

September 2013

£2 No. 354

Mascot

The Magazine of the Midget & Sprite Club



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Also see the Club Nights section for new areas and contacts.

Compiled by Richard Flynn (richard.flynn@live.co.uk). Please advise me of any changes, errors etc.
**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: IF YOU EXPERIENCE 'MASCOT' PROBLEMS UPON RENEWAL, PLEASE CONTACT
THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY OR THE TREASURER STRAIGHT AWAY. The Committee**

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September Editorial

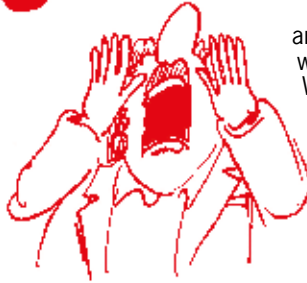
With the Midget & Sprite Club's AGM taking place at Gaydon in eight weeks, it's time to announce the new committee for the coming twelve months. Unfortunately there's nothing new about the new committee at all. No additional members have stepped up to join the existing team. In fact due to family and other commitments, two of last year's committee have reluctantly had to step down.

Two years ago there were eleven members on the committee (it's fairly easy to run a club with eleven people). Over the last twelve months that number has reduced to nine members (a still relatively OK number). And now that the applications are in for the coming year, we have just seven members out of over 1000 who are prepared to stand (now it's beginning to get tough). At least four of those seven have full time jobs. So you can appreciate that while the club is in a very healthy position with both its finances and membership continuing to grow, we are only seven people away from having no one to run the club at all!

Try to imagine what might happen if for no other reason than family commitments, ill health or change in circumstances, another three or four people had to reluctantly step down next year.

I'm not sure why the appeal elicited such a poor response (zero)? Perhaps I should blame myself for not advertising it well enough? It could be because people feel that as they pay for their membership, it will all be taken care of for them? Well, all of the committee pay for their memberships too. Or that maybe we get paid to do it? No, we don't get paid to do it either. Perhaps it's because the members think that the current

Volunteers!



committee are doing a good job and we don't need any help? Well yes they are and yes we do!

Unfortunately, it's now too late to put yourselves up for election to the committee for the coming twelve months. But there is the facility for members to assist/help/support, call it what you like, the new committee over the coming year, by volunteering to be club officers. You never know you might even enjoy being more involved in the running of the Midget & Sprite Club.

So one final plea before I sign off for this month. Please contact the Chairman (or any other member of the committee) if you would like to help out a bit. The contact details are on the page before this one.

I confirm the following nominations have been received:

General members: Dave Dixon, Jim Willis, Mark Hall and Kate Andrews

Membership: Stuart Watson

Finance: David King.

Editorial: Gary Lazarus.

Have a good month

Gary & Gaps

The deadline for articles and reports for inclusion in the October edition of Mascot is Thursday 15th September

The statements and opinions expressed in each and every issue of Mascot are not necessarily the considered views of the Midget and Sprite Club. The views expressed by the editorial contributors, letter writers and advertisers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Club. The Midget and Sprite Club accepts no responsibility for the results of following contributor's advice, nor does it necessarily endorse the services or products offered by advertisers.

Cover image: Matt & Sue prices "Frog & Toad". See pages 22-24 of this month's Mascot.

Appeal to our younger members



Lancaster Insurance Classic Car Show

at the NEC 15th – 17th of November



We have had some cracking weather in the last few weeks, but already you have the sense that the best of it may be behind us. Let's hope that there will some more to come.

But as August begins to draw to a close, I have to start to think about the cold wet weather in November and in particular the Lancaster Insurance Classic Car Show at the NEC on the 15th, 16th and 17th of November.

We have decided to try something a little different this year, and bearing in mind that none of us are getting any younger, and some of our cars may be in better condition than the owners. This year the theme will youth.

So I am appealing to our younger members, I know we have some, I just don't know who you are. Do you fancy showing your car at the NEC and representing the club? I can say that it is a quite rewarding experience. Your car does not have to be tip top condition, it could be pending restoration, it could be a rolling restoration in progress, it could

simply be your every day transport, carrying all the scars that go with a car that is 30–50 years old. It would be easier if the car can be driven to the NEC, but if you can arrange a trailer to get it there, that would be no problem either.

Tempted? Not sure? Drop me an email and I will go through the details and you can decide if you want to do it.

If anyone else would like to lend a hand and spend a few hours on the stand, you would be most welcome, so please get touch.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Alan Pritchett

a.pritchett@btinternet.com



Club Nights

- 1st Tuesday **Essex Area** – Now meet at **The Green Man**, Green Man Lane, Kelvedon Road, Little Braxted, Essex Cm8 3BL. For further details contact Jane Gates Tel: 01255830 509 or email: jjjanegates999@gmail.com
- 1st Wednesday **Devon Area** – **The Dartmoor Lodge Hotel**, Ashburton, TQ13 7JW 1930 – 2200. Please contact Dave Price for details, 01805 603133, daveprice@daveprice.plus.com
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at **Whitacre Ex-Service & Social Club**, 66 Station Road, Nether Whitacre, Coleshill, Birmingham, West Midlands. B46 2EH, 8.30-8.45pm Contact: John Collins, Tel: 07970 213084 email: green_mx5@hotmail.com
- 1st Wednesday Oxford Area – Meet at the Blackhorse Pub, Gozzards Ford, Nr Abingdon. 7pm for those eating or 8pm for those not. Contact Grahame Gibbins at grahame_gibbins@hotmail.com
- 2nd Tuesday **London Area** (Congestion Zone) – Meet at **The Ace Cafe** at 7:30pm. together with the Classic Cars Magazine night. Details: Gary Lazarus on 020 7700 5696, garyfrogeye@gmail
- 2nd Wednesday **Heart of England**, covers Worcs, Warks, West Midlands and surrounding areas – Meet at **The Green Dragon**, The Green, Sambourne, Redditch, B96 6NU, at 8.30pm as usual.
- 2nd Wednesday **North West Area** meet at **The Kilton**, turn off M6 at Jct 20 onto A50 towards Macclesfield. Pub 4 miles on left. Please note new venue.
- 2nd Wednesday **Bristol Area** will meet at **The Rose and Crown**, Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact Terry Horler on 01454 881770 rebelwithasprite@hotmail
- 2nd Thursday **Notts/Derby border Area** at the **Sitwell Arms** at 30 Wood Lane, Horsley Woodhouse, Derby, DE7 6BN from approx. 8.30. Just a mile north-west of the A608/A609 crossroads. Ian Cooke 0115 938 3838 ilc@bgs.ac.uk
- 2nd Thursday **East Anglian Area**. Previously the Cambridgeshire Area meet at **The Ferry Boat**, at Holywell, 8pm
- 2nd Saturday **Yorkshire Area** – meet each month at lunchtime from 12:30pm at **The Nags Head**, Pickhill, near Thirsk, YO7 4JG – more information at <http://yorkshiremasc.blogspot.com/>
- 3rd Monday **Dorset** – Meet at **St. Peter's Finger**, Lytchett Minster, Poole, BH16 6JE 7.30pm
- 3rd Tuesday **Scotland** – Meet at **The Windmill Tavern**, 4 Thorniewood Road, Uddingston G71 5QQ at 8pm. Contact John Pardo on 01698 814791
- 3rd Tuesday **Surrey** – Meet at **The Chequers**, Chequers Lane, Walton-on-the-Hill, Surrey KT20 7SF. 7.00pm onwards. Contact Mike Gorman, mike@birchwood44.freemove.co.uk Tel: 01737-552256
- 4th Thursday **Sussex** – Meet at **Bolney Stage**, Bolney, RH17 5RL from 19:00. Contact David Southcott at dandl@southcotts.plus.com
- 4th Thursday **Hampshire** – Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.
- 4th Sunday **Kent Area** – Meet at **The Angel**, Addington Green, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5BB at 12:00 for lunch. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- Last Monday **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Barge Inn**, Seend, Nr. Devizes, about 7pm. Contact Andy Cross on 01225 743554 or e-mail andy@cross743.freemove.co.uk
- Last Wednesday **Home Counties North West** for members in Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks, N. London or anyone interested! Meet at the **Chequers Inn**, Redbourn, AL3 7AD from 6:30pm. Please contact Mike or Sue Gahan on email mike@mgahan.demon.co.uk or on 07850 488636.
- Last Thursday **Somerset** – Meet at **The Lord Nelson**, Norton sub Hamdon at 7pm for those wishing to eat or at 8pm for those not. Phone Ray Darch on 01460 72040 with any queries and to ensure we will be there!
- Northern Ireland robertholmes25@hotmail.com. If enough interest, will arrange a meeting.
- South West Wales Non regular and occasional meetings and runs arranged throughout the summer months. Please contact David Hill on 01239 811307 or email: david@hill.be

Club Website

www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

Members Only Pages: Password: Wheelnut (which is case sensitive)

Also follow the Midget and Sprite Club on



Events

Area reps please make Gary Lazarus aware of any events already in your diaries for 2013, so that they can be added to this "Events" section of the magazine and the website.

For the magazine Gary can be contacted at editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

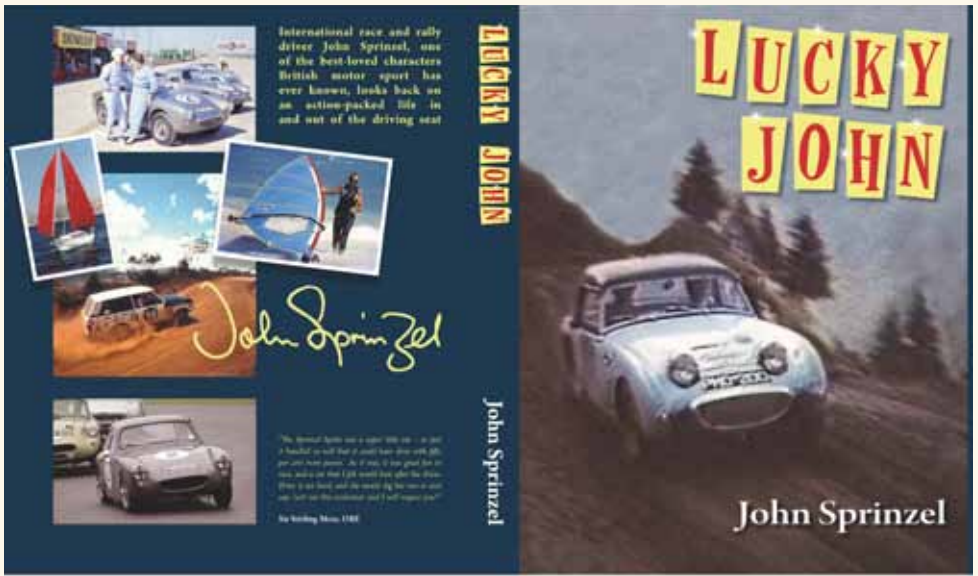
For the website Richard Mumford can be contacted at richardmumford@me.com

- 1 September MASC member's Spridgets are invited to the MGCC annual Midget Register September Run. Contact Dennis Wharf 01296 714232 or MASC member Neil Thomas ns.tenby@hotmail.com for an application form
- 4th Sept. Classic & Sportscars meet – probably the last gathering of the season at The Griffins Head, Papplewick: contact Ian Cooke ilc@bgs.ac.uk or 0115 9383838
- 7 September Buntingford Cassic Car Show. East Anglia area attending. Contact David Dixon 01733 222 810 email e-dave@hotmail.co.uk
- 8th September Bicker Steam Threshing; 23 miles east of Grantham along the A52 where it meets the A17 A leisurely day out at this village fete. Please contact Ian Cooke for details, as a number of us plan to drive there from the Nottingham area. ilc@bgs.ac.uk or 0115 9383838
- 28th–29th Sept Sywell Classic, Sywell Aerodrome, Northamptonshire – www.sywellclassic.com (coming soon)
- 8th October John Sprinzel joining London Area MASC at the Ace Café London, Stonebridge NW10 7UD Contact Gary Lazarus for details garyfrogeye@gmail.com or 020 7700 5696
- 20th October National Restoration Show and Grand British Autojumble, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire – www.restoration-show.co.uk
- 27th October MASC AGM at Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ Contact Club General Secretary Jim Willis jim.willis@tiscali.co.uk or 01527 402804
- 9th November Rolling Road session at CCK (Classic Cars of Kent in Sussex) and run by Daniel Lackey. Contact: John Clarke 07760 291784 jrclark@sky.com
- 15th–17th Nov Footman James Classic Motor / Motorbike Show, NEC, Birmingham – www.necclassicmotorshow.com
- 8th December Kent Christmas lunch at Hornby Visitor Centre Please advise Alan Anstead ASAP alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

2014

- 3rd–5th May Donington Historic Festival 2014 takes place at Donington Park, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2RP. Look out for more details in Mascot over the coming months

Send your events details details to editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk



Exciting News of John Sprinzel's visit to the Ace Cafe and the launch of his Autobiography "Lucky John"

As many of you will be aware, John Sprinzel will be visiting the Ace Cafe in London on the evening of October the 8th, during his coming trip to the UK. Please contact me at garyfrogeye@gmail.com or on **020 7700 5696** if you intend to come, so that I can try to accommodate everyone.

The address is **Ace Corner, North Circular Road, London, Stonebridge. NW10 7UD** www.ace-cafe-london.com and it would be best to get there before 6.00pm

It's been 60 years or so since he was last there and John had intended to come along for a quiet evening in the company of like-minded petrolheads and other classic car owners. However, after a bit of bullying (and I'm not saying by who), John has reluctantly agreed that he will sign some copies of his book with requested messages. Tom Coulthard (co-author of Spritely Years) has kindly agreed to bring a batch down to the Ace Cafe.

The cost of the book will be £40.00. The address for buying the book is luckyjohn@hawaii.rr.com and he is in the process of setting up a PayPal link.

I have been lucky enough to have been sent and to have read a preview pdf of the book, and all I'll say at this time is that it's a great read with some wonderful photographs. There will be a full review of "Lucky John" in next month's Mascot. **Gary**



A youthful John Sprinzel on his prized Red Hunter BSA in the days when he visited the Ace Cafe



John in the PMO 200 Midget competing in the very first television Rallycross at the Lydden Hill circuit

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Run to the Spa Classic Weekend

June 2013

I have been attending the Le Mans 24hr and Classic weekends for 12yrs with a group of friends and this year we decided to have a change. Spa Classic Weekend was the choice and so on 14th June our much reduced group headed for the Dover to Dunkerque ferry. We comprised a Cobra replica (which broke down and was quickly replaced with a modern Mercedes two-seater) a Tiger 6, seven style and my newly acquired and still being run in Midget 1500 Tifosi Rana Frogeye conversion. With the ferry bit done and all roofs down we headed off along the coastal motorway system for Brussels. I had only managed 700 miles and a good service before leaving so was still taking it relatively gently. I have no previous experience of the 1500 Spitfire based engine and had been warned that it's a bit weak in the crankshaft department. However with the huge reduction in weight with removal of rubber bumpers (have you ever tried to carry one let alone two!!) plus steel bonnet, wings, slam panel, bumper irons, rear wings, bootlid etc. etc. the power-to-weight is now very good and even two up, pulling away in second gear is no problem.

The miles flew by and we eventually had tired arms from returning cheerful waves from other drivers. At fuel stops our cars

generated a lot of interest and people wanted to sit in them for a photo. They seemed genuinely fascinated by our funny little cars. We had booked a B and B in a pretty little hamlet just outside the small town of Malmedy and only three miles from the circuit. We arrived at Ffalty Towers (yes double F!) a 300yr old converted farmhouse run by an extrovert Dutchman "Basil" and his wife "Cybil" a terrific cook who we never ever saw. My suite, for that's what it was, comprised a huge bedroom with four poster bed surrounded by curtains held up with ball and chains. The antique furniture included a dining table and chairs, tapestries on the walls and cherubs on the ceiling! The bathroom was bigger than my lounge at home and there was an additional loo.

Our host showed us into the hotel lounge with huge fireplace animal skin throws on



settees and chandeliers. The bar was serving us Palm and Chimay beer with disgustingly large alcohol content and we were soon very settled in.

“Cybil” dispatched a fantastic three course meal and after a couple of bottles of wine my memory is rather vague. I do recall “Basil” giving us a great range of songs from Sinatra to Elvis, followed by some spirited jazz on a fancy keyboard lit by disco lighting.

Next morning we headed for Spa circuit which is vast and set in the beautiful hills and forests of the Ardennes.

We drove along, seeing signs for all the famous bends and sections of the course and finally parked near Le Combe at the top of the long and very steep hill leading up from Eau Rouge. Parking outside the circuit was easy and free and we let ourselves in through the animal proof turnstile gates (free) and walked along the trackside whilst watching race practice. At Eau Rouge we found that we could have parked inside the circuit for a very reasonable 5 euros. Passing under a track tunnel we entered the old pits area and our senses were bombarded with the usual sounds and smells of classic race cars being fettled. Everyone spoke to us and there were no “no go” areas and Brands Hatch, Silverstone, Mallory Park et al have much they could learn. I spotted many Spridget racers and we were made very welcome at the pit area of a lovely Belgian couple who raced a Frogeye and a Sprite.

Wandering uphill through the vast pit area we finally reached the modern F1 pits and were again surprised to find we could let ourselves in and walk amongst the cars. Practice and heats were taking place all day and later we returned to our humble lodgings for another great evening. Time constraints meant I had



Tim Cairns 1959 Sprite

to miss the Sunday races to return home with the Tiger 6 following. I had encountered an annoying oil leak which all the experts had been unable to trace. It appeared to be the oil pressure relief valve but having removed and checked it twice, annealed the copper washer and spent 17 Euros on oil top ups I was getting rather concerned. My friend in the Tiger was unable to use his wipers when we encountered a few light showers approaching Dunkerque, as my oil leak had exited the rear of my car as a fine mist which covered his windscreen! We arrived back in Kent having covered around 800 trouble free miles and enjoying a great weekend.

I did finally cure the oil leak when I traced it to two 7/16 bolts either side of the distributor and facing up towards the camshaft. A quick tighten and problem solved. Had my oil and engine not been spotlessly clean I may have found it sooner. One last point, I have been asked several times about the rather awkward name Tifosi Rana. Tifosi as F1 Ferrari fans know means enthusiastic fans, and Rana is Italian for frog. So there you have it, I drive a Frog Fan or Fan Frog. Think I just prefer Frogeye rep...

Dave Chalk



The wonderful ‘Sanction 2’ WSM of Ian Hulett



The team working on Chris Dear’s 1964 Sprite with Pride & Clark hardtop

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new and rejoined members

4770	Denise & Christopher Furley	Northamptonshire	Sprite	Mk 4
4771	Jonathan Steeden & Gill Dawson	West Sussex	Sprite	Mk 1
4772	Mark Atkinson			
4774	Peter Jones	Kent	Midget	Mk 2
4775	Dave Griffiths	Warwickshire	Midget	Mk 3
4776	Sarah Upfield	Somerset		
4777	Frederick & Phyllis Newman	Kent	Austin	Sprite
4778	Paul Atherfold	London	Midget	Mk 3
4779	Peter & Holly Chase	Cambridge	Midget	Mk 3
4780	Bob & Mary Orchard	Bristol	Sprite	Mk 1
4781	Nathan Angell	Powys	Sprite	Mk 2

1 An original 1960s photo of Bob & Mary Orchard with the car that Bob has owned since 1963

2 Bob and Mary's Frogeye as it is now

3 Steve Newton's Midget MkII

4 Steve's daughter (and apprentice Sprigeteer) Jennie hears that Kate Moss has a Midget so tries Dad's nearly finished project out for size!

5 Peter & Holly Chase with their Midget 'Molly'

6 Denise & Chris Furley at the Silverstone Classic



July-August 2013



2



3



6



4



5

Midget and Sprite Challenge

On one of the hottest days of the year, Castle Combe was host to the Midgets and Sprite Challenge race. Saturday 13th July was part of Retro Race Weekend at this quite unique 1.8 mile circuit, where spectators are able to walk the whole way round and enjoy a good clear view of the track.

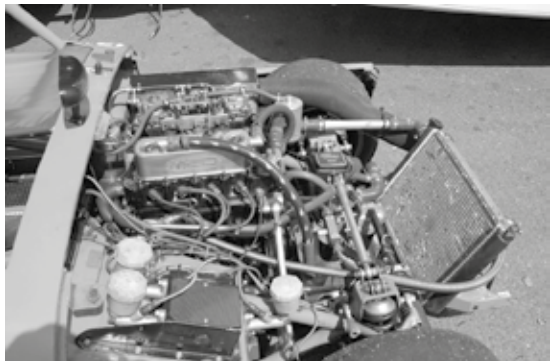
The 20 Midgets and Sprites were put into four different classes depending on how modified they were. Class A, fully modified, included the incredibly fast 1460cc MG Midget no 5 of Paul Sibley who qualified on pole with a time of 1min 15secs, an average speed of 88mph. The photo of the engine bay shows just how modified this Midget is.

By the afternoon it really was hot with the spectators looking for whatever shade they could find. The winner, as expected was Paul Sibley but Sam Healey, Sprite no 37, finished a creditable 6th overall, with Neil Cameron 9th and Tom Walker 11th, these two being in the semi – modified class.

Castle Combe really is worth a visit, not far from the M4 at Chippenham. Sunday 6th October sees their Autumn Classic Race day, a feast of classic racing.



Tom Walker 1380cc Sprite



Paul Sibley 1460cc Midget, fully modified engine and sticky slicks

Dave Hansford

The MG Midget Challenge is a national race series for MG Midgets and Austin Healey Sprites (built 1956-1979). The championship is run at all major UK circuits, with the occasional visit to Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium. It is a serious, professional but very friendly championship and has been running since 1977.



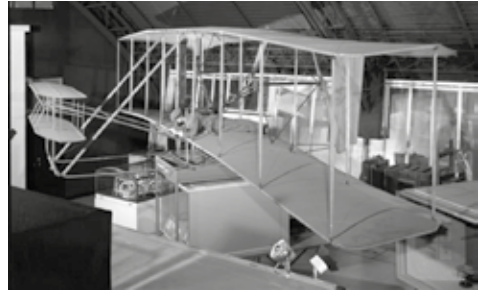
Sam Healey 1460cc Sprite, does it run on cyder?

Salisbury Hall

Hi Gary,

Alans Anstead's report on their visit to Salisbury Hall just south of St Albans and Hatfield forgot to mention that in the late '50s the hall and hangers were the home for the de Havilland apprentice school. During my time there we apprentices built a full size replica of the Wright Flyer which was for display at the science museum (I wonder if it's still there?)

As Alan says this is where the Wooden Wonder (Mosquito) was built and we were told that the initial pre-test flight was from a field behind the Hall to de Havillands airfield at Hatfield. After two or three years bench work at Salisbury Hall we apprentices transferred to the de Havilland drawing office on the far side of the airfield, for another year or so. Of



The Wright Flyer at the Science Museum

course our aircraft industry went bottom up, just like our motor industry through lack of finance and investment in R & D.

These extra notes may be of interest to Alan, if he didn't already know, so send to him if you wish

Regards

Maurice Stacey

Marshalling at Le Mans

Hi Gary,

I read with interest the article on the Sebring Sprite at Le Mans in the last edition of *Mascot*, and I had a lovely chat with the father, and a good nose around the car in parc fermé during that weekend but I'd like to clarify one point.

I was marshalling that weekend (for the support races and the 24h, though not where India stopped) as I regularly do for the ACO. When a car stalls, we are under instructions from Race Control that the car can only rejoin the race if it can do so on its own, without outside intervention. I realise this can be immensely frustrating for the driver when a push start could get them going again (a



S221 on the way back to Parc Fermé after the race (©Charlie Clegg)

similar thing happened at our post during the LM Story, and the drivers are often very clear about how frustrated they feel.

The whole track at Le Mans is under video surveillance, and any marshal who pushes starts a car will probably get a strict talking to, and the car may be disqualified anyway. There are safety concerns too; we avoid going onto the track unless there is a danger for a driver, because whenever we do there is a risk involved for all concerned.

So although I understand how drivers may feel about us "not helping" it certainly isn't because we don't want to – all the guys I know who marshal for the ACO do so because they love to see cars racing – so to see one stopped is always a disappointment even for us. But the rules are the rules, and we have to play by them.

Hope you enjoyed the weekend as much as I did, and please believe me when I say I wish we'd seen more of the Sprite during qualifying and during the race.

Kind regards

Philip Dodd

If you would like to contact the editor or the magazine, please email Gary at editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

Or write to *Mascot* Editor, 40B Hungerford Road, London. N7 9LP



Russell's Sprite with a Sebring front

Mk1 Sprite – Registration Number 1975 RO

A very good friend of mine (Russell Church) is keen to find out if the Sprite he owned in the 1960's still exists. He has found a couple of old photos of it, from which you can see he "got to work" with a "Lenham" type conversion, for which he would like to apologise to the current owner if the car still exists!!!!

Russel writes "Photo about 45 years ago at the Cross Keys Inn, Hardwicke. Perhaps the car still exists, it would be good to see it again. I could apologise to it for cutting the back off."



After the chop, now a Lenham Sprite

Austin Sprite RVU 260J

This was our car until late 1997, being used as a "daily driver" by my wife Dee for the preceding circa ten years. It got a little too rusty and with no time to do anything about it was sold on (and replaced by a restored 1969 Sprite which we still have). The DVLA Website shows its last tax (put on by us I think) expired in June 1998. The car was too good to scrap (and certainly sold at a price that reflected its potential) and we would love to know that our "old friend" still survives.



Photo attached. Many thanks indeed

Peter Houghton

Ferndown, Dorset. Member Number 370

If anyone know if Russell's or Peter's Sprites still exist, or you'd like to trace your old Spridget, please contact Gary at editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

ORS743

from page 16 of last month's Mascot

I was interested to see in the latest copy of *Mascot* the enquiry by Pamela Coe from Taunton about a Frogeye Sprite, registered ORS 743. This car is referred to in an article which I prepared for the Austin A30/A35 Owners' Club Magazine last year (please see attached copy).

This particular Frogeye (which appears to be a late 1959 or early 1960 model originally registered in Aberdeen) was owned by Barry Pinkerton in the early/mid 1960s. According to the WSM website he bought it from a lady called Maureen Manser. He subsequently did an engine swap with the single carburettor Downton-tuned unit from his A35 Pick-up and then used it extensively in Autotests during 1965. I believe an Autosport from May 1965 described some of his exploits. He then traded in the Sprite to Delta Garages in Leighton Buzzard.

I wonder if Pamela Coe's husband, Robert, owned the Sprite before or after this period? Hope this is of interest.

Regards

David Markham

As your editor couldn't resist the idea of a hot A35 Pick-up, Mascot has been allowed to reproduce the article with the kind permission of David and Sidelights, the quarterly magazine of the Austin A30/A35 Owner's Club



TRK 283

The story of a Downton-tuned A35 Pick-up from the 1960s

TTN 1 (now registered 5 DTN), the Downton-tuned Austin A35 Pick-up owned in the late 1950s by the Austin dealers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Murray and Charleton Ltd, and raced successfully by Jimmy Blumer, is the most well-known version of this model which was modified in period. Other examples existed, however, and information about another tuned Pick-up which resided in Bedfordshire in the early 1960s has recently come to light.

Registered in Croydon in May 1958 (and probably supplied by LF Dove Ltd or Milne and Russell Ltd), TRK 283 sported a Downton-tuned 977cc engine with a single SU carburettor, non-standard wheels and tyres and uprated suspension. As can be seen in the accompanying pictures, it had a bullet-style racing door mirror on the driver's side, a square front number plate, a single auxiliary spotlight at the front and, unusually, one at the rear. Though not visible in the pictures, it is believed to have also been fitted with aftermarket seats.

It is not known who carried out these modifications but by 1964 the Pick-up was being used by Douglas Wilson-Spratt, the proprietor of Delta Garages in Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire which was a well-known Austin dealership at that time, as well as being a Vauxhall, Bedford and Volvo agency. Douglas was the designer and builder of a number of special alloy-bodied Austin-Healey Sprite Coupes, known as WSMs, and died two months short of his 90th birthday in April 2011.

The Sales Manager of Delta Garages in the early 1960s was Robin Pinkerton and it was his younger brother, Barry, who bought TRK

283 from the company in 1964 having seen Douglas Wilson-Spratt using it in a local navigation-style event. All were members of the Sporting Owner Drivers' Club (SODC) formed by the racing drivers Captain

George Eyston and S.C.H "Sammy" Davis (another Mk1 Sprite owner) in the 1930s. During the 1960s the Club was based in Dunstable in Bedfordshire. Barry, who died in July 2011, recalled using the Pick-up on many runs, one of the most memorable being a reconnaissance trip to Wales for the Rallye Dubonnet run by the SODC. This was in the company of John Brown, who later started Le Jog (the Land's End to John O'Groats Reliability Trial and Classic Car Tour) and HERO (the Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation), and who was the driver across the Abergwesyn to Tregaron mountain road. By this time, Barry had exchanged engines in his two cars, the other being a standard tune Austin-Healey Sprite Mark One (Frogeye), registered ORS 743.

This was given the Downton-tuned engine from the A35 Pick-up as it was more suitable for auto-testing, one of Barry's passions. TRK 283 thus inherited the engine from the Frogeye Sprite which in practice meant that it wasn't a lot slower than with the Downton engine. TRK 283 was sold by Barry Pinkerton in 1965 for less than £150 and its later history is not known.

The photos of TRK 283 were taken at Barry's parents' house in Dunstable during his period of ownership. They were taken to show that the Pick-up was a 'special' rather than a commercial as Barry had been caught speeding and was deemed to have broken the speed limit for commercial vehicles which was in force at that time. The photos did the trick and Barry was let off.

Thanks are due to the late Barry Pinkerton and to Douglas Wilson-Spratt's son, Tony, for help in writing this article and supplying the photos and content.

David Markham Helpston, Cambridgeshire





Yorkshire Area Report

This month signalled the start of the Grouse season, a fact which was capitalised on by some members at lunch time! It was another case of the little red car club (plus one) as Jonathan, Tim and Ken all arrived in red machinery. We were later joined by another Rob in a white turbocharged midget, evening up the colours a bit, and giving us another different engine setup to look at.

My car was looking a bit sad as I'd started to poke at it in preparation for the MOT, and it had revealed some issues, which were worse than expected once I got it to the welding station (dad's house). Tim's 'Sebrina' was still wearing her hardtop, which was a good idea because it absolutely chucked it down later on in the day. Jonathan's K was as immaculate as ever, and it would seem if your name is Rob then worshipping the rear axle on your knees is appropriate, and Ken's 'little red' was out again after a floor restoration job.

It was also good to see Pete & Lu and Geoff & Angie, who had come longer distances in more waterproof cars. The possibility of a mid-week meet once a month was discussed, though it's likely to be next year before kick off on that.

There are also plans to have a classic car meet (non MASC-affiliated, but all are welcome) in the centre of York on the 4th of September, so if you know of anyone else or have other classics that would like an evening out then tootle them round to Nunnery Lane car park at about 7.

In addition to that, Jon has offered to look for an east Yorkshire area location. There should be more than enough people in Yorkshire to support more than one meeting, and we'll try not to overlap them.

The next meeting should be at the Nag's Head (come off at Junction 50 if coming from the south, unless you like going up and down the motorway) on the 14th of September. Hope to see you there and I hope to have another year's MOT by then as well! See you soon

Rob



Sebrina wins it by a nose

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Vintage



Modern



American



Prestige



Household





When you're eighteen years old then owning a bright red, shiny sports car's a dream come true.

Not usual of course, and having the wherewithal to buy a Frogeye that had the registration MRN919 came about in a rather roundabout way, some years previously after a motorbike had run into me at full pelt when I was out on my bike.

There then followed a long six-week recuperation period with a broken leg, which unfortunately coincided with the summer school holidays. However, that was all forgotten of course when I managed to cash in most of the Post Office savings that the other party's insurance company had paid out, which amounted to £250, to meet what had been agreed for this Mk1 Sprite, that had been first registered in the Preston area some thirteen years previously in 1959.

The price included a grey fibreglass top for the winter months, and changing from a soft top to the fibreglass one then marked a change of season, from the winter to the summer months, and vice-a-versa, over the next three years.

There had been something more exotic in my sights earlier on, in the not so easily recognisable form of a Mk1 which had then lost its characteristic Frogeye looks and outline with the substitution of a Lenham streamlined bonnet and fastback rear bodywork; with the further distinction of the A-Series engine being swapped for a tuned Hillman Imp unit, bored out to the max, but that sale fell through and maybe this was just as well for a relatively inexperienced driver in view of this car's fast revving performance!

Unlike the Lenham-bodied car, my Frogeye was in reassuringly standard condition. The Morris 1000/ Austin A35 mechanicals already seeming user-friendly, in view of having previously owned an Austin A30 and an A35 van; so no worries on that score over the next three years of ownership, until this car made way for a MkII Midget, which held open the same promise of easy maintenance and cheap repair costs in the unlikely event of anything then going seriously wrong.

If I'd looked more closely at my Frogeye's rear suspension mountings, then this would suggest the need for some attention far



into the future, although with regard to the bodywork, this car passed each MoT with the consummate ease which caused an impecunious student to sigh with unbridled relief once a pass certificate had been handed over.

There was one occasion when the examiner suggested the rear axle was twisted, as the distance between one of the rear wheels and the front edge of the rear wing was closer on one side of the car than this same measurement between the wheel and rear wing on the opposite side of the car; a potential failure that was immediately resolved by pointing out that in fact one of the rear wings had been 'shaved' of a few millimetres of metal by a previous owner, this being a cheap way of getting rid of some corrosion. The repair being a really class job as the curvature of the rear wing was still perfectly symmetrical. Exit MoT examiner with mud on his face!

On the mechanical side, failure of the master cylinder that's shared with the MGA was the only real problem, which was simply resolved when the MoT garage replaced the master cylinder seals.

There were occasions when lack of funds then meant that the car wasn't quite as roadworthy as it should have been, such as when the exhaust system suffered a terminal failure, with the result that a piece of galvanised steel that once formed the top bar of a farm gate was pressed into temporary service: a bit of agricultural improvisation that was only let down by the lack of a silencer box and leaky end joints, which caused complaints from neighbours

following a raucous drive home with a few unnecessary gear changes thrown in during the early hours of the morning.

I remember one shop owner complaining when I would leave the engine running outside our local shop on occasion. My reply being that the starter motor was on the blink, and if she would prefer that I switched off, maybe she would like to then help out with a push start? An offer that didn't attract a willing response!

Then there was the time when the starter refused to turn over the engine and the help of a trio of sixth form girls still in their school uniforms was enlisted to provide a push start on a short circular section of road round a housing estate. Round and round we went, with the girls getting more tired as we went wound for the third time. Much to the amusement of a crew of dustbin men who happened to be watching. The similarity to a scene from a St Trinian's film, or maybe a Benny Hill show, seemingly much in their minds! The car did eventually fire up on all four cylinders, although maybe I should have kept the information to myself regarding the oversight of failing to switch on the ignition for the first couple of hundred yards! No complaints from the bin men though!

Fitting a starter motor from a Morris 1000 answered the problem, although replacing the dynamo in this way wasn't an option, owing to the drive for the tachometer being a manual drive off the back of the dynamo. The prospect of fitting a dynamo from another A-Series-engined car lacking the mechanical drive to drive the tachometer being totally unacceptable in what was of course a performance car! A problem eventually resolved by overhauling the original dynamo.

The only time that the car actually broke down proved to be fortuitous as this prevented the engine from overheating and the possibility of resultant damage when all the coolant was lost on a long run from home. Fortunately, when all the coolant was discharged by a core plug developing a crack from side to side, the resultant outflow doused the electrics, bringing the car to a prompt halt within seconds.

Outright speed was never the Frogeye's forte. 80mph just about being possible on a



Girls seemed to like it too

downhill section of a motorway, and I recall holding onto all the speed that the car could muster in order to stay ahead of a 1300cc Vauxhall Viva driven by a friend's dad. Little did I know that this ex-Lancaster bomber pilot was allowing me more than a little leeway by kindly remaining in my car's wake by a few car lengths!

This car's true habitat was for racing along country lanes, the only edge it possessed in performance terms being the ability to sweep through corners without having to slow down much at all, with steering that was responsive, and brakes that were adequate, bearing in mind the low weight of the car.

Owning a two-seater could result in problems when you've taken your girlfriend out and you meet a mate who is desperate for a lift home. The answer being for him to sit with said girlfriend on his lap in the passenger seat. A journey that would have passed without incident had not my good friend imbibed about seven pints of best bitter, which were now making a determined bid for freedom from his bloated stomach. Say what you like about those side-screens with the tiny, Perspex windows, there was just enough for a full discharge without further incident or serious complaint from the other passenger!

Sitting in the passenger seat was also the cause of alarm for this girlfriend when a fire developed under the seat owing to a wire being trapped under the seat frame. Amateur



Girls still liking it!

fire-fighting skills having been developed by myself some time earlier, when a similar incident was caused by the wires for the front lights getting trapped between the inner front wings and the bonnet as it was lowered, which resulted in the need for prompt attention to disconnect the battery and then douse any nascent flickering flames!

On the positive side, this was another valuable learning experience, as I then had to rewire the front lights with lengths of plastic coated wire salvaged in a scrapyards.

Incidents when driving the car were thankfully few despite a youthful, press on regardless, style of driving. There was one occasion when the Frogeye went off ploughing a course of its own after the ratchet failed on the handbrake. Although glancing off a new Escort Mexico prevented what would have been a terminal plunge over an embankment, and the car then ran off in an alternative direction, narrowly avoiding two closely placed street signs before coming to rest in the middle of someone's front lawn! Damage to the Sprite amounting to zero, and a small payment to the Ford owner for touching up the paint on his car settled the matter of a superficial scratch on one of the wings.

So this car provided very cheap transport between 1971 and 1974, although one day after drawing to a halt at a set of traffic lights, the writing was on the wall when someone driving a Mini failed to stop in time, badly dinging and stoving in the rear offside wing. The damage was irreparable at a reasonable cost according to the other driver's insurance firm, so I accepted £180



The Frogeye's replacement DRJ 542B

for the car on the understanding that it still remained in my ownership.

By then I was ready to go off to college, so the car remained in storage, its replacement then being a 1964 MG Midget, DJR 542B, bought in Northumbria for the princely sum of £90, on account of the canvas soft top being badly ripped at the back. How well do I remember my first drive in this car through a snow storm as the back of the car filled with piles of wind driven snow!

Sadly, the last time that I saw the Frogeye, it had attracted the attention of a student colleague who owned one with a Lenham front, and as he was eager to buy my car, I let it go for what was a fair going rate of £30 at the time.

So concluded my ownership of a car that will be the apple of my eye forever. Even though I've now owned 30 other cars of all sorts



Dave with his MG Midget mid-1970s

and descriptions from high performance sports cars to basis family saloons. A car that I would very much want to see again one day, so if there's anyone out there who knows anything about my car and its present location, I can be contacted on telephone number 015395 63080.

Dave Bowers

CONTACT: Dave Bowers, 47 Beetham Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7QN
015395 63080
dave_bowers10@hotmail.com

Original images ©Dave Bowers

Additional images thanks to Classic and Sportscar Centre, Malton, Corner Farm, West Knapton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8JB and Ashley Bradford

Ed's note: It turns out that MRN 919 (now white) has recently been seen up for sale in Yorkshire and the new owner has given me permission to reproduce an image.

Dave's details have been passed on and he is hopeful of a reunion with the Frogeye. What happened to Dave's Midget "DRJ 542B" I wonder?





The whole set-up looking great

I have owned my '58 Frogeye since 1986, when at the age of 18, I placed a wanted ad in the Exchange & Mart. I had one response to my ad and became the proud owner of a rusty wreck, which looked like it had been exhumed from Pendine Sands. I spent a couple of years getting the car on the road, but after twelve months of fun, it was moth-balled in my parents' garage, where it slowly decayed for the next 20 years or so while I did adult things like buying a house and getting married. Then, about three years ago, with my grown-up head on and with the benefit of a few things that I didn't have before, like a credit card, the internet, experience, skills and patience, I finally felt ready to set about stripping it back to the last nut and bolt, ready for a complete rebuild, which I completed last summer.



The Frogeye as bought in 1986

Looking for places where we could show off the Frog, we found ourselves attending events such as Goodwood Revival, but in order to fully enter into the spirit of these nostalgia festivals, we realised we needed to have the appropriate clothes, Brexton picnic box and all the other etceteras. Of course, we also needed a place to sleep overnight. A period canvas bell tent would have looked the business but there was absolutely no way all this gear would fit behind the seats, on and around the spare wheel. So I got thinking about a small camping trailer. After a few beers, the idea morphed into a period caravan.

How to get the Frogeye to pull a caravan? In order for this crazy idea to work, the caravan would have to be small and light. Sadly, this ruled out the Airstreams, but many late night Googling hours later, I stumbled upon the



The Frogeye now

Eriba Puck, at 10 foot and weighing in at just over 300 kilos, maybe there was a chance after all? With a sensible payload, it would still be well under the 85% rule for towing. Like the Sprite, the Eriba Puck also started production around 1958, being made by Hymer until very recently. I found a 1969 model which seemed to tick enough boxes, so having been charmed by its quirky classic looks, it became ours.

The Puck is an ingenious design, developed after WW2 by Erich Bachem, a German aircraft designer. It consists of a tubular steel chassis and tubular skeleton framework called the AERO system, with a ply floor, aluminium clad sides, GRP roof and an elevating pop-top allowing full standing height. It has two bench seats that convert into a double bed, a table, a small sink, a 2-burner hob and some useless cupboards. As always with my impulse buys, once I start scratching the surface, I end up finding problems. There was some sponginess in part of the floor, so in the end I decided to set about removing the whole floor and interior, to do a full restoration job. The interior is now clean and bright with a new orange canvas for the pop-top. I added some mod cons in the way of a 12v battery with 240v hook-up, re-jigged the wardrobe to make space for a porta-potti, and fitted a Whale pump for the sink tap. Coupled with some new interior lights, it's now surprisingly cosy and liveable. For the exterior, I wanted to make it look like it belonged with the Frogeye, so a two-tone colour scheme of Old English White over British Racing Green was

chosen, successfully applied by roller. To the rear, I fitted Lucas lights and a black and white number plate, to harmonise with the Frog's back-end.

The missing link was a towbar which I sourced from a company called Watling who still list the Sprite. When I managed to piece together the multitude of plates, angles, tubes and bolts, I felt it was still lacking something, as there is no real chassis to latch on to. The towbar was designed to bolt across the back of the boot floor, between the bumper irons, in the little space between the petrol tank and the rear valance. There was no real structure front to back to spread the load, so I thought it would soon bend and buckle the already flimsy boot floor panel. I therefore set about adding plenty of steel to it, creating two angle iron straps front to rear, just outboard of the tank, plus linking up with the bumper iron brackets. With extra straps inside the boot floor, the whole thing feels very solid with the car. I can stand my 17 stone on the towbar and bounce the car up and down nicely. I fashioned a bracket for the electrics socket to keep it tucked neatly away and then hooked into the wiring loom at the junction behind the offside tail lights.

Of course, with the standard 43hp, the Frogeye would have to work hard to tow the caravan plus two big adults, a dog and all the gear. However, with 1293cc under the bonnet



Cut-away image showing construction



The rear end before ...



... the rear end after

turning out around 95hp, my little Frog has plenty of croak. Once I plucked up enough courage for a test run, I was surprised how well it handled, with no swaying or braking issues to speak of. Yes, of course you know you are towing, but not with clenched buttocks or white knuckles. Several issues were apparent however. Firstly, even though the 'van is only 5' wide, this is still wider than the car and without any wing mirrors, would have meant driving blind, not to mention illegally. I therefore fitted two Holden clamp-on overtaking mirrors to the tops of the windscreen pillars (who uses sidescreens anyway) which meant I could at least see the caravan, but not beyond it. To see down the side of the 'van, I extended a pair of chrome motorbike mirrors and clamped them on to the knurled sidescreen screws (who uses sidescreens anyway). They are crude, but functional. The second issue was the engine



The now immaculate and period looking interior



Sprite tow-bar is sold in kit form.

An original image of a Mk1 Sprite towbar, taken from a late 1959 magazine article

got hot at times, mostly up hills and in traffic. Luckily I already had a Kenlowe fan fitted, but I added a manual bypass switch so I can have the fan on permanent when towing.

'Toad', as we have named the caravan, travels very sedately behind 'Frog' and really gets noticed. Motorway journeys are now far more entertaining, even if mostly confined to the inside lane (virgin territory for Gaps!). It's amazing how many people wave and smile as they pass by. So if you see us out and about, please feel free to pap at our Frog and Toad as we hop to our next festival.

Matt & Sue Price
Worcester





.....and you thought Spridgets were small!

Scotland Area Report

The weather throughout Britain during the month of July was really special, as the record figures produced by the Meteorological Office confirmed and excellent for those taking “staycations”. However, the summer holiday season also meant that, in this part of the world at least, organised classic car events were somewhat thin on the ground. The weather was too good to miss and we made good use of the car.

Each year I make an extended trip into England to take in an event and to visit friends and relations. For example, last year it was to attend the MGB 50 celebrations at Blenheim Palace. This year the focal point was the “Flying Legends” airshow at The Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

We left Uddingston on the Wednesday and drove the 290 miles to Bromsgrove to spend the evening visiting Elspeth’s relations and dining *al-fresco* in their back garden. After a night in the local Premier Inn we headed to Stratford upon Avon, and enjoyed a walk along the river before going sightseeing in the town centre. Morning coffee sitting overlooking the canal basin was followed by a drive to The Red Lion in Culworth and lunch with friends in the rear garden. We drove then to Banbury to our overnight accommodation and spent the evening walking around the town.

Friday saw us head though Daventry to Weedon Bec to have morning coffee with a relation of mine and then on through Towcester to Stoke Bruerne and The Canal Museum. Pulling into the museum car park we noticed that a section of the car park was roped off with a sign indicating that it was reserved for the Messerschmitt Club. By the time we left, some hours later, the area was

full including three of the rare Tiger variants. That evening was spent having a pub meal in Hackleton with more relations of mine prior to spending the night in the Northampton Travelodge.

Saturday took us to Cambridge stopping at the American Cemetery on route. The remainder of the day was spent walking around Cambridge town centre, the colleges and the “backs” area. Saturday night accommodation was at Wyboston. On Sunday it was Duxford and a day at the airshow.

On Monday, it was up the A1 and across to Lincoln to have lunch with relations followed by a walk around the old part of Lincoln city and the Cathedral area. Thence to the Doncaster Travelodge.

Finally on Tuesday it was home via the A1, A66 and M74 with a stop for lunch in Appleby. We had covered a total of 920 miles, every inch of which had seen the roof lowered and achieved an average petrol consumption of 38mpg, which while not in the Spridget economy league, I regard as pretty good for an MGB.

This Sunday, August 11th, eight cars from The Blackwood Classic Car Club attended The Albion Foundation Rally at Biggar. This was the 40th anniversary of the show and it has grown to be one of the largest in Scotland. Certainly the line up of commercial vehicles, agricultural tractors and military vehicles was most impressive. The show season has now restarted and we have a number scheduled for the next few weeks.

John Pardo

Contact: 01698 814791

E-mail: jp1kg@talktalk.net



Steam & Vintage Rally – Liss

HOT! HOT! HOT! – After a lovely drive through Hampshire, five cars met up at 9.30 just before the showground, so that we could arrive and park together. Thankfully John had brought the gazebo and we quickly set up camp beneath it.

A quick trawl around the exhibits, then it was back under shelter; sitting around, reading, nattering, eating picnics and ice cream, it was so hard.....

At around 3.00pm we packed up ready to join the 'Road run'. Unfortunately we must have taken a wrong turn just outside the gate and we all ended up at our respective homes – not sure what happened there! Oh, did I mention it was hot?

Jenny Green

Woodcote Rally

This year was the 50th anniversary of The Woodcote Rally. We had not attended since 2010 and last year's event was cancelled due to the site being waterlogged. What a difference a year makes.



Vic and I met Barry and Jenny at The Pack Horse Pub about four miles from the showground on the Sunday of the two day event. On arrival at the show site we travelled from the entrance to the parking area in a dust cloud, it was very dry and hot this weekend.

Alf and Lyn and Rolf and Lynn had arrived on the Friday evening in their respective caravans; Alf with his Frogeye and Rolf with his Austin 7.

Looking through the rally programme, there were nine Mk 1 Sprites entered, however only four were in attendance on the Sunday. As in previous years there were plenty of attractions at the show, something for everyone.

After spending all day in the sun, the drive home in the Sprite was most welcome.

John Foard

Fleet Carnival Car Show

It's going to be 26 degrees. Summer Car Shows have begun. We met at 9:30, and drove onto the field just before 13.00. I had asked for a space for our gazebo – and thank heavens for it. The temperature went up, and the cars kept rolling in, meanwhile we put up the gazebo with the minimum of fuss, quite successfully.

This year there were about 60 cars in, and more turned up (apart from the Yanks that were meant to be in the space next to us). It was rather nice to just sit and relax, have a natter (then a beer) walk around a few cars (have lunch) have a natter (then ice cream) and a sit down to recover from it all.

Happenings



It was a nice little show which deserved to have more public support, but with the goings on in SW19 it was not to be. The weather was hot, the field nicely laid out, and just the ticket for a nice relaxing day.

Andy wins another historic first

Two Andys won on Sunday, ours won a 'first in class' for his Midget – much to his amazement.

Here he is with Adrian being presented with his award.

Harriet Langridge



Ed's note, Apologies to the Hants area and Jenny Green in particular, for not being able to fit your Holiday 2013 report into Mascot



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Notts & Derby Area Report

My Sprite at the Hope Show



Hope Valley Car Show report

Whilst on my way to the Hope Valley charity car show, I spotted the Mk 4 Sprite of Paul Hitchings parked outside a cafe, so swung into the car park to join him and other members of his car club for a cuppa before proceeding to the show. Tucked into the heart of the Peak District near Castleton, the show attracts many classic enthusiasts keen for a drive through the Derbyshire Dales, and the blue skies had certainly helped swell numbers as our convoy approached the event. There was a wide variety of classic cars and vehicles spread around the field and a very friendly atmosphere.

Ashover report

Another event currently organised by a local group raising money for charity, the annual Ashover Rally usually attracts a large number of cars. Today though it seemed that some had opted to stay away due to the forecast of showers, and maybe the clash with the Silverstone Classic hadn't been good timing. Sideshows and stalls were also a bit thin on the ground this year which disappointed some of our members, although Alan managed to pick up a very reasonably priced head gasket set for his Big Healey.

The morning remained dry, but we didn't let the weather put us off. As the scattered showers eventually forced up the hoods, we gathered under the trees and spent social time chatting with fellow enthusiasts.



MASC Spridgets at Ashover

In the dash between showers to get the six miles home Paul Hitchings reports...

"I left in the dry then drove over the moors into a monsoon, I had water pouring into my lap from the half closed tonneau, I pressed on only to realise that the reason I could not see the road was not the wipers fault... there was almost as much water running down inside the windscreen than outside! Took out the seats and carpets when I got back in the garage, seems to be drying out Ok in the garage with the door open. Must try the hood to see if it still fits, as it was very tight last year!"

Knaresborough

Tech advisor makes up for lost time

Yes folks, your friendly MASC Technical Advisor Mark Boldry and partner Anita came home from the Australian Gold Coast to sup some traditional British brew in Blind Jacks in Knaresborough, choosing to invite and share their experiences with friends and acquaintances gathered over the years from the classic car world and beyond. I must apologise that I forgot most of the names of guests I spoke with, as the local brew played a large part in my memory loss as the day wore on.

There was a guy from Surrey who had met Mark when he used to supply classics to the "Heartbeat" series TV sets, friends from his schooldays, his parents who had driven over the moors in their MG, and the owners of a pale yellow European Midget parked outside in the square. Mark and Anita will now be back in Oz, but if you need any tec' issues sorting, Mark is only an email away!



Mark's dad's MG outside Blind Jacks

On our way home the following day, we called in to the National Railway Museum in York to view the collection of locomotives celebrating the record speed achievements. Whilst there I spotted this Midget on the model railway – seems to be summer all year round!

So only a few days ago on a quieter weekend, my wife, Jo and I took a drive



The red model Midget (though I'm convinced that it's a Sprite. Ed)

out to a local pub where we bumped into a former MASC member of some years back, Ian Taylor, former coordinator of the Notts & Derby area MASC when they used to meet at The Crown at Shardlow.

It had been a few years since we last met, and I had lost track of Ian since he sold his Midget, so it was a great surprise to bump into him at The Dixies Arms. Ian informed me that he had discovered a MASC banner in his garage while he was recently moving house, and kindly offered it to our group. So after a bannerless break of some 10 years here is a photo of the official handover...

Next meeting at The Sitwell Arms will be Thursday 12th September



Ian's and the "official" handing over of the banner



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Old Boys off to the festival of Speed



July in Kent

The mid week 'Old Boys' run this month was to Goodwood Festival of Speed. Only four 'Old Boys' met, on the day, at the Grasshopper Inn, Westerham, for this month's run.

For those that may not have heard of the Festival of Speed the organisers describe it as "the largest motoring garden party in the world – a unique summer weekend that brings together an impossibly heady mix of cars, stars and motor sport 'royalty' to create the largest car culture event in the world. Held in the immaculate grounds of Goodwood House, this annual Hillclimb event is a true celebration of motor sport and all things automotive".

Away they went Moss, Trossi, Hawthorn (wearing cheese cutter cap) and the 'Silver Fox' Taruffi powering their 'Spritely' machines along superb roads. O.K. maybe an exaggeration but it was a great drive along roads selected especially for the occasion by Ron (Moss). Whereas the 'followers' were able to swap places, somewhat similar to the Monza Lottery, no one would pass Ron for there were no Maps nor Sat Navs, for the route was in Ron's head. The machines in question were two Frogeyes, a Midget 1500, and a 1275 Spridget.

The day started with a faint misting of rain but soon the Sun was on Regulo 6 cooking all who ventured out.

After a spirited drive we arrived at Goodwood to see many rare cars challenge the drive at Lord March's country pad. The event

probably earns him a mint but the old Gaff looks like it could do with a lick of paint.

After several hours' cooking and 'done to a turn', and probably having not seen half of what was on offer, our Kent Grand Prix Greats returned to the roads with a different and equally superb route chosen for the return.

Next month will have an aeronautical theme. Come and join us?

The monthly meet

The weather forecast, as usual, was all 'doom-n-gloom'. Tempests, Storms, and floods unknown since the Ark were expected on the Sunday designated for the Kent monthly meet at the Angel, Addington Green.



The Arkley SS of New members Trevor & Kathleen Hale



Roger & Sue Gray's Midget and
Neville & Pam Plummer's IOW Frogeye

How many would turn up? How many, if any, Spridgets would appear? An incredible seventeen Spridgets. Non Spridgets included a Vauxhall Sports, an Eagle kit car, two MGBs and an MGA. I've seen less cars at a car show!

New members Trevor & Kathleen Hale brought along their Arkley SS to show. Arkleys were made by fitting a fibreglass bonnet and rear end to a Spridget. They were made in north London by Spridget racer the late John Britten. This makes two we now number in Kent.

Nearly new member Dave Chalk, with Debbie, came in his Tifosi Rana Midget 1500. Yet another fibreglass kit to alter the appearance of a Spridget. Dave's ultimate would be an IOW Spridget. Had he noticed Neville & Pam Plummer arrive in theirs?

Kent Webmaster Rylan is keen to add ICE to his recent acquisition. I know it's hot but I thought filling the car with the cold stuff was excessive until it was explained that this is a modern term for a car radio. A car radio in a Spridget? Will he ever hear the sound above the tappets, exhaust, and wind? Isn't the engine noise music to your ears?

Frogeye 238YUF was brought along by a non-member to show and is for sale. I should have more details soon. The body looked really good. The car is fitted with a 1098cc engine. Expect it to be offered at the top of the price scale to reflect its apparent condition.

Roger & Sue Gray popped over from Essex 'running-in' their Midget's new 1275 engine.

Being a hot day once meals were consumed all seemed to gather in the car park amongst the cars. *Thanks all for coming.*

Hornby • Airfix • Scalextric • Meccano

A Christmas Meal with a difference!

On Sunday 8th December 2013 arrive at Hornby Visitor Centre. Westwood Industrial Estate, Margate, Kent. CT94JX at 10.30. (Plenty of Spridget parking) Walk around the centre that includes a museum to the above brands, shop and cafeteria. Then follows a Scalextric race competition on a four lane track and a make and paint (Airfix model making) activity. At 12.30 we sit down to a three course Turkey roast dinner with a choice of five starters and five deserts. (Beverages & alcohol not included – available separately at counter) After dinner return to the model making, if not finished, or watch the recording of the Hornby History or race some more. Premise closes 1600hrs.

All this for £20 per person!

In order that I can advise of numbers register your intent to attend now. I will collect a £10 per person (non refundable) deposit in Late Oct / Early Nov. Balance to be paid on the day.

Alan Anstead



Heart of England Report

MASC at the Far Forest Countryside Show

The morning of the Far Forest Countryside Show was bright and sunny, yes there were a few dark clouds to the west and to the north and maybe a few to the east. Why the fixation with dark clouds you may ask, well, I was driving the rain-hating Frog to the aforementioned show, nuff said!

Our intrepid little band of eight cars met up at 9am on 'The Running Horse' car park, just the other side of Bewdley, to go 'en masse' to the show; where we picked up a stray Midget, its owner Clive was a bit lost and had joined us thinking we were 'the show'. I tried there and then to inveigle him into becoming a member of our wonderful club, thrusting an application for membership form under his nose; as Geoff says "I am dangerous when in full flow and especially dangerous if I have had a drink", no I hadn't, far too early even for me! He was a bit reluctant, so I thought I would try again when we got to the show. Geoff tried his powers of persuasion later on in the day but he said was already a member of two clubs and also he didn't look forward with unbridled joy of the 50 mile round trip to Sambourne for the club night every month.

On arrival Geoff and Bob Bayliss started to erect the mini gazebo, just in case we needed sudden shelter; a degree in engineering is required to complete this task, Stan and Kath put in their four penny worth and in no time at all the job was done! Then everyone went off in different directions to explore the delights of the show, Dave Parker, who joined later in his reasonably priced car, remarked that he had never seen

a ferret on a lead before. It is a countryside show Dave. Barry and Margaret also came later in their everyday car because his Midget is being a naughty boy.

There was plenty to see, a dog show, medieval jousting, a falconry display, and much more. The food tent was wonderful, meat pies, cakes, olives, cheeses, meats of all kinds, bread loaves of all shapes and sizes, chocolates and sweets of all kinds; there was even an active honey comb! There was of course the usual competition of vegetables; my marrow is bigger than your marrow kind of thing and cake making competitions.

On the day there were eight cars with thirteen members on board, two Euro boxes with four members and insurgent in a Midget, and we were by far the biggest single make present in the classic car division. Amongst the others was a beautifully restored Triumph Roadster from around 1949 and an original AC sports but with a V8 motor, a fore runner of the Cobra before they became "Shelbyised."

A good time was had by all, the rain kept away, an added bonus for me in the rain hating Frog.



Janet Hunter Continuing this month's caravanning theme
2656A



MASC line up at Speke Hall

Recently we have had three events. Taking part in the weaver Wander, Speke Hall Vintage Festival and the Tatton Park classic car show.

Mike has done the write-up for the Weaver Wander:

As an example of three events rolled into one, it would be hard to beat the Weaver Wander on which we enjoyed a rolling classic car show, a run through some great countryside and a picnic in the grounds of a castle.

This is an event run by the Nantwich branch of the Rotary Club to raise funds for charity, and a group of us from the North West branch of MASC decided to enter. Peter Vass brought his K series engined Midget, Lee and Madie where in their Midget and Karen and I took the IOW Frogeye.

The start was in the Legends Sports and Social club at the Bentley factory in Crewe, and for those wishing to partake there were bacon butties and tea/coffee as the cars were marshalled into starting number order in the car park. You would be forgiven for foregoing breakfast just to be able to spend more time looking around the entrants with cars from the '20s to the '90s.

From a Bullnose Morris and a collection of magnificent grand Rolls Royces and Bentleys,

to two fully rally prepared Audi Quattros and a whole collection of classics in between.

With a comprehensive road book containing "Tulip" diagrams for the route there was no excuse for getting lost, the route took us through Nantwich and on through the Cheshire countryside to the picnic stop at Chirk Castle. With a lovely sunny day and some excellent roads, this was a very pleasant run with the added interest of the company we kept on route. At one point we came up behind a group consisting of an A35, followed by a huge Cadillac Eldorado with enough room on its boot lid to carry the A35, which was followed by a TR4 and then a 1960 Thunderbird. At other times we met equally interesting sights – so much better seeing cars like this in motion than sitting in a field being polished.

At the National Trust Chirk Castle, the cars were lined up with the castle in the background and those taking part could have a picnic on the grass, visit the café and/or, if they wished, visit the castle itself.

The afternoon was spent with more scenic roads, this time through the northern edge of Shropshire before heading back to Nantwich where we joined a static show of cars. An excellent day, and just to finish it off, we were awarded the prize for Best Club.

Dennis volunteered to do the Speke Hall write-up. I was unable to go at the last minute unfortunately.

This was a first time event for MASC North West. We managed to muster five cars on the Sunday Bernie and Lynne, Mike and Karen, Mark, Lee, myself and Daniel who were last to arrive even though we were the closest! Although Speke Hall is easy to find and get to, Bernie and Lynne had problems on the way passing over the Runcorn Bridge several times, apparently this was the fault of traffic management and poor diversions. The car show was quite small but we had a great day with great weather. Mark and Lee's families joined us and enjoyed the event.

There was live music, market and food. Exhibitors were given free entry into the Hall a National Trust property, very much appreciated by our more cultured contingence. Entry to the event is free to the public and very well attended, even some of my work colleagues turned up.

Lastly was the Tatton Park classic car show. This is a two day event and is one of the biggest shows in the north. For some reason this is the first time we have attended as a club. Saturday we had six cars on display. There was me, Bernie, Alan, Dennis with Daniel and Rob. Plus Dan Cusworth in his racing K-Series Midget. Dan is a chap Bernie had been speaking to on one of the bulletin boards and when Bernie discovered he was going to the show he invited him to join us. Very interesting car and nice chap. Weather was a bit mixed with some rain, in fact we had torrential rain going home, Bernie opting to leave his top down – big mistake!

Sunday was an excellent turn out with nine cars. Should have been 10 but Ian arrived late and his car was not allowed onto the show ground – health and safety as the show was open and the public on site. We tried to argue the case but no joy. We had the same people minus Dennis/Daniel and Dan but plus Andrew, not seen his car for ages due to his other commitments and was nice to have him there. He had son Oliver with him (10 years old plus a bit – that extra bit counts for a lot when you are young) – I've not idea what he makes of us aged lot! Janet came along with Rob. Also there was Mark, later joined by the rest of his family, and Fraser with Lesley.



The MASC stand at the Tatton Park Classic Car Show"

Another friend of Bernie's from the bulletin board joined us; this was Paul and son Shaun in their very nice '73 Midget. They seemed to fit in with us and looked like they had a good time, so hopefully we will see them again. Lastly was Neil in his MGB GT. Neil's Frogeye is undergoing some major surgery to the spring hangers and floor so maybe we should be kind to him.

I think we all had a good two days, at what was an excellent show – the sun even came out on the Sunday. Then to top off the weekend we won a trophy, second in class for best sports car display, well done to all.

Three events and two awards, not bad going.

Well that's it for now, see you on at the Kilton on 11th September.

Les



Tatton Trophy Club prize

Home Counties North West



Pat and Zara's Charity Road Run August 4th

'Given to hospitality'. Romans 12:13

The customary warm welcome awaited us at The Robin Hood and Little John pub in Tonwell when we arrived to join the eclectic crowd of crews and assembly of cars. Pat and Zara's meticulous preparation of these events assures everyone that they are welcome. The car park reflected a comprehensive list of GB's past achievement. The field consisted of two open Austin 7s, an MG Magnette, a MK11 Jag., a TR6, three big Healeys, a Volvo P1800 (sorry, not GB) and two well worn Sprites, those of Maggie and Roger and (welcome again) Gaps with Gary tagging along. The other immaculate yellow Sprite in the picture belongs to Pat and Zara. We were not Spridget mounted, the Red Lady having left us a year ago. Much missed. If anyone sees DFF 778D on the road or at a show please give her a pat on the boot for us.

Our route was supplied in the tulip diagram format which, as I have perhaps observed before, is entirely satisfactory unless you lose your place. Then, not knowing where you are starting from, confusion takes over. Fortunately everyone managed to keep to the instructions and completed the course. The only casualty was the Triumph which suffered one of those electrical faults which are easily solved when you have tried everything else.

So, we left Robin and John to their own devices and took the road to Ware (if anyone would like to borrow my bumper fun book about roads to Ware, make your own up). We crossed the roundabout in one direction (see later) and drove into the ancient town and out again, on the Hadham Road, through Stanstead Abbots, Roydon, Hunsdon, Widford, Perry Green and Cold Christmas. Now who on earth names a settlement Cold Christmas? It was neither cold nor was it Christmas! More encouraging, surely, to call it long hot summer and then go there on Christmas day.

Assembling for lunch at the Robin Hood & Little John Pub

Our good fortune was to follow one of the Austin Sevens which was discharging oil, especially on tight left bends, onto the exhaust pipe. Would he pull over? After a while the smell became nauseating so we stopped and let a braver couple in a Healey take the strain.

On to Wadesmill and then to Bengeo. "Hey! There's that roundabout again", but we were crossing the other way. Had we been a bit smarter on the throttle we would have had to give way to ourselves coming from the right. The little village of Bramfield, where you can buy fresh eggs, Tewin, Watton-at-Stone, and back towards Ware and THAT ROUNDABOUT AGAIN!

There was one, I'm sure deliberate, mistake. Turn L and the arrow goes right. Keeps you on your toes. You could say that we travelled far but got nowhere. But we did get somewhere. We arrived back at Pat and Zara's house and workshop for an excellent tea and chatathon in their delightful garden.

These annual events are organised to support Livability, Choices for Disabled People. This day raised £200. The total since the millennium is £2304.50. Thank you friends for a good day out.

A word of thanks to those in the club who give time and energy to organising us. Without you there would be no club. I give especial mention to Gary who insists that the successful birth of Mascot each month is due to the contributors. I say that every new royal baby born needs the devotion of an expert gynaecologist. I think that in Gary we have one.

Home Counties Group meets monthly, on the ultimate Wednesday, at The Chequers Pub at Redbourne. If you would like to be there please contact Mike and Sue Gahan at mike@mgahan.demon.co.uk

Chris Jackson 3056

East Anglian MASC Report

A month of fabulous sunshine and barely a weekend without a Sprite event, first up was Abingdon works car show, only the four of us attended from my local group (*which was a bit of a shame for such an auspicious event*). We set off from Peterborough at about 16.30 and arrived at the very pleasant accommodation that Chris had booked for us, at about 18:30, having had a brilliant sunny topless drive of just over 100 miles. The accommodation was fine and after moules and frites in a wonderful old world stone inn, a walk about, pleasant company, an odd glass of beer and a good night's sleep we were up and ready for a lovely 25 mile run through the Oxfordshire countryside to the show venue.

It was another hot sunny day as we took our place in the "line of Sprite" and soon found some friendly local MASC men and some great Spridgety cars ranging from the earliest Spridgets to the latest rubber-bumpered Midget, which had bounced down through Africa (*brilliant*). We had a fabulous day looking at all the brilliant old cars (almost in the shadow of the last remains of the factory where they were built), eating nice food and enjoying the sunshine, I even picked up a few tips on how to make my bonnet fit more properly.

Next up was Kimbolton classic, this is always a great show, more like a village show with classic cars (but hundreds of them), livestock, craft stalls, the sealed knot and all



manner of things going on. Not only all that, but the chance to meet up with old friends on other stands, all in a stunning location in the hot sunshine. I always enjoy the drive to Kimbolton since once you get off the nation's first highway it's countryside punctuated by pretty villages and winding

roads past Grafham water. Even the traffic is transformed with everything on the road being interesting, from hurried helmeted heads in Caterhams to Ferraris and Maseratis in my way.

We arrived quite early and had a good turn out to a much better organised and better marked and marshalled ground than in previous years (well done the sporting bears). I got the gazebo up (with the help of the aforementioned marshals) and sat and spotted Sprites (especially Graham's) driving by, one after another, with the exception of Nigel and Diane who had resorted to people power (see photo) at first I thought they had suffered an attack of green *enviromentitus* but Nigel sitting under a tree surrounded by spanners soon dispelled that notion. One of the spanners (Derek) insisted I published the picture of Diane's people powered Frog (*hope the hand prints polished off OK Nigel*).



People Power

It was as always a brilliantly enjoyable event with something for everyone (*even Derek*), so a good time was had by all.

See you all at the oldest Inn in England and beyond.

Dave Dixon
(AKA Red Leader)

Hill Climbing in Wiltshire



It's been a very good summer for getting out in our cars in Wiltshire. You'll have heard about our clash with Bristol from them (see opposite), so I will resist giving our side of the tale until the dust settles. Let's just say some of us can cope with 1-in-4 hills, some can't.

But, moving on, a few MASC Spridgeters also came from outside the county to Castle Combe for the annual Classic Action Day there. This was a lively day, though most of us left the Action part to a convoy run around the circuit. With nothing else to do it meant we all wandered around inspecting cars. At which point I kicked my tatty MkII Sprite's rust-bubbled sill to see if it would pass the upcoming MoT test (This isn't the official test, they have a little hammer for that), but as my boot went right through I decreed that a "fail".

Back home later, cutting the outer sill away, there was a small hole in the inner sill too but of course lovely shiny waxoiled steel just five millimetres above it. I guess this comes from leaving it outside all year. Anyway, now the inner sill is neatly patched, as (it seemed crazy to replace it all, and a new outer sill is installed (thanks to Mascot advertisers the Frogeye Spares Co) and the MoT is booked. Fingers crossed!

It's good to be in other car clubs too, as well as MASC, and I've been a member of Bath Motor Club for many years – though not quite the 50 years they celebrated recently. This was featured in an excellent Classic Tour

recently, and a few Spridgets and MASC members took part. The route covered 100 narrow twisty miles around Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire, covering everything from Chew Valley Lake, to Burrington Combe, Cheddar Gorge, East Somerset Steam Railway, Compton Abbas Airfield (via Zig-zag Hill in Dorset, great hillclimb practice, look it up!) and Longleat. We spent most of the day with the exhaust hitting the road but the route book, in tulips, and arrows on key junctions meant no-one got lost.

The finish was in Southwick with an anniversary dinner, and accompanied by John Davenport and Stuart Turner. If you know 60s rallying these two are top BMC men, and if ever you get a chance to hear Stuart Turner speaking, take it! He has some great memories and a makes a few serious points, but mostly he is a superb comedian, with a calm delivery reminiscent of Dennis Norden. A hilarious evening!

Since then we have been at the Longbridge Deverill classic gathering, and the Classic hillclimbs of Prescott and Shelsley Walsh, both events with all older cars and great nostalgic air about them, and there is another evening run planned locally. So please get in touch if you are able to join us, or just attend at our monthly meet at the Barge at Seend, last Monday of the month, and we will always make you welcome.

Andy

01225 743554



Wilts MASC at Longbridge Deverill

From the Bowels *of* Bristol



A gathering of the Western-ish MASC Clans at the Bell on the Green, somewhere in Wiltshire

We had this idea to broaden our horizons. Let's go for a drive in our Spridgley things and cross the county border for an incident. Time to leave our oil stains on someone else's patch we reckoned. Can't go to the north as it involves crossing the river Severn and that's expensive on those French controlled bridges, upsets the British economy when the Pounds are turned into Euros. So it's a quick sortie southwards and into Wiltshire and back again before anyone notices, so, that was the plan.

However, the club has a Wiltshire branch, somehow, they were waiting for us on the border. (So who tipped them off then?). Our convoy was brought to a stand, followed by a thorough interrogation by their leadership as to the purpose of our mission. We volunteered nothing but our Vehicle Identification Numbers. The threat of a strip search was looming despite protests from one of our number – who insisted that he was searched, no names mentioned of course! Documentation checked, Spridgley things checked, we were allowed access but only under close escort. Their leadership insisted upon our vehicles and driving competence be tested by taking us up the steepest hill

in the world, and on the hottest day ever! Temperature gauges soon explored the upper regions of their dials but we had an ace to play. Philip Sellen's Midget was carefully prepared to break down every 15 minutes in the event of our being car knapped. This gave us enough time to slow down the convoy to plan our escape. We decided not to, none of us knew where we were, other than on a very steep hill in Wiltshire. We were escorted to Broughton Gifford (if such a place really exists) for further interrogation by even more Wiltshire MASCites who had gathered there.

All the time they kept us talking, our Spridgley things were slowly turning their county black with a controlled release of 20/50 for which they will surely get the blame from the landlord of the 'Bell on the Green' (If that was indeed the real name of the pub). Fortunately for us, the Wiltshire plans were scuppered when one of their members broke down on the way to the pub. They organised a rescue mission which divided their numbers and their attention. We were amazed that they would do such a thing, if any of us were to break down, it wouldn't stop the remainder from carrying on

and enjoying ourselves. More to the point, if any of us were to break down, it would simply demonstrate that the required commitment to your Spridgley thing is wanting and you thoroughly deserve to be left behind to deal with it – ON YOUR OWN. This demonstrated a fatal weakness in our 'hosts' and with that, we all ran for it. Well, drove for it that is. Luckily, we soon found road signs that did seem to make sense and we all escaped unscathed if a little depleted on our dip sticks. With a bit of time in hand and a fading light, three of us thought it a wheeze to create a few crop circles before leaving the county, an open gate invited us to do a few quick laps amongst the maize. Well, it all helps the Wiltshire tourist trade when the crop circle anoraks arrive to deliberate what sort of alien craft was responsible. If they look closely enough, they might find that this 'alien' craft also leaks 20/50 profusely. (Alien craft = two Sprites and a Midget actually) No doubt someone will claim to have seen it and write another book about it.

My Congratulations to Glyn Polly for not letting our side down, it was the first real trip in his Sprite for 28 years, and we think he got home – eventually. Alan Lo's Sprite failed scrutineering at the start of our mission, no brake lights. Unfortunately, he managed to

fix that so we had to let him take part. Jim White's Sprite suffered a slight layer of dust and a few squashed bugs on the windscreen but he says that he can soon fix all that. Philip Sellen is re-mapping his Midget's anti-run programme so we are all looking forward to his next unexpected and equally unexplainable resistance to forward motion. Trevor Large was a no show – just like his Midget – if it exists. Yours truly – well – I don't have any problems at all of course.....

Our thanks to our Wiltshire friends, for letting us go, hope you found your broken down chums (DAVE AND JILL HANDSFORD) and gave them a thorough telling off for being such sloppy Spridgley thing owners and how ashamed they should feel in letting the whole of Wiltshire down in the event of the most important invasion by another branch of the club – shame on you! Just you wait when you come to us – if you ever get going that is. Better mention Andy Cross (who kindly supplied the photo) before I close, there, you got a mention.

Terry Horler

(How do you get corn out of the radiator matrix?)

Oh – If the Wiltshire lot write a report, THIS is the correct version, not theirs.

Market Place

Adverts to Alan Lo, 23 Charnell Road, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS16 5NE
email: alan@mobuzzing.net Tel: 0117 9572617

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