



CLUB LOTUS ELAN SECTION

...With Knobs On!

There is something attractive to us all about the items we handle most often when driving our cars. It may be that the tactile nature of the steering wheel and gear knob in our hands, allied to the mechanical immediacy of their actions, triggers a particular response within us. The subject of Elan steering wheels and gear knobs is rather long and convoluted, so we have split this article into two, concentrating in this issue on gear knobs. We shall return to steering wheels in the next issue. As we have often said before, with Lotus in the 60s and 70s nothing can be exactly pinned down and we know there are some exceptions to the rule. However, we have had a crack at it below.

The gear knob is the second most handled control in the Elan cockpit and they went through several iterations. There were variations in shape and insert, though by 1968 the standard had become the round wooden knob with a Lotus badge or gear shift pattern insert. It is not known if the gear knobs were made by a supplier or by Lotus. The wood was lightly varnished to a high shine; however, this quickly wore off with use and many knobs became darkened as the grain absorbed the normal sweat and oils of the palm of its owner's hand. Most replacement knobs currently available are high gloss with several layers of varnish which helps to maintain an even look. However, many of these replacements have the incorrect font on the word Lotus; all should be the 1960s standard Informa SC Medium. It is now very hard to find the correct gear shift insert.

Of course, there can be no hard and fast definitions of exactly when changes were made and a few cars left the production line with different knobs to those detailed in the table as being applicable to them, such as the Lotus way!

Car	Diameter & Thread Size	Shape & Materiel	Insert Style	Insert Colour	Notes	Photo
Earliest S1	1 3/8" & 5/16"	Tear-drop & Wood	Lotus Badge	Brass	Had a dimple on the top; used until late 1963. Also used in Lotus Cortina	A
S1 & S2 Elan	1 3/8" & 5/16"	Tear-drop & Wood	Lotus Badge	Yellow		B
S3 Elan	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Tear-drop to mid-1967 then Round & Wood	Lotus Badge	Black	Tear-drops had yellow badge	B

S4 Elan	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Round & Wood	Lotus Badge	Black		C
Sprint Elan	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Round & Wood	Gear shift pattern	Black		D
+2	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Few early cars Tear-drop then Round & Wood	Lotus badge	Black	Few early cars had Lotus badge insert in yellow	C
+2S	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Round & Wood	Gear shift pattern	Black		D
Plus 2 130	1 3/4" & 5/15"	Round & Wood	Gear shift pattern	Black		D
Plus 2 130/5	1 3/4" & 3/8"	Round & Wood	Gear shift pattern	Black	5 th gear was indicated as O/D (overdrive)	E

For that complete period restoration you can always finish off your pre-Hethel Elan with a genuine Lotus leather key fob! Two were produced, one in red and one in green. In addition to the Lotus logo in gold, they had the Waltham Cross exchange telephone number and Cheshunt address embossed onto them. Probably the next most handled part of the Elan!



Contact Us

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Photos:



A



B



C



D



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