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23 Sept 81.

Stan Anderson

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Dear Stan

Thanks very much for your letter of 1st June 81 with information on your Lotus XI # 212. First let me apologise for the delay in replying but there are several reasons - like rebuilding a 200 year old house and 2 25 year old XIs - and the fact that I have not yet concentrated on the ex works XIs as far as the history is concerned. However I have spent a few hours putting together the various pieces of information on the 3 1956 Le Mans works entries some of which is of interest to you.

1956 Le Mans work entries.

- No 32 CHAPMAN/FRASER FWA Reg No GEHX rtd big end failure.  
No 35 HALL/ALLISON FWA Reg No DEC494 rtd hit dog.  
No 36 BICKNELL/JOPP FWA Reg No XJH902. 1st in class.

There is no positive record of the chassis numbers - the factory records start at # 223. but the first XI was # 150 - but I had some evidence that 211 and 212 were 2 of the cars. The numbers are about right for the build timing and your details of the wide frame, wide screen and fuel filler position confirms this - I think that the only other wide frame Series 1 XIs were the 1957 Sebring cars.

Registration numbers.

- all three were used by the works on various cars.

GEHX was issued in London in 1955 and was first used on the 1955 MG engine MK9. - also used on the FWA engine car used by Chapman in UK races in 1956.

DEC494 was issued in Westmoreland in 1956 to Cliff Allison (who lived at Brough Westmoreland in northern England) and used on his 1956 FWA works car. - also used on # 276 Sebring 57 and Le Mans 57 # 320.

XJH902 (not KJH902 as you suggest) was issued in

Hertfordshire England in 1956 and first used on the SI Sport ~~car~~ raced by Graham Hill in 1956.

What happened to the cars.

9EHX. I have no details at all after Le Mans 1956.

DEC 494. Used for the UK Guild of Motoring Writers driving day at Goodwood Nov 1956.

Used by Ian Smith on Lands End to John O'Groats drive Nov 1956. although this car did not have the 4 headlight bonnet at that time. There is also a report that it was the class winning car.

Road tested by ~~'The Motor'~~ ~~and~~ 'The Autocar' 30 Nov 56.

XJH 902. Other than the report that it was the Lands End car I have no details at all. The Harvey claim is debatable - like most of the items in his book.

LOZANO

Ignacio 'Natcho' Lozano was editor of the Los Angeles Spanish newspaper La Opinion and was from Oct 57 on the Secretary of the USA branch of Club Lotus. - perhaps he is still in California? His first XI was new at the end of the 1956 season - I have no evidence that this was an ex works car. - He drove for Team Lotus at Sebring 1957 in #278 (I think) and bought a works car afterwards - this was registered DEC 494 which I think was #276 the Chapman/Shepherd/Dungan car. When raced by Lozano the car had the central fuel filter but not the extra headlights. #276 was owned by James HOBIERRE, St Elaine Shores Mich. in 1976 but I have not checked since then.

So I have very little positive information BUT. at the end of 1956 a letter in the UK publication 'Sports Car and Lotus owner' had a letter from Brownlow Whitehead owner of the first privately owned XI #153 where he states that an XI probably #212 (but no mention of an ex works car) was to be delivered to Dusty RHODES of Galveston Texas in the near future. So this may be when the car went to the USA. My own inf on 212 suggests that it was owned by M.G. BEIDLEMAN OAKDALE CALIF in 1976. Can you confirm this? - also #211 another possible Le Mans 56 entry ~~was~~ was owned by CHAS GIBSON FAIRFIELD CT 06430 at the same time. (369 SASCO HILL RD.)

Hope this helps. If you can add anything on more recent history on 212 or any other XI I would be very grateful - look forward to hearing from you. Yours, Pat Hall