

The Caterham Maple Leaf News

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An historians view Part II continued:

4. PAPERWORK: This is the 'icing on the cake', so to speak and I think makes the difference between a good car and a very good car. Paperwork can be bills, letters, articles, old tax disks and even old photographs and can be a valuable asset to a car.

5. ORIGINAL SPECIFICATION: Typically no two Sevens, whether Lotus or Caterham are the same as they are all customised by and for their owners from day one. Over the years, with the need to have ever more power, some weird and wonderful drive trains have been fitted, even to the earliest cars. For example Mazda rotary, Ford 1600 Crossflow or 1558 Lotus twin-cam engines and even automatic gearboxes and that is just in Series One cars, 1957 to 1960! Now I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with non-standard engines but, I think, in the long term, a standard car with an original type specification is definitely the best investment.



For those on the Internet, I have a web site at <http://www.lotus7register.co.uk> where I have attempted to detail the original specifications of all the Sevens made by Lotus 1957 to 1973. Those without 'the technology' [I believe that even our honourable editor has, after pressure, succumbed of late!] may send me a s.a.e. and I will mail the relevant parts of my web site to them.



There are also books that should be referred to before contemplating the purchase of an early Seven. The titles that I prefer are "Lotus Seven - A Collectors Guide" by Jeremy Coulter which I find is a very interesting read, "Lotus Seven - Restoration / Preparation / Maintenance" by Tony Weale which is an invaluable reference for any Lotus or pre-1992 Caterham owner and is particularly good in respect of the Series IV and one of the two reprints of the Lotus Seven Owner's Manual which any owner can ill afford to be without.

6. CONDITION: Whilst this is all important when looking to buy any car, I believe that it is less so when considering the purchase of one made between 25 and 40 years ago. An old car will have flaws; some call them 'character', whereas a newer car should not. Obviously the mechanics should be sound, but the body may show signs of careful wear, called 'patina' in the antiques trade. Unfortunately not all cars are restored as lovingly as they might be and to some an original 'basket case' example is the only one to buy. Beware, this can work out very expensive when properly restored!

Article by: Lotus 7 Historian John Watson (UK)

The South American Lotus 7. Part 1

In 1969 Jorge Mutio, an Uruguayan businessman, fell in love with the Lotus Seven whilst on a business trip to England. At the time the Renault factory he was running on the outskirts of Montevideo had ceased production and he was looking for something to occupy his mind. As a former racing driver who had competed in Maseratis, Simcas and Panhards with some success, the Seven caught his imagination.

When he returned home he told his English speaking friend, Richard Vignoles about the wonderful little sports car he had seen and the pair of them returned to the U.K. and bought one. So great was their enthusiasm for the little car that they also got permission from Colin Chapman to build replicas of it for the Argentinean market. The main reason that Argentina was chosen rather than Uruguay was that the latter only has a population of some 3 million whilst Argentina has eight times that. Whilst there was nothing in writing and there no royalties were demanded, it was agreed that, before they went into production, a Lotus manager by the name of Mike Warner would approve the prototype.

The Seven was duly shipped to Buenos Aires and used as a pattern to make the prototype. This work was carried out in the home garage of an Argentinean named Edgardo Boschi. The engines, drive trains, and brake systems etc. were all sourced from Fiat for ease of supply and servicing. Eventually Mike Warner came to Argentina and inspected their work and returned with a photograph of the English and Argentinean Sevens side by side which is shown on page 66 of Jeremy Coulter's book "Lotus Seven - A Collectors Guide". Later on when over for the Argentinean F1 Grand Prix, Colin and Hazel Chapman saw their work and encouraged furtherance of the project. Finally 'production' commenced in a little factory founded by Edgardo Boschi. Richard Vignoles advised on the car's construction having built the prototype and Jorge Mutio supplied his expertise as a long time car constructor.

To be continued in November issue.



NEXT ISSUE

In our next issue we will continue with Part II of the South American Lotus 7.

We will also be introducing Mark Mackenzie. Mark is from Calgary Alberta, Canada and will be sharing the story of his very nice 1969 Lotus 7 Series 3, now undergoing restoration.

LOTUS 7 CLUB



For those of you who have yet to join the Lotus 7 Club, let me encourage you to take the leap. The club's monthly magazine 'LOW FLYING' is a superb publication with excellent articles from enthusiastic owners.

For further information on joining the club use the link below:

www.lotussevenclub.com

The original Caterham R500 EVO was legendary in rewriting performance records for 0-60mph and 0-100-0mph times.

The new R500 is even quicker.

SEVEN facts?

This newsletter is published by 7CARS, Canada's only used Lotus/Caterham 7 dealer. Further information on our current stock of quality used 7s can be found at www.7cars.ca email: sevencars@shaw.ca