

Top left: IWR manifold for Lotus Elan.

Top right: Body repairs—two Elans.

Right: The boss—Ian Walker himself.



WHEN it comes to tuning motor-cars Ian Walker Ltd. have a somewhat original approach to the business. Apart from the fact that the firm specialises in tuning Lotuses, which places them somewhat apart from the usual run of chaps in the go-faster business, they reckon—unless the customer specifically wants to go further into the thing—to keep the mods. down to those permitted by Group 3. Obviously, not all their customers want to go racing when the job is done, but no doubt they like to feel that they could if they wanted to, while from the point of view of the firm the whole process is simplified, and the temptation to go beyond the point of reliability can be safely ignored.

Although we said that Ian Walker specialises in Lotuses, this isn't all they do: Fords tend to follow on fairly naturally from this sort of exercise, and they can deal with B.M.C. products as well. Not so long ago they were producing a rapid line in Vauxhall Vivas, but this particular project hasn't been carried on any further.

All the work goes on at 236 Woodhouse Road, London, N.12, a garage with workshops and showrooms to which the firm moved last December. At the same time Colin Hextall joined them as general manager, and apart from the tuning side of the business Ian Walker Ltd. are Lotus and M.G. agents, and Cibie distributors for north-London, Middlesex and Hertfordshire. And, of course, they deal with normal routine servicing as well—in fact, when we called, the service department was dealing with two Elans, a Lotus-Cortina and an elderly Daimler Conquest, which just goes to demonstrate versatility, or something like that.

Ian Walker's name is, of course, as well-known as modern motor-racing itself. And it was as a result of the performances of the Ian Walker racing team that enquiries started to come in from people who wanted to go as quickly—well, nearly as quickly. After all, motor-racing is business! But to continue—eventually these enquiries

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reached such monster proportions that a separate company called Ian Walker Racing (Sales) Ltd. was formed to deal with the tuning and preparation side of things, and it is from this that the whole thing has sort of boiled down into the present company—Ian Walker Ltd.

Ian himself started racing when regulations were still being carved on stone tablets—in the early fifties, to be exact, with a 100E Ford Prefect. This car was rallied and raced pretty extensively, and for the most part on two wheels. But before long he reckoned he'd either get hold of something which stayed on four wheels for quite a lot of the time—either that or a motor-bike—and he ended up with his famous Lotus—the "Yellow Peril". This was powered by a Ford 100E engine. Bob Yates had already done a special head for Ian's Prefect for an R.A.C. Rally, and a production version of this inlet-over-exhaust head, taken up by Willments, was fitted to the Lotus's Ford motor. The end result was an extraordinarily quick car with which a good deal of success was achieved.

After this came the very first of the Lotus Elites—EL5—with which he won the Autosport Championship, and this was followed by another Elite and the first Lotus Seventeen. He began to get very serious about the whole thing with these two cars, and very nearly became a professional driver. However, (as they say) since the Elite caught fire and the Seventeen blew up its engine and couldn't be made to handle, he decided again it, and in fact sold the whole shebang at Silverstone—on the third week-end of the season. With a final flourish he retired from racing—at least, until the start of the following season, when I. Walker Esq. was back with a bang and the first of the Lotus 18 FJ cars (in which, to use his own words, he did not distinguish himself). Then came a Sprite, with an all-aluminium body and half the chassis-punt replaced with lightweight aluminium: this was a somewhat quick little chariot, and Master Walker thoroughly enjoyed himself with a new class lap record at every circuit he took it to.

While all this was going on the rallying programme was being kept up—mostly with Fords—and Ian Walker has done eight Montes in his time, among other events.

About this time the foundations were laid for the Ian Walker team: while galloping about with the Sprite he met Paul Hawkins, who agreed to drive one of Ian's cars and work as full-time mechanic into the bargain. Mike Spence drove the other car, and the team comprised a Junior and a 23—both Lotuses, of course. Before the season ended the team had acquired another of each and an Elite—that was 1962. Their best performance, probably, was winning the 1-litre class at the Nurburgring 1,000 kilometres, getting ninth place overall.

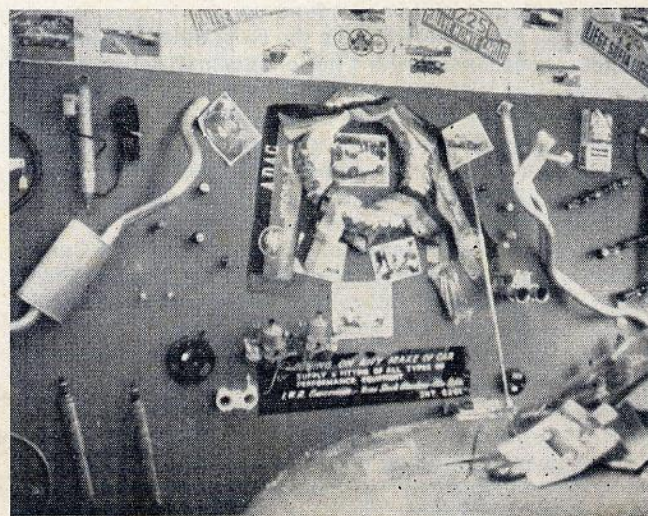
The following year the team went over to a couple of Brabham Juniors, the first Brabham sports car, and a Lotus 23. Mike Spence had gone to Lotus, and Paul Hawkins was joined in the Ian Walker team by Frank Gardner. In 1964 they raced Elans as the official Lotus team, and they also had a somewhat ill-fated Lotus Thirty, which had to be shovelled up at Brands after a mid-season shunt. Which really brings us up to date, because at the end of the season Ian gave up racing; the two monster transporters and the cars were sold and all that remains is a huge pile of silverware and some laurel wreaths.

Colin Hextall, the general manager, is another ex-dicer, who began racing in 1959 with the ex-Hurrell TR2. At the end of the year he dealt with this somewhat summarily in a road accident and Syd Hurrell rebuilt it to TR3 specification, leaving Colin with a very fast hybrid with which he rather cleaned up, winning the Freddie Dixon Trophy in 1960. At the end of that year he joined Tornado Cars (no longer with us, alas) and raced a Tornado Thunderbolt, a fierce

TR-engined car, and, later a Talisman, a very neat four-seater G.T. car with Ford 1500 engine. And the other chap you are likely to run into is the sales manager, Brian Perks. He is well-qualified to be selling Lotuses because before he joined the Walker organisation he was the assistant export manager at Lotus.

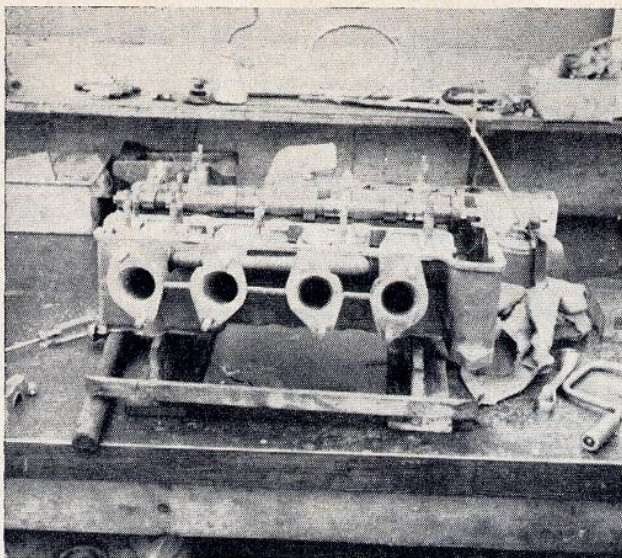
Back to the conversions side: as we said before, the firm has tended to specialise, without really trying, in the Lotus range and, in particular, in those Loti with Ford-based power units. The IWR conversion for the Elan comes in three stages, of which the first is a pair of modified camshafts and carburettor mods. giving increased power from three thousand revs. This, with plugs, points, labour and an electronic tune, costs £45. Stage two puts the price up fifteen quid and this time you get a modified head, with reworked chambers, much-cleaned ports and inlet tracts, while Stage 3 gives you the head and the camshafts. The engine is completely stripped and balanced, you get heavy-duty main and big-end bearings, an oil pressure relief valve modified to suit and a modified timing-chain tensioner. The compression ratio is put up to 10.5 to 1 by taking twenty thou. off the head and in this condition the engine is producing around 130-135 b.h.p. at five-eight. Maximum revs. on the balanced engine are 7,000 r.p.m., and the power drops off quite sharply after this, so there ain't no point in going on. We had a short run in one of these cars (a full road test is being arranged, so don't worry) and the thing that impressed us most of all, apart from the obvious increase in performance, was the way in which the noise level and flexibility have hardly altered. The power starts coming in at about four thousand revs. and from then on just keeps on coming, but you can trickle about in traffic without fuss or snatch and with no tendency whatever to run hot, oil plugs or any of the other less enjoyable habits to which some tuned cars are addicted. The cost is £146, which doesn't seem a lot for the extra performance you get: Ian Walker will provide you with a roller-brake graph if you like, which shows about 98 b.h.p. at the back wheels from about five-eight, maintained to around six-four, compared with seventy b.h.p. for the standard car.

The IWR approach doesn't stop at the works. Suspension mods. are available too, including up-rated shock-absorbers, a rear anti-roll bar and 5½J wide-rim wheels. All of which probably make the full IWR Elan a car which is pretty hard to beat.



Some of the 'goodies' displayed at Ian Walkers.





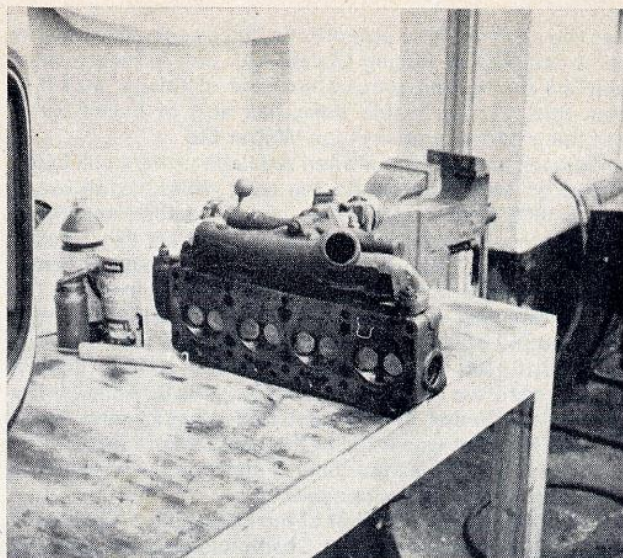
All ready for Webers.

A similar range of conversions is available for the Lotus-Cortina, covering the previous range of three stages for the engine and adding a fourth, for pre-1965 Lotus-Cortinas, which converts it from "A"-bracket to leaf-spring rear suspension. This represents an extra fifty quid, and covers a kit of parts which includes a one-piece prop-shaft, leaf springs lowered by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and a new rear-axle pinion flange, all of which brings the blunt end of the car up to the latest specification. With 135 b.h.p. and the latest rear end treatment, this means that £190 gives you something pretty impressive in the way of high-performance saloons.

With all this work going on with the twin-cam Lotus-Ford engine, it stands to reason that the IWR range includes a lot of good things for Cortina G.T.s. Stage 1, designated Road Tune, provides a modified cylinder head (10.5 to 1 compression ratio) with reworked and matched inlet ports, reshaped combustion chambers and a modified inlet manifold: cost is £47 10s. Stage 2, also a road tune, combines the Stage 1 head with an IWR camshaft, giving an appreciable increase in performance over four thousand revs., with peak power at 6,000 r.p.m. The engine still remains tractable for town work and low-speed torque, they say, isn't adversely affected. Cost—£85, including new bearings, plugs, points and a tune-up.

Stage 3 for the Cortina G.T. is the Rally tune, and involves fitting a Stage 1 head with a hotter camshaft, which takes a bit away from the low-speed performance and adds it on at the top end. For this stage of tune the firm insists on a complete strip-down on the engine and full balancing, with a high-output oil-pump fitted. The cost of this one, including all the new parts and the balancing, is £125, which again sounds very reasonable to us.

Downstairs, the IWR range of conversions for the Cortina includes up-rated front suspension struts, lowered front springs, an additional anti-roll bar and rear spring lowering blocks for the road car, and a similar range of parts, with the addition of a sump guard, uprated rear dampers and an export front cross-member, with a special anti-roll bar. As extras you can choose from anti-fade brake linings and pads, vacuum servo units, an oil cooler kit, an uprated second gear for the box and a range of alternative final drive ratios—3.7, 4.1 or 4.4. For rally cars they can supply heavy-duty generators, 28 amp. regulators, long-range tanks, tank shields and special seats.



Stage 3 head—nearly ready to go.

So far as B.M.C. cars are concerned, the M.G.B. is the only "standard conversion", and although obviously wonders can be worked for Coopers and Minis of all types they like to have a chat with the owners first of all to see exactly what is required. Then, as like as not, it can be done on a "one-off" basis. The big "C"-type engine they don't touch. For the M.G.B., stage 1 tuning consists of a modified head, with reshaped and matched inlet ports and smoothed combustion chambers: compression ratio is raised to 10.5 to 1. This costs £45. Stage 2 goes almost the whole hog, by contrast, and for £127 10s. you get the stage 1 head, plus two  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. S.U.s on a special inlet manifold, and an IWR camshaft. For a further £22 you can have a single side-draught Weber and a special manifold to take it, and as extras you can have the whole thing balanced, a competition clutch, close ratio gears and so forth. It's all very businesslike up there in N.12, and if you are a Lotus or an M.G.B. driver you've got nothing to lose by going along for a chat.



Electronic tuning equipment.