



# AUTOSTORICA

FIA Historic Rally Champion, with co-driver Simon Warner. This followed their victory in the same championship one year before with a red and white Austin-Healey 3000. Paul is Managing Director of the international 20-shop designer clothes chain, Rohan, 'Clothes for the Action Life'. Business commitments notwithstanding, Paul finds time, in partnership with his co-driver, to run the UK's only Classic rallying business called 'Autostorica'. The enterprise offers services which include managing the affairs and cars of various private competitors, supporting competitors on events, preparing cars and developing a range of safety items and clothing appropriate to period sporting applications.

The design of the Lotus Elan may be more than a quarter of a century old, but as I was to find out, Paul's little white and green projectile would be capable of holding its own on many a

modern tarmac rally, let alone on an event for pre-1965 cars. "Deer down I don't think Historic rallying would be like this," confesses Paul. "But I don't make the rules and, as things stand, to do well in a European Historic Rally you need an Elan or, on a mixed-discipline event like the Coppa d'Italia, a heavily modded E-type." He continues: "besides which, I'm the first to admit that I'm not the world's greatest driver and I need the best car I can get to give me a chance!"

Very few truly exotic cars now run in the major European events, not just because many of them are too valuable, but simply because they are uncompetitive against the likes of the Elan. The FIA rules for rallies admit cars made before the end of 1966 (pre-72 in some cases), provided they meet the appropriate regulations listed in Appendix K of the FIA's Yearbook of Automobile Sport: *The Yellow Book*.

*Main picture, Paul Howcroft's 26R lookalike 1963 S1 Elan demonstrates its searing performance at Pembrey. Far left, the owner, with engineer Dick Saunders who built and looks after the car*

Cars can compete in various classes according to their type and the extent of their modifications. Paul Howcroft's Elan runs in the 'Period Improved' class in which the cars may be uprated using tuning aids of the type that were available in the day. The application of these rules governing modifications has