



Type 26 Register Update No. 3

One point of interest which has arisen since we formed the Type 26 Register is that not all owners appreciate the somewhat complex way in which the cars were identified in production.

From the beginning of production, Lotus used 4 means of identification: Unit number, Chassis number, Body number and Engine number.

As we have mentioned previously and as most owners of early Elans are aware, the initial production of bodysHELLS was by S Bourne of Nottingham. Their bodysHELLS were individually numbered on a small plaque on the vertical bulkhead near the offside bonnet spring catch. Unfortunately, Lotus found atrocious quality and supply problems with these bodysHELLS and decided to move production "in-house" during the end of 1963.

When Lotus began to manufacture their shells (perhaps beginning with body number 3001) they might have marked this number somewhere. A body number is certainly shown in the factory records that differs from the 3 digit Bourne format. The question is: does it appear on the bodysHELL anywhere? Please let us know!!!

The second form of identification was the unit number – note that there was no such thing as a serial number. This is the most accurate way of referring to a car for reasons which will become clearer later on. Production proper began at unit 001 and continued to unit 048, at which point the figure three was added as a prefix so that after 048 the next number was 3049 and so on. All the unit numbers continued in sequence until 1st January 1970 when a more complex form of identification was adopted. The unit numbers increased more or less in accordance with the date when the cars were invoiced and therefore this would appear to be a pretty

good guide to when a particular car was built.

From the beginning of production chassis numbers for Series One cars were allocated to a vehicle in a way that does not relate to the unit number. The chassis number can vary considerably from the unit number, which makes it difficult to "date" a Series One car by its chassis number. We suspect that chassis were sold as replacements for accident damaged cars which would perhaps explain why, as Series One production continued, the chassis number continued to increase at a greater rate than the unit number. This is the reason why it is always better to refer to a car by its unit number rather than the chassis number.

This practice did not continue for very long, although to date we have been unable to identify the change point after which the chassis number and unit numbers became the same. Certainly Tim's April 1965 Series Two car, unit 4585 has the same unit and chassis number.

Early Series One Lotus Components identification plates clearly show the chassis number and engine number but also have the unit number engraved by hand vertically on the right hand side. Later in 1963, a different identification plate was used (more rectangular in shape, with a Lotus logo and without the term "Components"). This now had the unit and engine number as the key identifiers. The chassis number was also shown below. No reference to the paint colour was ever given on the ID plates used on Type 26 cars. Incidentally we have been trying to ascertain at what point the Lotus Components ID plate changed to the later ID plate. It would be most interesting if those of you with early Series One cars still bearing their original identification plates could let us know which plate they have.

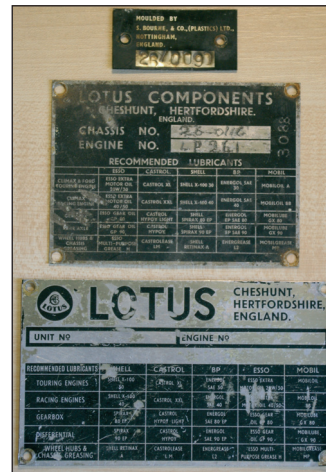
Just to reinforce the point may we remind owners that it is always better to refer to a car by its unit number. In this way, production change points, eg ashtray positions, steering wheel type etc can be more accurately established. Indeed as time passed, the key identifier on VIN plates was the unit number and there was no reference to the chassis number at all.

On a different tack, we would like to thank all those owners who have taken the trouble to make contact with us with information about their cars. A number of these owners have probably felt quite isolated given the greater interest in the later Elans but it is clear that more Type 26 cars have survived than might first have been expected, albeit that many of them are in various states of dismantlement.

Many parts for Type 26 cars are no longer available from established suppliers. The fact that we are being contacted by owners, who are rebuilding or intending to rebuild their cars, and faced with the restoration of three cars – meant it was necessary to remanufacture a number of key items, which were either damaged, rusted away or just missing. Luckily, one of the cars was almost totally original, which made the task of reproducing parts correctly more straightforward.

As a result of our efforts, the Type 26 register are delighted to offer the following parts to fellow restorers. These have been produced in limited quantities, and are all excellent quality, made as closely to the original design as possible unless stated otherwise. Other remanufactured parts will be offered and added to the list in the future. Please let us know if there is a particular part which you need.

If you are interested in any of them, or would like to make contact for any other reason, then please contact Tim by email tim.mees@hotmail.co.uk or 01189 891705.



VARIOUS IDENTIFICATION PLATES USED ON TYPE 26 ELANS. TOP: AN EARLY BOURNE BODY ID PLATE. MIDDLE: AN EARLY LOTUS COMPONENTS ID PLATE. BOTTOM: A LATER LOTUS CHESHUNT ID PLATE



RE-MANUFACTURED PARTS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE TYPE 26 REGISTER

Application	Description	Price
S1	26B265. Rear light cover (inside boot) – supplied in pairs	£30
S2	A26B265. Rear light cover (inside boot) – supplied in pairs	£30
	Rear light cover with extra holes for soft-top retaining strap (not supplied)	£35
S1 & S2	26B246 & 26B247. Exterior door weatherstrip mounting channel LH & RH	£20 per pair Mild steel
	Simplified "L" cross section design, in unplated mild steel or polished stainless	£30 per pair stainless
S1 & S2	26B244 & 26B245. Door trim panel "top capping strip". Correct profile, in pairs, un-plated and uncut (therefore not handed) to accommodate small variations in existing door trim size	£40 per pair
S1 & S2	26B011, 26B017, 26B016. Boot support assembly: Complete assembly with plate-boot support rod, rod-boot support, clip-boot floor, riveted terry clip and correct stainless self tapping screws	£40
S1 & S2	26B032. Bonnet catch spring: correct early design	£25 per pair
S1 & S2	26B024. Windscreen tie rod	TBA
S1 & S2	Rubber gasket - rear numberplate light to body	£8.00

All prices plus post & packaging