



“NOBODY WAS SERIOUSLY HURT IN THE ACCIDENT BUT THE ELAN WAS ALMOST UNRECOGNISABLE”

Whenever Andrew lifted off the accelerator. “I think the problem could have been fuel starvation or dirt in the fuel line,” he adds. Metres after the burn-off, the engine cut out completely. Andrew coasted to a halt – stranded in the carriageway due to the absence of any refuge or hard shoulder and turned on the hazard lights.

“We got out very promptly and I raised the boottid to increase the car’s visibility,” he explains. “I put our red warning triangle in the road too, then phoned the emergency services because I thought the car was in a dangerous position.” Andrew called Highways England and the AA next, before standing by the road to warn motorists of the stranded Lotus. “We had quite a few near misses. One driver ran over the warning triangle but just missed my car.”

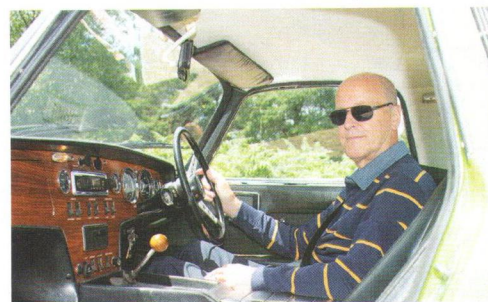
Worse was yet to come. One driver missed Andrew’s warning, ploughed through a line of traffic cones and struck the Lotus hard in the rear. The Sprint speared off into the crash barrier, while the other car flipped, collided with another driver and landed in the central reservation. Nobody had been seriously hurt in the accident but the Elan was almost unrecognisable. Though the passenger compartment retained its shape, the front end was torn to pieces and the bonnet had shifted back several inches. Damage to the car was even more pronounced: the window

frame was forced up, the entire offside rear quarter was demolished and the original fuel tank simply disintegrated.

Early impressions weren’t good. After asking the advice of Club Lotus, Andrew had the car recovered to Max500 and awaited the results of an initial inspection. “It soon became apparent that it needed a bodyshell, suspension work and a chassis change,” says Max Hurst. “The damage to the chassis was obvious without removing the body: the rear driver’s side chassis turret had been pushed forwards by the impact. I’ve done lots of Lotus crash rebuilds but few to the extent this Elan required – it’s not normally cost effective.”

Such extensive repairs risked outstripping the value of the car, but there was no question of Andrew losing his cherished Lotus. As part of his insurance policy, he’d paid a £15 supplement that entitled him to keep the salvage of any accident – no matter its severity – and claim up to the remainder of the car’s agreed value. “You never expect anything like this is going to happen but I didn’t want a situation where I was left without the Elan. It’s proven to be a very worthwhile payment!”

More good news followed. “Our first impression was that the car might be written off. The engineer from the insurance company was



Andrew Clark has owned the Elan since 1981.



Racking up the results in the 1960s and '70s.



Rebuild completed by Surrey based Max500.