

As with most things in life this story started out with the best of intentions. We were heading for LOG 28 in Indianapolis and the '71 Elan +2S was one of our armada. It was revived for the trip from a long deep sleep in someone else's garage. We honestly didn't know much about the car except that it now ran.

It ran well enough and after a lot of fiddling we got it running to the point that it was a contender for the trip. Proud moments in its history appeared on YouTube and plans were struck to attend LOG. Then it happened.

We looked at the classic Rotoflex couplings in the rear driveline. You know; those ugly rubber donuts that is an excuse for universal joints and used in attaching the halfshafts to the differential in all Elans. I guess in their day this was an excellent way of saving money, development costs and some wasted engineering skill.

It was decided that ours were knackered beyond hope of making it the 1000+ miles to LOG. Wanting to be totally original in our restoration, we shopped around only to discover that new ones were not to be had immediately from the usual suspects in the quantities we required.

Everyone with a Lotus needs a Plan B. Ours was on the Internet and we started looking around for alternate suppliers of Flexible couplings. I'm surprised at the number of offerings found. Unfortunately none could deliver in time for LOG and time was now even more precious.

Plan C was discovered in the form of a half shaft that was a direct replacement for both rubber donuts, bolting solidly to the spline in the diff along to outboard drive shaft. We found evidence of one supplier with one universal joint and one CV joint and others that consisted of 2 CV joints with the halfshaft in between. More research convinced us that the double CV joint solution was the way to go. (Purist heresy, I know)

After contacting the chosen manufacturer directly in Australia we were disappointed in that none were in stock for immediate delivery but a new batch was being made shortly. Would we like to place an order? No thanks, we want to go to LOG.

Moving quickly now to Plan D. We pleaded with our mates and found rejected spares. These four were so old that they had already been



removed for fear of failure. These were storage units kept for "just in case" or "original spares". We were told that they were so easy to R&R that it could be done "on the side of the road" using stainless "very long" steel hose clamps and an appropriate ditch. We conceded defeat and Randy rode his German Taxi to LOG with his family.

On our return home we proceeded with our intentions of providing the +2 with motive power. Metal reinforced couplings are purported to be safer and longer lasting than the stock rubber donuts that are usually found on Elans. The necessary bolt pattern and size are found within most suppliers of these flexible couplings. Looking at the economics of flexible couplings we discovered that there wasn't that much difference in price between 4 Metallastic couplings and the aforementioned CV joint replacements. Including delivery, duties and exchange a premium of less than \$500 CDN in exchange for a potential 140,000 more Kilometers before any major servicing or replacement is required.

The CV drive shaft conversion kit ordered was from Croucher Engineering in Australia at <http://www.elantrikbits.com> they are beautifully made units and I am impressed with the fit and finish. The weight penalty is less than 3 lbs over the stock units with the Rotoflex couplings attached. Delivery in my case took about 3 weeks by air mail including the delay at Canadian customs.

Installation was a breeze with the enclosed instructions and the thoughtful notes placed on the end bolts indicating which way is which on installation. Very thoughtful indeed... I got it right, the first time! Installation of both CV half shafts took less time than to rid one side of the old Rotoflexes which were quite knackered. Complete R&R took less than an afternoon with us lying on our backs in the laneway and our +2 up on jackstands.

The first drive with the new CV joints installed in the '71 Lotus Elan +2S instead of the stock Rotoflex couplings was a real revelation. It was like driving a car rather than a really big rubber band. No rubber induced windup! It is definitely a much more positive feeling than the tentative stock setup. It turned our +2S from a nice driving Lotus to a much more positive driving machine. It is difficult to find the appropriate words to gush enough about the improvement it has made to the positive feeling of driving the Elan +2S. That, after all, is what it is all about anyway. Driving a Lotus.

If you haven't checked your donuts for wear lately, I strongly suggest you to do so for any signs of rips and or tears. I'll definitely be ordering another set of Colin Crouchers CV joint replacements once the resurrection of the '65 Claiborne Elan S2 RHD box car gets closer to reality.

