

Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

# AUTOMOTIVE DESKTOP 2008

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Odette International is an organisation, formed by the automotive industry for the automotive industry. It sets the standards for e-business communications, engineering data exchange and logistics management, which link the 4000 plus businesses in the European motor industry and their global trading partners.

<http://www.odette.org>

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International Conference & Exhibition  
21/22 October - Strasbourg**

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## **1. WORLD NEWS FROM JUST-AUTO.**

<http://just-auto.com>

### **LOTUS ACQUIRES HOLDEN LIGHTWEIGHT STRUCTURES**

Source: just-auto.com editorial team

Group [Lotus](#) has announced the creation of Lotus Lightweight Structures, following the [acquisition](#) of privately held Holden Lightweight Structures Limited (formerly part of Hydro Aluminium). Lotus Lightweight Structures, which employs 120 skilled engineers, technicians and sales staff, will be based at the former Holden Lightweight Structures Limited site in Worcester, UK and will continue to manufacture light weight aluminium and composite structures and components for its 'extensive client base'.

Lotus Lightweight Structures will continue to assemble the Lotus Elise, Exige and Europa aluminium chassis as well as the all new chassis for the yet to be launched Lotus Project Eagle. Lotus says the strategic acquisition of Holden Lightweight Structures Limited and the subsequent creation of Lotus Lightweight Structures enable Lotus to:

- Create, adapt and change its range of products quickly and effectively, catering for changing global customer demands.

- Provide an additional in house manufacturing facility.

- Add an additional manufacturing solution for Lotus Engineering's global client base, providing lightweight aluminium and composite vehicle components and structures.

Mike Kimberley, Chief Executive of Group Lotus plc, "I am delighted to announce the creation of Lotus Lightweight Structures following the strategic acquisition of Holden Lightweight Structures Limited. With this facility, we will continue to expand and lead the world in lightweight vehicle research, development and production to help our global client base find ways to reduce the weight and cost from their vehicles. Weight reduction is one of the most attainable ways to lowering CO2 [emissions](#) in vehicles today, as well as improving fuel economy and performance, and we have a duty to share our technology with the world's car makers for everyone's long-term benefit.

"Lotus Lightweight Structures provides additional facilities, capabilities and expertise to the Lotus Manufacturing portfolio. The Worcester facility, and dedicated team, complements our Hethel Headquarters and does not substitute any of the operations in Norfolk, but instead enables our strategic global expansion programme to proceed to plan. We are now just ten weeks from the unveiling of the next all new Lotus, codenamed Project Eagle at the British Motorshow, and we are working hard to bring this fabulous 2+2 to the market in the Spring of 2009. The Project Eagle chassis structure will be the first product from our new Lotus Lightweight Structures facility. We look forward to increasing our support to customers, clients and new ecologically driven projects worldwide."

## **2. THE WEEK IN BRUSSELS.**

<http://www.smmmt.co.uk>



### **1. Commissioner Verheugen advocates concessions in CO<sub>2</sub> dossier**

European Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, Günter Verheugen, has told *Handelsblatt* that the European automobile industry is unlikely to meet the Commission's overall target of reducing new car CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to an average of 120g/km by 2012. He said that whilst supporting the Commission objective, the "industry will [only], in my opinion, be able to meet the target without great difficulty from 2015. Even the Commission knows that not all new cars will meet these standards by 2012", and added that "there are already calls from the Parliament to extend the deadline to 2015. The Commission has to get it into its head that we have to reach a sensible compromise." Draft opinions from the Industry Committee and the Transport Committee, as well as the report by lead rapporteur Guido Sacconi MEP are being translated and will be published shortly. (Source: EU Observer) <http://euobserver.com/9/26123>

### **2. Concern about CO<sub>2</sub> concentration levels**

A new release of figures, published by America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), show that the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere increased by 0.6% last year and this is the third highest increase in fifty years together with the year 2005. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are now at a 40% increase since the industrial revolution and there are concerns as this accumulation is happening faster than expected. (Source: NOAA) [www.noaa.gov/stories/2008/20080423\\_methane.html](http://www.noaa.gov/stories/2008/20080423_methane.html)

### **3. Implementation dates in the spotlight in Euro VI dossier**

This week the European Parliament's Transport Committee adopted an opinion on Euro VI emissions from heavy duty vehicles. The Committee called to advance 1 October 2013 as implementation date for newly registered vehicles and opened repair and maintenance information to all firms engaged in this area. The Commission had proposed April 2013 as implementation date for new vehicle types and 2014 for all new registrations. The lead committee, ENVI, is expected to adopt a report on the subject on 15 July. (Source: European Parliament)

[www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/homeCom.do?language=EN&body=TRAN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/homeCom.do?language=EN&body=TRAN)

### **3. THE WEEK IN WESTMINSTER.**

<http://www.smmmt.co.uk>



#### **1. Economic stability and skills are main targets for 2008/9**

On Wednesday, the Prime Minister announced the draft legislative programme for 2008/9. New bills made were to protect the economy and strengthen parliament such as the Banking Reform bill and the Constitutional Renewal Bill. Among others was the Education and Skills bill which intended to ensure a “customer-driven skills and apprenticeship system” by creating an independent qualification system. UNISON, the largest trade union in the UK, welcomed the plans to give greater access to training and broadening parent’s rights. (Source: Number 10)

[www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page15534.asp](http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page15534.asp)

#### **2. MPs debate VED changes**

This week, the House of Commons hosted an opposition day debate on vehicle excise duty (VED) following changes introduced in the Budget. Philip Hammond, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, opened the debate by arguing against its increase saying that taxes should be “introduced for environmental reasons and are not disguised stealth taxes”. However, Jane Kennedy, financial secretary to the Treasury, said that VED reflected the car’s emissions and created an incentive to drive cleaner cars and support their development. The Conservatives upheld the view that the government was taxing people on an unfair basis, Justine Greening said: “They are now planning to pickpocket from the purses of millions of people”. (Source: Parliament)

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080514/debtext/80514-0014.htm#column\\_1456](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080514/debtext/80514-0014.htm#column_1456)

#### **3. Smaller manufacturers pass on high costs as demand slows**

A CBI report revealed that small and medium-sized manufacturers have raised the prices of their goods to deal with the highest cost pressure in 20 years. Despite the demand being lower for their goods at home and abroad, job numbers are growing in this sector and in particular in smaller manufacturers. Russell Griggs, chairman of the CBI’s SME Council, said: “The uncertain wider economic climate has resulted in some mixed findings. What is certain is that small and medium-sized manufacturers are continuing to feel the impact of higher costs, and that they now have to pass these on to customers.” (Source: CBI)

[www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/9bf35dbbb1471999802574440031fa98?OpenDocument](http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/9bf35dbbb1471999802574440031fa98?OpenDocument)

#### **4. LATEST UK CBI ECONOMIC DATA.**

<http://www.cbi.org.uk>



The Bank of England has signalled that interest rates are likely to remain on hold for the time being, amid fairly gloomy consumer and producer price data. Meanwhile, evidence shows further weakening in the housing market, and unemployment data suggests that the economic slowdown is beginning to feed into the labour market.

# CPI inflation rose sharply to 3.0% in April, up from 2.5% in March, largely driven by higher energy and food costs. The Bank of England's May Inflation Report also revealed that it expects CPI inflation to accelerate further over the coming months, and to stay above 3.0% for several quarters, which would prompt a number of open letters from the Bank Governor to the Chancellor. Analysts have taken the report as a signal that interest rates are less likely to be cut again in the near-term, despite evidence that the economy is slowing.

# Meanwhile, separate price data showed that, in April, annual output price inflation for manufactured goods increased at the fastest rate since 1985. Similarly, the annual rate of input price inflation for manufacturers rose at the fastest pace since 1980. In both cases, pressures have continued to come from higher commodity prices.

# The latest Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) housing market survey indicated a decline in UK house prices for the ninth month running in April. Furthermore, the balance of surveyors reporting that house prices had fallen rather than risen, was the highest since the survey began in January 1978.

# The claimant count measure of unemployment increased modestly in April - for the third consecutive month. Likewise, the ILO measure of unemployment also increased slightly, up 14,000 in the three months to March.

## **5. NEWS FROM "AFTERMARKET".**

<http://www.aftermarketnetwork.com>



### **EURO CAR PARTS REVEALS EXPANSION PLANS TO GET BETTER DEAL FOR WORKSHOPS**



**EURO Car Parts has joined an exclusive international buying and marketing group it says will help it offer workshops bigger savings on a wider range of parts.**

ECP director David Bevan announced that the company had become a member of the ATR International AG (ATR) buying and marketing group. The announcement was made at the company's headquarters in Wembley, where director of sales Chris Barella also gave a glimpse of ECP's plans for future expansion. ATR is an organisation of company's from across Europe, designed to help members get the best deals in the international purchasing and supply market. It was formed in 1999 and aims to strengthen its members' businesses through coordinated purchasing and marketing activities.

David said becoming the ATR group's 24th shareholder was good news for ECP customers. "This organisation has massive leverage with some of the biggest manufacturers in the automotive world," he said. "It means we're in a better position for buying and getting the best pricing structure meaning savings can be passed on to customers. There will be further improvements to our ranges of OE products too."

Sales director Chris said ECP was planning to expand with 5 new branches this year. Sites earmarked for locations include Stoke, Stockport, Brighton and Ipswich. He confirmed that plans are currently being developed to build two or three distribution warehouses in England to help supply local ECP branches more quickly.

The picture shows Euro Car Parts managing director Sukhpal Singh (centre) with ECP director David Bevan (far right) being welcomed into ATR by members of its supervisory board.

**6. NEWS FROM BODYSHOP MAGAZINE.**

<http://www.bodyshopmag.com>



**BIDDERS SHUT OUT FROM AUCTION FOR RBS'S INSURANCE BUSINESS.**

According to the Financial Times, private equity groups have been shut out from bidding in the first round of the £7bn auction of Royal Bank of Scotland's (RBS) insurance business, which includes Direct Line and Churchill.

Many firms such as Blackstone and Apax Partners had wanted to take part in the auction, but were told by RBS bankers that, because of the difficulty in financing leveraged buy-outs, they could not submit offers.

Eight bidders have been sent sales memorandums and RBS said that it was looking for a £4bn net gain from the sale of its insurance business. Analysts predict that the business would have to be sold for between £6.5bn and £7.5bn to achieve this target. Chief Executive of RBS, Sir Fred Goodwin said he would not hold a 'fire sale of assets'.

**7. FLEET NEWS ONLINE.**  
**NEWS FROM EMAP'S ON LINE PUBLICATION.**  
<http://www.fleetnews.co.uk>

**fleetnews.co.uk**

**"White cars could be more at risk because white is non-metallic and is easier to disguise through re-spraying"**

Fleet drivers have been warned that car thefts peak on a Monday. In addition, white cars are more likely to be stolen than cars of any other colour. The figures come from analysis of data from the police national computer. As black is fast becoming the most popular new car colour, the analysis shows that these cars are now the third most likely to be stolen.

Prior to black, silver was the most popular new car colour. However, silver cars are the third least likely car colour to be stolen. White cars could be more at risk because white is non-metallic and is easier to disguise through re-spraying, suggests the Royal Automobile Club Foundation and Retainagroup, who carried out the research.

The analysis also revealed that, with car theft peaking on Mondays, motorists can relax a little over the weekend as the risk of having their car stolen is one-third less on a Sunday than a Monday. However, there is some dispute over whether the Monday peak is simply down to the fact that many motorists do not discover their car has been stolen until they get up for work – and that their car may have been stolen over the weekend.

"In the UK, two cars are stolen every minute," said Mark Jones, a director of Retainagroup. "Prevention is better than cure and we know that visibly marking cars with a unique, recordable and therefore traceable code reduces the chance of theft by more than 50%. We're urging more car owners to adopt this strategy to avoid the traumatic experience of having their car stolen, regardless of the colour."

## **8. HIGHLIGHTS.**

### **LOMBARD TAKES FLEET MANAGEMENT SERVICE AWARD 2008 Van Fleet World Honours**

Lombard Vehicle Management has won its third major award in six months - the Fleet Management Service Award in the 2008 Van Fleet World Honours. The award was presented at a ceremony held at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall on Tuesday 13th May. The Van Fleet World Honours are presented annually to those motor manufacturers, service companies and individuals who have, in the opinion of the judges, achieved the highest possible level of excellence in their sector.

Commenting on the award, Van Fleet World editor John Kendall said, "Some finance providers are taking a greater role in tailoring vehicle specifications to meet the specific needs of their customers. Lombard Vehicle Management with its extensive experience in managing light CV fleets, launched its trade van range last summer.

"Recognising the needs of specific light CV users, Lombard assembled a van specification for trade users, with the vehicle fitted out to meet users' requirements. Specifications include those designed for electricians, gas engineers/plumbers, builders, glaziers, workshop technicians, florists and refrigerated delivery services. To cater for users' needs, each specification is equipped with specialist racking, a lining and resin floor, a steel bulkhead, internal lighting and dedicated livery.

"First to market last summer were vans for electricians and gas engineers/plumbers, based on the Citroën Berlingo and Dispatch respectively. Lombard fixed rental prices based on a three-year contract hire deal and 10,000 miles annual mileage.

"Such a package could help fleet managers to meet duty of care requirements and help tradesmen with their financial planning. Besides this specialist service, Lombard provides a range of consultancy and support services for the light CV finance packages offered by the company as well as services from fuel cards to vehicle tracking systems," added Mr Kendall.

Fleet World publisher, Ross Durkin, commented, "We had a record number of entries in this year's Van Fleet World Honours - a sign not only of the significance of the awards themselves, but also of the tremendous level of service and innovation that exists within the fleet industry today. Those who have won have done so against stiff competition in every case."

On receiving the award, Lombard's Van Unit Operations Manager Wayne Millward said, "We are very proud of this award because it recognises that we have an ongoing commitment to develop products to meet the requirements of different van users. Following last year's professionals' vans initiative for businesses wanting an off-the-shelf product we have just announced Van Plus+, an in-house, bespoke build management service, and we intend to keep ahead of the field in addressing customers' needs."

The Van Fleet World accolade follows the Best Business Motor Finance Provider title won at the Business Moneyfacts Awards in March and Best Motor Vehicle Finance Provider won at the NACFB Awards last November.

## **9. E-COMMENT.**

Do feel free to visit my new website at [www.christophermacgowan.com](http://www.christophermacgowan.com)

This week's edition comes to you from Seville where I am spending the weekend with about a dozen friends; we all flew out from London and Seville has proved to be a wonderful city to visit which I can recommend without hesitation.





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Sincerely

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[www.greencaravanning.co.uk](http://www.greencaravanning.co.uk)

#### **KEY AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURING EXPERTISE IT OPERATORS.**

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QAD	<a href="http://www.qad.com">www.qad.com</a>
Adobe	<a href="http://www.adobe.com">www.adobe.com</a>
GXS	<a href="http://www.gxs.com/auto">www.gxs.com/auto</a>
Covisint	<a href="http://www.covisint.com">www.covisint.com</a>
Dassault	<a href="http://www.3ds.com">www.3ds.com</a>
SAP	<a href="http://www.sap.com/automotive">www.sap.com/automotive</a>
PipeChain	<a href="http://www.pipechain.com">www.pipechain.com</a>
Teradata	<a href="http://www.teradata.com">www.teradata.com</a>
Autoweb	<a href="http://www.autoweb.com">www.autoweb.com</a>
BearingPoint	<a href="http://www.bearingpoint.com">www.bearingpoint.com</a>
Galion	<a href="http://www.galion-solutions.com">www.galion-solutions.com</a>
ICD	<a href="http://www.icdint.fr">www.icdint.fr</a>
IFS	<a href="http://www.ifsworld.com">www.ifsworld.com</a>
Infor	<a href="http://www.infor.com">www.infor.com</a>
IPoint	<a href="http://www.ipoint-systems.com">www.ipoint-systems.com</a>
Lawson	<a href="http://www.lawson.com">www.lawson.com</a>
Procaess	<a href="http://www.procaess.com">www.procaess.com</a>
Seeburger	<a href="http://www.seeburger.com">www.seeburger.com</a>
Seemage	<a href="http://www.seemage.com">www.seemage.com</a>
SupplyOn	<a href="http://www.supplyon.com">www.supplyon.com</a>
Tradebeam	<a href="http://www.tradebeam.com">www.tradebeam.com</a>
WSW	<a href="http://www.wsw.de">www.wsw.de</a>
GSM	<a href="http://www.pls-ltd.co.uk">www.pls-ltd.co.uk</a>
ODETTE	<a href="http://www.odette.org">www.odette.org</a>

AUTOMOTIVE DESKTOP is all about delivering information to you promptly and reliably and the success of the e-mail rests on the rich list of sources which is available to me – and of course to you. Here is a list of just a few of my favourites which have to be visited frequently and many of which provide an auto-email service as well. The list below is in random order and is my personal choice. I am not in any way remotely suggesting there are not many other extremely useful sites – there are!!

<http://www.aftermarketnetwork.com> Highly informative aftermarket site.  
<http://www.ameinfo.com> A fabulously functionally rich site from the Middle East.  
<http://www.am-online.com> EMAP's AM magazine is required reading.  
<http://www.autowired.co.uk> Daily news by e-mail.  
<http://just-auto.com> A huge database – has become the industry standard.  
<http://www.autoindustry.co.uk> BERR Automotive Unit runs this excellent site.  
<http://www.automotivepr.com> automotivepr has a blue chip client list – visit!  
<http://www.autonews.com> Run by the global automotive news provider Automotive News  
<http://europe.autonews.com> Automotive News Europe – excellent European perspective.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk> Few can compete with Aunty Beeb's truly global coverage.  
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<http://www.nytimes.com> New York Times. Some of the best articles around are here.  
<http://www.pfpr.com> Ranked Top 50 UK Consumer Consultancy by PR Week 2006/2007.  
<http://www.cw360.com> Computer Weekly. Best for e-commerce and new IT trends.  
<http://www.awknowledge.com> Packed with automotive data, knowledge and reports.  
<http://www.mbendi.co.za> First rate automotive coverage and not at all confined only to Africa.  
<http://www.smmmt.co.uk> SMMT. Top site – as you would expect it to be!  
<http://www.fleetnews.co.uk> Fleet News Online - EMAP's site; stuffed with fleet info.

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### **BEN BOOK OF NUMBERS**

At BEN, we are constantly looking for innovative ways of increasing our sponsorship.

An excellent example of this is the recent launch of the BEN Book of Numbers which was the brainchild of Tim Holmes who, in conjunction with Professor Peter Cooke from Nottingham Business School, have produced a must-have reference book for anyone needing market information on our industry. The project was pulled together, sponsored and financed by BearingPoint [www.bearingpoint.com](http://www.bearingpoint.com)



This statistical collection will have great impact on our industry. In order to remain as efficient and informed as possible, decision makers need easy access to the numbers that shape their business. This useful reference book contains in depth information on:

- " Vehicle manufacturing, vehicles in use and taxation
- " New car registrations
- " UK used car market
- " LCV and HCV markets
- " UK fleet and business car market
- " UK after sales market
- " Retail motor industry
- " UK motorcycle

The book can be ordered through our distributors at the price of £99 plus £5 p&p and due to the generous sponsorship of BearingPoint, 100% of the sale proceeds will go directly to BEN.

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