younger, smaller and more nimble company are growing their reputation by producing superbly detailed plastic kits. It is because of their nimble ability they are able to move quicker to bring new products to the market. The trouble is, like new technology, it is infectious. We get to hear about new models on various forums long before we should and just as soon as any embryonic prototype appears. Then it can be many months changing in to years before we see them in the flesh. I put this point to Anthony who confirmed that Hobby Co. won't market a model until around six weeks before they are due to hit the shelf. You could say just at the point when the boat is loaded. What happens at the trade shows and subsequent promotion just keeps us hanging on

..... continued



Hobby Company continued....

Continued.....

I asked how a new model is judged in regard to the quantity of stock brought in. Quoted Anthony " **for a new product we usually stock a quantity we expect will sell out, then we can re-stock with better market intelligence**" Hobbyco use past performance when possible in judging how much stock to carry, generally Lotus models are popular and certainly the Ebbro range has been very successful. Taking the Lotus 49 for instance and bringing what must be the definitive kit of this particular car to the injection moulded plastic kit market and then, redefining it into an accurate 49B, Ebbro has to be applauded. Going for accuracy where others including Tamiya and in diecast, Quartzo ,have used their marketing techniques to persuade us to buy 49Bs that aren't . Whereas that accuracy has done nothing but good for Ebbro's growing reputation and having an importer in The Hobby Company that includes a high level of enthusiasm for the models on top of their business model can only be a recipe for an exciting future.

Anthony and I discussed new models, what sort of influence the team at Hobbyco would have on the likes of Ebbro. It seems that most of the teams at Ebbro, Tamiya and Hobbyco have known each other for a long time and so any such influence has distinct possibilities. I sneaked in the one about a 1:24 scale Lotus Cortina and my suggestion that Ebbro would be the perfect source, you never know.

Talk of Ebbro is all very well but Hobbyco is firmly entrenched with Tamiya whose vast range outshines any else any other manufacturer has. Radio Control, for example is a huge market in itself as is military modelling, far bigger than us mere auto- modellers. Having a vast array of peripheral products such as paints and finishing equipment also helps set them apart from others and it is largely due to the pioneers who are now part of Hobbyco that we can enjoy the Tamiya range.

Now Mr Hobbyco, what was it we said about the 1:24 Lotus Cortina??

The Hobby Company are always keen to promote their Tamiya offering and whilst not new to us, one of their most significant lines in recent weeks has been the re-introduction by Tamiya of the Lotus 49 in Big Scale 1:12.



It was back in 1968 that the 49 was first released and most of us have been hooked ever since. For many years, these kits have been unavailable except through internet sales from individuals and there were rumours that moulds had been lost or damaged preventing re-issue. However, there is evidence of new tooling on some of the parts despite other sections where changes to bring the kit to a more up to date standard have been passed over , for example it still has the strut mounts for the would be 49B—but the etchings and a Graham Hill figure complete with moustache more than make up for it.

It still is (my opinion), the epitome of a Grand Prix racer in its purest form from its era and well done Tamiya for keeping it with us. Also, watch this space as Automodello (Jim Cowen) currently has a 1:12 diecast 49 going through its paces in the development stage, early pictures look good, for more check out www.diecastsociety.com



Meet the collector - Ray Fisher

This time our collector is Ray Fisher who has been a subscriber since 2010 he has kindly volunteered to take part in the questioning and provided some pictures of his collection.

Q. Do you have a favourite brand either diecast or kit ?

Answer: another emphatic one—Spark



Q. When did you become a Lotus enthusiast?

Answer: 1962 (nuff said ed!)

Q. What was the biggest influence that drew you into Lotus?

Answer : Like many of us who read Kit Lotus and genuinely many Lotus fans whom we speak to on our travels answer the same, Ray being no exception—Jim Clark

Q Did that coincide with collecting model Lotus?

Answer: I was only collecting toys at that time, mainly Corgi etc.

Q. Do you have a preference for diecast or kits?

Answer: I started making kits around 20 years ago but now the hands aren't as nimble as they were it is just diecast.

Q.How big is your Lotus collection and do you collect any other models?

Answer: About 150 race cars, some Le Mans and Indianapolis all Lotus plus some rally, land speed cars and other bits & bobs.

Q What is your favourite model Lotus car and why?

Answer: The Lotus 49 in Gold Leaf colours (Just wished Jim Clark had gone on).

Q. How did you first come across Kit Lotus?

Answer: At the Snetterton Lotus Festival in 2010

We bumped into Ray again at Race Retro, always nice to meet readers and there were a few who called in at the stand to chat. Ray has also very kindly allowed us to include as a download on the Kit Lotus website, a statistical record of every Lotus F1 entry showing the car, driver, race and result. Look out for this download soon at www.kitlotus.com

Bits & pieces.....

Down Mexico way is an outfit called Classic Model Museum offering resin 1:12 scale kits. I have shown their Lotus 25 before, but how about this for a Lotus model?



Uncertain yet as to the scale and how we get hold of them, I have put a message into Classic Model Museum for more information. If this is 1:12, it is a must have kit. They also show a road going Esprit, a 98T and their 25 on the website. Further details to follow just as soon as I have them.



Dioramas need figures, this 1:43 pit crew is available from your stockist, made by True Scale Miniatures and also available in 1:18.



Tameo have released their latest low cost kit the Martini Lotus 79, great value with fewer etch replaced by cast parts



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