



Lotus Elan +2

Run by James Elliott
 Owned since March 2012
 Total mileage 21,859
 Miles since December
 2012 report 602
 Latest costs £625

BELTING UP FOR THE SCHOOL RUN

There has been something of a miracle. My last running report ended (well, more sort of tailed off) with the words: 'I hope to be transporting the Elliotts *en famille* by the time you read this.' And lo! It came to pass, as much to my surprise as everyone else's. The car was in near-daily use anyway, but without fulfilling its primary purpose of ferrying the kids around. When Port's Thatcham Classic was looming, the impending family day out finally spurred me into action.

Though when I say 'spurred into action', the only action I took was to haul the Lotus around the North Circular on a Friday afternoon to C&SC's perennial seatbelt problem-solver Quickfit in Stanmore.

I outlined my requirements to boss Stuart Quick and, after closely inspecting the car and investigating the options, he reckoned that, given my girls' ages and sizes (six and four, both tiny), four-point harnesses were the safest way forward for at least the next few years.

"Brilliant, I need it in a week," I replied, doing a runner. When I returned the day before Thatcham, the job was done. Beautifully. The harnesses barely intrude and don't affect the rear sight-line at all.



Stuart Quick decides best system for +2



Neat brackets anchor harnesses to chassis



Elliott's cherubs now love travelling in +2

Off-the-shelf kits are available, but Quickfit was determined to make sure that all the harness points were anchored to the backbone chassis, which necessitated a lot of bracketry, but the extra rigidity was a compelling argument.

Master of webbing Pawel Podchorodecki took me through his showreel of the work and it was

mighty impressive. I do like it when people record their efforts so diligently, so you know exactly what has been done and what is lurking behind the trim without having to tear it all out for a reassuring peek.

Of course, the real verdict could only come from Charlotte and Lucie. But not at Thatcham because, due to some last-minute hitches, I ended up travelling solo, feeling guilty every mile of the way that I had put the Quickfit boys under so much pressure for nowt.

Even so, it was a brilliant drive down, sharing the M4 with Taylor's Stingray and meeting a load of friends (old and new) at the West Berkshire event before heading home through atrocious weather in convoy with Clements' Magnette.

Shortly afterwards, I enjoyed another great trip when I popped up to Hertfordshire to visit the Veteran Car Club's magnificent HQ, and to lower the tone in its splendid car park. Having taken the direct route on the way up there, I enjoyed the final, non-motorway stretch to Ashwell so much that I

got my special Lotus-branded map out and plotted a route home that involved a lot more country roads.

Despite the disappointment of being *sans famille* at Thatcham, since then I have become aware that, without that impetus, I might have gone months or even years without getting the job done.

Instead, the +2 is now capable of doing the work that I used to justify buying it. Not only do the girls adore the "little red car" to look at, but now they're boasting to their friends about going to school in it, too. The belts themselves are comfortable for them, plus easy to put on and adjust for me, holding them securely in their seats.

Now, if I could just unteach Lucie the unflattering song she has picked up somewhere – her mother I expect – and enjoys singing loudly on all occasions: "Twinkle twinkle chocolate bar, Daddy's got a rusty car."

THANKS TO

• Quickfit SBS: 020 8206 0101;
www.quickfitsbs.com



Quickfit recommended that four-point harnesses would be the most secure for the Lotus