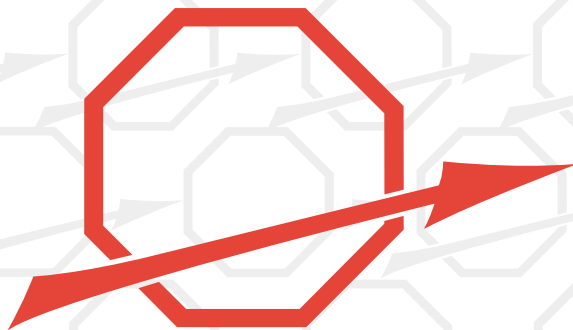


MASCOT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB



Ticklish Frogeye?

ISSUE NO. 233

MAY 2003

www.mgcars.org.uk/midgetspriteclub

THE WHO, THE WHAT & THE WHERE of THE MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB

COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON	Acting Chairperson – Alan Barton. Nominations still sought for an elected chairperson.
GENERAL SECRETARY	Terry Horler , 63 Littledean, Yate, Bristol, BS37 8UQ. Tel: 01454 881770
TREASURER	Pauline Walters , 18 Lodway Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 2NR. Tel: 0117 971 3092
DEPUTY TREASURER	Brendan Joyce , 18 Lodway Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 2NR. Tel: 0117 971 3092
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TECHNICAL ADVISER	David Smith , Doric Lodge, 10 Mansfield Terrace, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, EX9 6EN. Tel: 01395 446353 email: bobndook@tiscali.co.uk
WEBMASTER	Chris Nevard , Tel: 01932 847933, Mobile 07798 743922 email: spridget@mgcars.org.uk Website: http://www.mgcars.org.uk/midgetspriteclub
EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR	Alan Barton , 10 Wrens Park Avenue, Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B76 8LP. Tel: 0121 351 2513
MEMBERS ADVERTISING	David & Jenny Smith , Doric Lodge, 10 Mansfield Terrace, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, EX9 6EN. Tel: 01395 446353 email: bobndook@tiscali.co.uk
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE CO-ORDINATOR	David C. Hill , Penrallt-Y-Cordde, Glynarthen, Llandysul, Dyfed. SA44 6PE. Tel: 01239 811423
TRADE ADVERTISING	Ian Rider , Tel: 01793 685351. Email: ianrider@ntlworld.com
Trade Advertising Rates	Full page one issue £30. Half page one issue £15. Full page whole year £300. Half page whole year £150.

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DEVON	David & Jenny Smith , Tel: 01395 446353 email: bobndook@tiscali.co.uk
DORSET	Pete Downton , Tel: 01202 515544 email: pete@phc.co.uk
HAMPSHIRE	Ian Swinden , Tel: 01202 623002 email: Eswinden@aol.com
SOUTH STAFFS & NORTH BIRMINGHAM	Terry Langridge , Tel: 01252 626063
CENTRAL SCOTLAND	Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird , Tel: 01922 458429
NORTH WEST	Carson Thomson , Tel: 0141 245 6327 day or 013606 22334 evening
SOMERSET	Les & Diane Robinson , Tel: 01772 432138 email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
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WARWICKSHIRE	David Wright , Tel: 0208 642 4789 email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
WILTSHIRE	Alan Couch , Tel: 01564 773302 email: alanrosemary@acouch.fsnet.co.uk
	Chris Yates , Tel: 01608 665066 email: Sheila@sheya.fsnet.co.uk
	Ian Rider , Tel: 01793 695351 email: ianrider@ntlworld.com

Also see the Club Nights section on page 2 for new areas and contacts.

Club Mileage Competition	Contact and Co-ordinator is David Southcott, 29 Skylark View, Horsham, RH12 5EA. Email: dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk
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Compiled by David Hill. Please advise me of any changes, errors etc.

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Editorial MAY

John Barton: WHO?? Yer I know, it should have been ALAN BARTON, acting chairman. Ed gets it wrong at 2am the night before the flight to Canada, David missed it whilst proofing (but did a fantastic job else where so no blame) I have offered my resignation to the committee and await their pleasure ☺ . . . and written to AB! But for you die hards, it was correct in the committee listing and Terry Horler's story on page ten, thanks heavens for TH, more of which to follow . . .

. . . remember my reference to TH in last month's editorial and his many articles, it goes on. My throw away comment about my own dog eared copy of Original Sprite & Midget attracted several bids, but on reflection I couldn't bring my self to sell it and anyway Its currently propping up the workbench! Terry also got a mention in the Bulletin Board section in last month's Mascot; described as "almost deified". Looking back through old issues of MASCOT, he has indeed long been revered, being described once as "the Ayaterry", and once as "leader of the fanatical Spr'iite sect" . . . more than his allotted four minutes . . . (fame, that is). Top man Canada was great but the BIGGEST surprise was finding a Big Healey, no hood (-5) used as a daily driver, dwarfed by just about everything on the road, this guy was a serious fan. Never saw the driver but the car was parked in a different spot most days (see photo else where) Any other Holiday spotters? See letters for a Sri Lanka Midget, MGA & TR. Take your cameras this summer and lets find the exports.

Couple of people needed last months smiling Frogeye photo comments squared with the obvious Frogart that was on the cover. The original photo JPEG corrupted in transmission to Quorum (our printers) and a quick bit of footwork by David Hill saved the day but he didn't have time to 'edit' the editorial. See front cover!

Carson has started me off on another mission. DO YOU WANT TO BUY A NEW (modern) MIDGET FOR 10K? Photo in March issue: Yes? Well you'll have to work for it. I have linked up with the editor of MG world to lobby MG Rover to build it and thrown the support of the MASC membership behind it. If however you do not want to see a new modern sub 10K Midget and have no wish to be associated with it let me know and I will publicly disassociate you from the project. Its really 1957/8 all over again (build a sports car out of an A35, MAD!) So what can YOU do? A) Write to MG Rover, B) place an order at your local MG Rover dealer C) e-mail MG Rover pleading for info, order codes, availability etc. All this will feed back to MG Rover as the public trying to BUY this car that they are thinking of not making!! Don't worry too much about 'B', no deposit, just put your name on the list. When the salesman says NO LIST, ask him to start one and forward your request to MG Rover.

Well that's me done, hope you enjoy it. Lots going on and if I'm not here next month you'll know that the committee hasn't got a sense of humour ☺

Mike North, Editor at large

Will the Scottish member who volunteered for the audit role please make himself known to the Editor: e-mail/phone etc. Ta, Ed.



All articles and photographs for the magazine must be received by the first of the month preceding publication. Articles submitted for publication should be e-mailed to the editor if possible or on disc accompanied by hard copy. Members should be advised that pictures will be returned the month after inclusion in Mascot. Photos will only be returned if supplied with a SAE.

The statements and opinions expressed in each and every issue of the 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.



CLUB NIGHTS

1st Tuesday	Wiltshire – Meet at The Forresters , Leigh, near Cricklade
1st Wednesday	South Staffs & Birmingham – Meet at the The Green Man , Middleton Village, 7.45pm
1st Thursday	NEW! Lincolnshire Area – Meet at Heneage Arms , Hainton, nr. Wragby. 8pm. Contact Brian Sumner on 01507 328128
2nd Tuesday	Surrey – Meet at The Blue Ball , Walton-on-the-Hill, 7.45pm.
2nd Wednesday	Warwickshire – Meet at The Moat House Inn , Kings Coughton. 8.30pm
2nd Wednesday	North West Area meet at The Kiltren , turn off M6 at Jct 20 onto A50 towards Macclesfield. Pub 4 miles on left. Please note new venue.
2nd Thursday	Cambridgeshire – Meet at The Mad Cat pub in Pidley Village, midway between Huntingdon & Chatteris, 8pm
3rd Monday	Dorset – Meet at St. Peter's Finger , Lytchett Minster, Poole 7.30pm
3rd Tuesday	Central Scotland Meet at The Wheatsheaf , Torrance, East Dunbartonshire. 7:30pm in the Lounge. Check first with Carson on 0141-245-6327 day or 013606-22334 evening.
3rd Tuesday	Notts/Derby border area – Meet at The Sitwell Arms near Horsley Woodhouse, from approx. 8:30pm. Just a mile north-west of the A608/A609 crossroads. Contact Ian Cooke for further details on tel: 0115 938 3838 or email: ilc@bgs.ac.uk
4th Thursday	Hampshire – Meet at The Lord Derby , North Warnborough. Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.
Last Thursday	Somerset – Meet at The Lord Nelson , Norton-sub-Hamdon. 8.00pm

CLUB WEBSITE

Members Only pages for May,

User name: mango

Password: chutney

EVENTS

From Webmaster Chris Nevard & David Hill

Events organised so far for 2003

May

Sunday 4th	Dorset Area Club Run to Exbury Gardens. Meet in Magna Road Lay-by at 09:30 for a classic "Colin Morris" scenic run to Exbury. Special group entry of £5 a head. Details from Ian Swinden, Tel: 01202 623002 or Pete Downton, Tel: 01202 515544
Sunday 4th	Classics on the Prom, Bournemouth, continues every Sunday until September 21st (not 28th as previously advised). Be there at 4pm.
Saturday 10th	North West Area visit to Oulton Park MG Race Meeting. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
Saturday 17th	MG National Event at Brands Hatch, Kent.



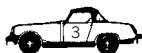
- Saturday 17th Walton on the Hill May Pageant. 2pm onwards. Surrey Area is in the procession. Please come and join us. Details from David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789
- Sunday 18th Atlantic Coast Express Run. Devon Area participation organised by Colin Lennox-Jones. SAE for entry forms to, 6 Trehill Road, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0AZ. Tel: 01752 892434. Email. clj@talkgas.net
- Sunday 18th Yorkshire Dales MGOC Dales Trail for all MGs and Classic Cars. Contact Tony Richardson, Tel: 01609 774295 or email: tony2.rich@excite.com.
- Saturday 24th to Tuesday 27th Surrey Area Tour to Dorset & Swanage. Details from David Wright, Tel. 0208 642 4789
- Sunday 25th Dorset MASC Regional Day II at Kingston Lacy. We're going back again this year following the success of last year's event. Details from Ian Swinden, Tel: 01202 623002 or Pete Downton, Tel: 01202 515544
- Sunday 25th North West Area visit to Quarry Bank Mill. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Thursday 29th to Sunday 1st Warwickshire Area trip to Josselin, Brittany. Details from Alan Couch, Tel: 01564 773302

June

- Sunday 1st New Forest Run organised as usual by Southampton & New Forest MGOC. Advance notice of this very popular event (More details to follow)
- Tuesday 3rd Brigg Classics Night at Brigg, Lincolnshire. From 5.30pm. Should be a good collection of MGs. Details from Cliff Wood, Tel: 01724 734 406. Entries before May 19th.
- Sunday 8th The 'Windwhistle Run' Again, advance notice of this repeat event – member Peter Young of Chard will forward more details nearer the time.
- Sunday 15th North West Area's Cheshire Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Sunday 15th Warwickshire Area Run to Chester Show. Leaving at 09:00. Details from Alan Barton 0121 351 2513.
- Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd MG Car Club International Weekend at Silverstone Circuit in Northants. Details from MG Car Club.
- Sunday 22nd Surrey Area are going to the British Airways Classic Vehicle Association Event at Cranford on the site of the old Heston Aerodrome at 3pm. Entry by classic car with a subsidised BBQ, bands, social afternoon and evening. Details from David Wright, tel: 0208 642 4789.
- Tuesday 24th Dorset Area run with MGOC to the "Bear and Ragged Staff", Romsey.
- Saturday 28th North West Area's visit to the Symphony at the Tower. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net

July

- Sunday 6th Warwickshire Area trip to Shelsey Walsh. Details from Stuart Watson, Tel: 01562 883076
- Sunday 6th Surrey Area BBQ chez Chris and Laura in Outwood. Join us and celebrate Surrey Area's 10th anniversary with a special cake made by Ashley and Denise Hinton! Details from David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789.
- Saturday 19th Great Western Rally at Bowood House, Wilts. Saturday
- Sunday 20th Road Run with inclusive visit to the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum, Calne. Sunday, in front of Bowood House with lots of events. Contact Terry Horler 01454 881770



- Sunday 20th Warwickshire Area Day Visit to Haynes Motor Museum. Details from Chris Yates, Tel: 01608 665066
- Sunday 20th North West Area visit to the Hoghton Tower Classic Car Show. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Sunday 27th North West Area taking part in the MGCC Peak District Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net

August

- Sunday 10th Dorset Area with MGOc 1020 Athelhampton Picnic (Details as last year or contact Ian Swinden, Tel: 01202 623002 or Pete Downton, Tel: 01202 515544
- Sunday 10th North West Area visit to Holker Hall. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Tuesday 12th Dorset Area Raid on Aston Martin Owners Club at the Fox and Goose, Combe Bisset, nr. Salisbury. 7:30pm. Meet at St. Peter's Finger for Club run.
- Saturday 16th Surrey Area's Autojumble or Furzewood Frolics! Bring your spare parts and trade at Chris and Jacqui Harding's, near Turner's Hill. BBQ and soft drinks at modest prices or bring your own picnic. Advertised locally and with MGOc and AHC. Details from David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789.

Saturday 30th 20 Years of MASC Rally at Beaulieu and the club's 40th birthday anniversary.

- Saturday 30th Classic Vehicle Show at Brigg, Lincolnshire. Should be lots of MGs there. 10am start. Details from Cliff Wood, Tel: 01724 734 406.

Sunday 31st AGM date and venue to be changed to October. Details TBA.

- Sunday 31st Surrey Area's Southdowns Run. Petersfield to Eastbourne. Details from David Wright, Tel. 0208 642 4789.
- Sunday 31st North West Area Visit to Cholmondley Castle Classic Car Show. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net

September

- DTA Thornfalcon Picnic Party. Dorset Area are planning a run to this event which is held at Hatch Beauchamp, near Taunton. Date and further details in due course.
- Friday 5th North West Area visit to the Morgan Motor Company. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Friday 5th to Sunday 7th Goodwood Revival Meeting, West Sussex.
- Sunday 14th North West Area is taking part in the West Lancs MGOc Classic Car run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net
- Saturday 13th Capel Classic Car Show. Details from David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789.
- Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th Warwickshire Area Weekend Tour of North Wales. Please note change of date. Details from Alan Barton, Tel: 0121 351 2513



October

Sunday 19th

Exmoor Rut. Devon Area participation organised by Colin Lennox-Jones. SAE for entry forms to, 6 Trehill Road, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 OAZ. Tel: 01752 892434. Email. clj@talkgas.net

November

Saturday 8th
& Sunday 9th

NEC Classic Car Show, Birmingham. MASC stand.

December

Sunday 7th

North West Area is taking part in the MGOc Christmas Cracker Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net

Tuesday 9th

Surrey Area Christmas Dinner.

Sunday 14th

North West Area's Christmas Dinner. Details from Les or Diane Robinson. Tel: 01772 432138 or email: les.robinson@breathemail.net

Area Reps please let me have confirmed dates for new events asap.

Remember there are Club Night Natters throughout the year and that area events are also open to members from other areas!

Please also note that the above lists only M&SC events or events where we have a presence or an interest. General classic events are listed in the classic press.

Mutual Assistance Directory

Unbelievably for West Wales we have not had rain for a very long time. Everything is so dry and we have had superb motoring weather. If you have not been to West Wales you should, it is beautiful and outside of the months of July and August, relatively traffic free. We also have some MAD members in Wales should you need assistance!

Looking through the Directory, I notice that most areas of the country (and some countries overseas) are well represented. However, we have in the county of

Hampshire, 11 members which is by far, the most of any county. It seems then, that the good people of Hampshire are really keen to help fellow members.

Don't forget, if you need a copy of the latest MAD you can download it from the members only section of our website but if you do not have access to the web or know someone who does, I will print off a copy and send it to you.

David Hill

Thought for Today (with apologies to Radio Four)

Read the excellent report in Classic & Sports Car May issue and the road test of the Honda S800 Vs 1275 Midget. Midget comes out of it quite well but the razzle dazzle of the Quad carb, twin cam 800cc Honda blinds them to the obvious values of the BMC product.

However one thought did occur to me. If the Honda had our gearing and diff it would do

142 MPH! If on the other hand we had theirs we could only manage 71 MPH flat out. Don't ever complain about your four speed box ratios being too short, the poor Honda has to deal with **11.9 mph per 1000 rpm** honest! Makes our 16.9 (1275) look positively overgeared.

Ed (19.8, Toyota 5 Speed) North



Twenty Years of MASC Remembered

Incredible as it may seem, it really was 20 years ago that eight enthusiasts of Spridgley things gathered together at the Lamb Inn, Iron Acton near Bristol for the very first meeting that led to the formation of our club. No one there at that time would have any idea that a club just for Spridgley things would catch on, leave alone that it would be alive and well twenty years on. From just 8 people, we now have well over 800 plus another 200 joint or family members – yes, it most certainly was a good idea!

From those original 8 back in April 1983, meeting on the 7th of April 2003 were Nigel Williams, John Ruderman and Terry Horler. Also, from the very early days were Dick and Karen Morris, Brendan Joyce, Trevor Scantlebury and Craig and Mo Large. Steve Proud, husband of long time Mascot editor Sue came along on a 'big' bike with son Jordan, Sue unfortunately feeling a little under the weather and probably remembering how she originally got roped into the job! Steve and Dick were both Competition Secretaries in the early days whilst John was both an Area Organiser and Club Chairman. Karen was involved with Mascot collation and distribution when the whole affair was very much a "front room" activity. Craig was one of our very first successful Area Organisers

back in his native land of Hereford. The other names may be familiar to you today. Although we still have many of our very early members still with us, there is a moment of great sadness. Lindy Clifton, who lost her battle with cancer last year, was a key person in getting the club of the ground from day one. Lindy was both our first Mascot editor and later, Treasurer. In whatever role, she always excelled and in no small way, has an honoured place in the history of our club.

Although just a gathering of locals in 1983, our 2003 meeting was anything but, stalwart AGM supporter Stuart Miller came all the way from Southampton, Nick and Maureen Sawyer from Bromsgrove, whilst Peter Hobson's home is in Rochdale. What wonderful support. In all, over 20 members and past members attended to mark that special meeting in 1983 that led to what we have today. It was so good to see so many Spridgley things in the car park of the Lamb once again.

Much has changed over those years but one thing still holds true – its all good fun. Here's to the next 20 years? Thanks to all who came, both near and far.

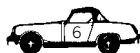
Terry Horler

Banff Canada Daily Driver?

Found this very tidy Big Healey parked in the street in Banff.

Although there wasn't much snow in the resort it was -5 and this guy didn't even have a hood!! So where are all the other 60's exports? If I can find one so can you! Photos please with a few details. First up is Bob Bunker, see letters. Can YOU do better?

Ed, Banff Canada





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Frogart



Excellent line drawing of an early sprite (hood studs!). Unaccredited image supplied by Mascot friend Ray English.

Great Western Rally 2003

19th–20th July

We are once again pleased to invite members to the Great Western Rally at Bowood House in Wiltshire. This long running two day event has settled into a successful formula of a Saturday Road Run and Sunday Rally in the grounds of Bowood House.

Last year we introduced a photo shoot for all cars leaving on the Road Run through the Rally start gate. Nearly 60 cars took part which kept photographer Carol busy snapping, processing and then distributing all the photos to the crews as they reached the finish. New for this year will be the finish at the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum at Calne. Free entry to the museum for all participants on the Road Run followed by a "Bring your own food" BBQ. For those wishing to stay overnight, then the Backlands Leisure campsite is just a few yards (Metres) along the road from the museum. As always, a highly detailed Road Book and Rally Plate are

provided to all crews plus an optional question sheet, Treasure Hunt Style, for those of a competitive nature. (And last year most were) Sunday is Rally day in the superb setting of Bowood, we have a full programme of events throughout the day. Two driving tests, two team events, a parade of cars, pride of ownership and this years special feature – 100 years of Ford (??) Our milestone this year is 20 years of MASC. As Masc members make up a good proportion of the rally organising committee and on the day marshalls, then we shall not pass un-noticed!

You can enter for either day, but better both. This event is designed for enthusiasts who enjoy driving their cars, appreciate the great outdoors, beautiful countryside and good company. Keep an eye on Mascot for further information but fill in your diaries for the 19th and 20th of July to be in Wiltshire for the 2003 Great Western Rally.

Terry Horler



Rally

BOWOOD HOUSE
2003
GREAT WESTERN RALLY

Saturday Road Run

Sunday Events Rally

Official Rally Campsite



www.gwrally.freeuk.com

- Themed route covering 50-60 miles
- 'Monte Carlo' style rally board
- Visit the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum
- Rally field in front of Bowood House
- Driving events, fun and competitive
- 'Pride of ownership' awards
- Club team events
- Spares traders
- Classic cars of all ages welcome

Bowood House Calne Wiltshire



19th & 20th July 2003

Entries & Enquiries Tel: 01225 832546

Great Western




BOWOOD HOUSE
2003
GREAT WESTERN RALLY
 SATURDAY 19th & SUNDAY 20th JULY 2003
 Sponsored by the Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum

BOOKING FORM

Please complete one of these forms for each vehicle entered and include relevant payment.

Name:

Tel. No:

Address:

E-mail:

Make:

Post Code:

Model:

Registration:

Year of Manufacture:

Car Club (if appropriate):

Please tick if you are interested in the Saturday Road Run. It starts at Bowood House covers about 50 miles & ends at the motor museum.

Please tick if you are interested in the Saturday Evening Barbecue (bring your own food). It takes place at the motor museum starting at 6 pm.

Please complete the appropriate boxes below and include your payment by cheque:

Rally entry fee	- £13.00	(includes full access to Bowood House and gardens)	£13.00
Road Run	- £ 5.00	(entry to the Museum & laminated rally board included)	<input type="text"/>
Camping Sat Only	- £10.00	(or £12.50 with electric hook-up)	<input type="text"/>
Camping Fri & Sat	- £19.00	(or £24.00 with electric hook-up)	<input type="text"/>
Early bird discount	-	(deduct £1.50 for entries sent before 30th June '03)	<input type="text"/>

Total enclosed: Cheques should be made payable to: 'GREAT WESTERN RALLY'

I confirm that the driver(s) of any vehicle holds a valid licence to drive a vehicle of the appropriate class and that any vehicle entered by me has a valid MOT, insurance, and motor vehicle excise licence.

Signed:

Dated:

Please send completed form(s) to:

Steve Neathay, 2 Bloomfield Rise North, Bath, BA2 2BU
 Any queries please phone: 01225 832546 (evenings/ weekends)
 or e-mail: gwrally@freenk.com

Official use only:
 / / 03 / 03



Webmonster



WEBMONSTER: Auto site of the month

First in a series of featured sites that help members link to the world of motorcars, motorsport and motor enjoyment! This month is... <http://www.prescott-hillclimb-school.co.uk/>

Prescott. Arguably the most famous hillclimb in the UK, GREAT fun. Pit yourself against the clock in a safe environment and enjoy expert instruction on the art of hillclimbing.

Mileage Competition Gathers Momentum

The Club mileage competition has now attracted 18 entries; 10 from Surrey, 7 from Scotland, and David Dixon representing Cambridge. Any more to come? Don't forget its open to all, so if you're in Australia get your entry in before it gets too cold!

The 18 entries are made up of

6 Frogeyes
1 Sprite Mk II

1 Sprite Mk III
9 Sprite Mk IV/Midget MkIII
1 Midget RB

The average age of the cars is 37 years and the highest recorded mileage is 257,513!

Does anybody use a spridget that's done more miles? Answers to David Southcott, dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk



Bodger's Corner

The Anonymous Bodger's Tip of the Month

Some of our dear readers may have found an Australian item on the net about reducing the diameter of a standard (late type) spridget steering wheel. About 9 months ago I was using a "60's" aftermarket wheel on my 1970 midge which looked the part wonderfully but had too thin a rim, driving made my hand ache chronically. The original wheel was in a bad state so I took careful note of the internet item and set about my wheel. In essence the trick is to strip the outer grip off the wheel, cut the rim off the spokes, shorten the spokes by 1" or whatever suites, cut 2 pi times that amount off the rim and re-weld everything back together. I am a bit of an engineer so made sure there was some "weld prep" on each new joint and I did get a proper welder to MIG it back together, but the result is at least as strong as the original. The only tricky bit is to put the grip back on. I had not been particularly careful taking it off in the first place, and a deal of

trimming is required to shorten it back whilst still retaining the mouldings around the spoke ends. Even so, when stuck back with "instant glue" the result is pretty pleasing. I think that with care and a better wheel to start with it all could work out very well. The result is a wheel that looks the part (so many modern wheels look "too modern") indeed to a brief glance it looks original, and, to make the point of the Australian originator of the idea, doesn't move the wheel any closer to the driver.



Another (not so) Anonymous Bodger!

Ed says: Thanks to another 'New Boy' Bodger Gavin. More from Gavin next month. Come on you lot I still need more AND I need it now!!!

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Surrey Area Report (May)

Our very special area of the bar at the The Blue Ball was occupied by non-classic car enthusiasts, so those of us who were early birds were squeezed up at one end.

However, as Surrey MASC regulars rolled in, we took over the bar bit by bit.

The David Southcott inspired mileage competition generate some interest, as whilst some felt that the Euro-Classic might chalk up a few thousand miles to achieve a good advantage, it was soon disclosed that Nic had already done 900 miles this year in his IOW Frogeye, which is his daily driver, so the pressure's on folks!

A brief difficulty after last month's meet of wrong coats being taken home had been totally resolved by the courtesy of all involved, and friendships strengthened as a result – what a bunch of helpful people we all are!

Five cars will be meeting up in 2 weeks time at the docks at Dover for a trip to the Champagne region in France, so much ado about what to take, where to meet etc.

Meanwhile, Ashley's researches show that it is the 10th Anniversary of the Surrey Area this year. We will be celebrating this tumultuous achievement as much as busy diaries will allow, but particularly at the annual summer BBQ, which this year will be chez Chris and Laura in Outwood. Ashley and Denise have kindly offered to produce a special cake for all of us, hopefully adorned with suitable vehicles on top, so we look forward to gorging ourselves on the 6th July.

Whilst deep in discussion, apparently, Tim and Helen cruised past the pub windows at ultra-slow speed, and on investigating, we found them in the car park, finalising their detailed analysis of their petrol tank's capacity – say no more!

It's great how events have a habit of materialising – Chris Harding's Autojumble is really taking off now, with date fixed of 16th August, refreshments planned, adverts being placed for Austin Healey and MG clubs as

well – hey we could offload our bits to someone else!

Again, whilst we were all deep in a number of conversations, the organiser of the local village pageant in Walton approached me asking if we would be interesting in joining their May Queen procession through the village. So far, we have 5 cars lined up, and look like being the larger part of the procession!

Next month – a pictorial record of the occasion.

And finally, Ashley has at enormous cost and after exhaustive research, produced the blanking plate that covers the area below the two master cylinders – it's a de-luxe version – powder coated, the works, and here's the photo to prove it. *Ed says: I also included his washer bottle frame* ☺

Ashley, also known as concours judge in chief at Brooklands and many other MG



events, has scooped a lump of tinware himself with his newly restored 1969 Midget – no we're convinced it was not a fix, and good for you Ashley, it must feel good to be on the receiving end for once.

So, look out for the extra events now featured in David Hill's splendid events listing, and

come and join us whenever you can. May Blue Ball meet may well have an evening run if the weather's good.

That's about all for now

See you all at the Blue Ball

David

Scotland Report – May

Here's the secret of good health. Say after me: 'I am well. I know I am well. I'm well because I haven't been to see a doctor'. Then I went to see doctor. Now Hulot's not in the garage. All that remains are the dehumidifier [as Alex Taggart's aunt rather nattily calls it] the heater & 3 fotos of a red J2 once owned by Stan D'Arcy & that's it. It was thru Stan that I had my 'Rosebud' experience [Citizen Kane]. The last time I saw him was in '76; yet was a cord bearer in '91. Extraordinary in its mystery, because I never appreciated nor understood his depth of friendship when it was with me. You'll recall that last year I got a run in the J2 with its shaking supercharged oil inducted aromatic aliveness, creating the impression that all further progress in car design should have been suspended rite there. I often look at the selotaped fotos of the J2 in the garage & laff, because I'm sure that Stan would be delighted with the little Midget parked beneath them. None of this is meant to be gloomy. Not in the slightest. Rather, it's my way of saying-look: time compresses on us all & never more so than during our infamously brief summers! Yet, fairly, you'll wonder how



Carson and Bob parked in a DOG zone (see sign in background). Ed says: Sorry Carson too good to miss!

all this squares? Quite easily, really. After the Doc's, I said, to hang with that; let's get on with it & extended my absence from the toil to an official ½ day's holiday, cranked up Hulot & drove the 22 miles to Rutherglen for mechanical recuperation & financial ruin. The short run was enjoyable. But it destabilised, for back at the playpen [work], the toil didn't seem as much super fun as usual, the mind taken far away, caught in wafts of sun filled anticipation. You've got it all by now boys. These are the vital hours. And in that vein, Hulot, Bob & I are leaving the country, as the Scottish contingent of the International Spridget Brigade, sailing for Holland in June. True heroes amongst men. Who said that!? There's no usage here; but Bob's a handy man to have as a co-driver being a believer; the rite size & weight [to save on the gasoline as he quickly deduced & of course, well able to change a spark plug!]. But this definitely isn't an exercise in selfishness, no: his addiction will be allowed & we aint talking wacky-backy here-Bob can strap his MIG welder to the luggage rack. There must be lots of windmills, bikes, possibly even metallic daffodils in need of repair. After that, Bob's internationality doesn't stop, because he is going to have a personal Funeral in Berlin to mark the end of his thirties, going there with a chum about to cross the same abyss from which no voyager has ever returned. 40. Jings, what a whirl. But our whirl will be envy free of New York Nick's Jack Kerouac & his travels on the open road, because we will have our own Joseph Conrad, the sea & if we get blown off course, the Western Approaches [any excuse to say Western Approaches because it sounds so fabulously Boy's Ownish!]. Other news. Jim McGuinness's cat likes to sit on top of the control box of his wide screen TV. That was

fine, until one weekend the cat got too hot, had an upset & the TV went *kaput*. So, with the cat in its proper box, Jim & his wee daughter went into the garage &, after 6 weeks' slumber, one turn of the key & the Mk1 was awake [if only all things in life were as reliable as 1275's – Ha!] & off they went, burbling thru Torrance to the cattery. Alex Taggart's new garage has got a spot of water coming thru the roof; so the RWA's got a tarpaulin over it. The car seems to be running on 3 cylinders until after 20 minutes when everything clears. Alex thinks it's some kind of determined condensation. Reporting on the matter from the end, back to the start, immediately introduces Alan's terrific looking Sprite which sat in the car park with ice on its tonneau. But Alan's a hardy lad, &, on departure, without a jacket-not sure he's actually got one fired up. He didn't hang about; zipping away, head lites cutting over the moor, the Oselli exhaust haunting the silence. There had been 5 of us at the meeting. Alan you know about. Bob, well Bob had spent the day at a business meeting

in Leeds & had flown strait to Sherriffmuir, as it were. How about that for a deserved well done? The chums were all alone. When Ricky, his son-in-law David & the chatterbox [me] arrived we were welcome sights to Alan & Bob because at 8.40pm they had given up on us; so we went strait into the snug, the walls reverberating to the call of 'Fun in Cumbria!' HEE ME OORI-ISHT.

CARSON AND CHUMS

Ps. I recently met an old lady pushing her leatherette basket out of the supermarket car park – she must have had a bit of a trek in front of her. We got on the chat. She said she was in her 90's & didn't want to live to 100 & be a burden to anyone! I cheered her up by mentioning MG's!! 'Ah, my husband had a red one of those. I think I held a candle in the garage while he did repairs more often than it was on the road'. I just couldn't bring myself to ask if it was a J2.

Ed says: Carson, did you at least find out if it was STILL IN THE GARAGE ☺

Warwickshire's April Report

This has been a month of firsts for us: the first big meeting of the year and our first run. Both were very successful and it just shows that the Warwickshire contingent is going from strength to strength.

There were 23 in total at this month's meeting; consequently, we are considering new seating arrangements to ensure we all fit in. We are made to feel very welcome at the Moat House Inn and now have a section of the bar area reserved for us, which is just as well with our increasing numbers.

At the meeting on 29th May, we discussed arrangements for our weekend run and the



Group photograph

trip to Josselin. The conversation centred on the requirements for driving abroad and, I think, there have been a number of cars driven in France in the past without the full kit! We are looking forward to the club's annual event at Beaulieu and have changed the date for our Welsh Weekend, so that it does not clash. Alan had details of a number of Show Events and Chester has been added to the itinerary, being the only one that did not clash with our existing arrangements. We intend to join the South Staffs and Birmingham Group at the Greenman next month, as well as our usual meeting.

With Stuart Gunn building flagpoles, Kim Hadley has kindly offered to make the flags, so we are going to be very distinguishable, and distinguished, at the next show.

Alan Barton, finally, seems to be preparing himself for the restoration of his Frogeye! And Mo Wood would very much like to drive her car in Heartbeat, so if there is anyone out there with appropriate connections please contact us.





Filling up

On Sunday, 13th April, 12 cars met at the Royal George in Birdlip. The day was dry and at times very sunny, although it did cloud over towards the evening. Following the group photograph; Chris and I led the way along single track roads and through villages of traditional cottages in Cotswold stone. Everyone kept together, and my fear of losing cars along the way was not realised. However, we did have some moments of excitement, as our windscreen wipers suddenly started on their own, followed by a clattering sound. A passing walker picked up our air-filter and kindly returned it to Chris, who nonchalantly tossed it aside when he realised it was broken beyond repair. Unfortunately, Andy had to attend to some more significant repairs at Burford, but he had loads of advice and, of course, we all waited for him to change his points and

condenser before setting off again. It is always fun to watch people's faces, noticing their pleasure at seeing the old cars change to astonishment as the line progresses. I am also amazed that we can spend our time sitting in traffic jams on the major motorways, when we seem to travel freely through these lovely lanes. We did meet one huge lorry at one of the farm entrances, but it moved off the road and did not bar our route for long.

It was a popular day for local events and we passed point-to-point meetings, a classic motorbike run and the more usual cyclists and walkers. It was only with difficulty that we managed to prevent some members from joining the other activities. Mindful of our creature comforts, we had arranged to stop for morning coffee in Bibury, lunch in Burford and afternoon tea in the Broadway Tower Country Park. Four cars left us at Burford, while Moe and Nick Sawyer joined us in their Black MG Midget, so nine of us completed the afternoon section. It was a whole day of leisurely driving for those who want to use their toys "pride and joys", with wonderful scenery for the passengers and everyone was good company and fun to be with.



Running repairs

Sheila Yates



At Broadway Tower



Somerset Area Report

A quick report from Somerset area is overdue so here goes!

Most of our cars have now completed their winter upgrades and overhauls ready for the summer season.

My own Midget has returned from the bodyshop having received a long overdue respray in Old English White. This now shows the deficiencies in the chrome and other trim so the refurbishment is not yet completed

Peter and Valerie have also completed bodywork repairs to the rear of their 1500 Midget where some wet rot (apologies for surveyor speak) had taken hold. John Rathbone has sorted a carburation problem on his Sprite, which I witnessed on the return from the last meeting. Brian Pyes car is in

fine fettle and ready for action. Malcolm is nearing completion of his Mk 3 Midget re-build so looking forward to seeing the car soon

As for events we met at The Windmill East Quantockhead on the Quantock Hills on Sunday 23rd March for a pub lunch. Peter Young and my own car were still in the workshops so Peter and Valerie collected me in their new Subaru Impreza Turbo. Slightly quicker than a 1275 Midget.

Future events include a run next Sunday to Bournemouth Parade on the Prom with lunch en route. The weather has been superb in recent weeks so I am hoping it will hold for Sunday

That's all for now

David Bearne

Lincolnshire Area Report

We drew up into the car park of The Henage Arms to be greeted by Roger's Sprite and new member Alan's Frogeye. What a wonderful sight on a sunny spring evening. It makes you even more determined to give that push to get yours on the road.

Now after reading the Editors comment at the bottom of my article last month we have come up with a challenge for you! With the light nights now upon us why not try and seek the Lincolnshire area out if only to prove to us you do know where we are ☺

Now back to our meet. I said last time that I was getting technically minded. Big mistake, what on earth are these men going on about? Does it really matter if your crankshaft journals are half a thou out or how do you know if your sprockets are worn? Apparently according to Phil you can tell just by looking at them. What on earth is a sprocket? More to the point what does it do?

Now the men are going on about autojumbles WHY! It is all a jumbled up mess. Does anyone know what they are buying at the

time? You must, because when you get home the part or whatever always seems to fit. But persevere I will. There must be some ladies out there in the Lincs. area that own one of these wonderful cars that can come and help me out. Phil's wife Lynn and the other Brian's wife, Sue, say why bother with Autojumbles lets go shopping instead. I must say I am slowly coming round to their way of thinking!

It was suggested by members that we organise a run out maybe to Whitby and the surrounding area, also to take up David Dixons offer to meet up with his tribe (what a day that will be).

In my last report I am afraid I got a bit muddled with which car belonged to whom. Apparently Roger has the Sprite and John has a Midget I do apologise for getting that wrong. By the time we have our next meet The Easter break and May Day break will be over with. We are all hoping that our cars will be getting nearer completion and near to being roadworthy. I am certain that as our group grows we also will be able to organise events but for now we are still getting to know each



other's needs. So to anyone out there that is reading this and belongs to the club or maybe you, like us last year, are not satisfied with other clubs why not come and give us a whirl. We are a happy bunch and although sometimes it gets technical we have a lot of fun and a laugh.

We are quite proud that in such a short space of time we have a good cross section of cars.

One frogeye in excellent roadworthy condition. One frogeye in restoration. Sprites, c/b midgets and r/b midget

Finally we meet the first Thursday in the month at The Henage Arms at Hainton near Wragby at 8pm we all look forward to welcoming new members

Sue Sumner

Wiltshire Report April

We met as usual on the first Tuesday.

Barry is still trying to sort out his apparent fuel problem, which only seems to occur on a long, full throttle climb in low gear.

It does seem to point to a pump problem, but we'll have to wait and see.

I went to a little show at Newbury on Sunday April 6th, which I saw advertised as a Classic bike show, which regulars might remember is another interest of mine, and on arriving on the Speed Twin, (Yes it has new wheels now!!), I discovered that it was also a classic Car show, so it was of double interest.

There were a wide variety of both bikes and cars but no Midgets. A special Boat shaped Reliant Robin was unusual and drove there but no Midget pictures I'm afraid. (Perhaps next year!!)—It's very early in the year for a show so I'll hope to be there next time.

My 'Other Club' Treasure hunt took place on Sunday last. I had a very busy time tearing around getting loads of Tulip Charts ready, and re-driving the route to make sure nothing had changed, since the first few

times. Sadly only three cars turned up, but we had a very pleasant lunch at the halfway point, and the weather was very kind too so it was still an enjoyable day.

I wished there was an easy way to plan a treasure hunt at times but in the end it seemed to go down O.K.

The show season is about to start in earnest soon so I've got to get out the Midget and give it a spring clean and a service (and paint and fit the off side wing I bought last year), as it has to go to Andover on Easter Monday for the first Club Show.

I'm a little jealous of Malcolm as his beautifully built R.W.A. Midget has been in use already whenever the weather has been suitable, while I'm in the garage trying to get all my Projects finished.

I found a picture of the two cars taken while we were being interviewed by Wiltshire Radio for the G.W.R. Show last year, (you might remember that Terry Horler was interviewed about the show live at the time, while we showed the presenter what a Spridget looked like).

If Mike prints the picture, Malcolm's MUCH nicer Midget stand by him at the rear while my example is closer (I'm behind the camera).

I'll try and get a better picture for Malcolm's midget this year!

Ian Rider (Wiltshire area Rep)



April Meeting South Staffs and North Birmingham Area

What a night! Here we are, 2nd April, Nine members, seven Spridgets and one Chairman all crowded around a table in a quite busy pub. Alan Barton came a'visiting at last and we had Geoff, Gavin, Peter and Laurence as well as Arthur and Carol, and us two Bills. We were very busy with conversation a'flowin' and a'ebbin'. Alan invited us along to Warwickshire's April run, "A day in the Cotswolds". With luck some of us may be able to get along and join in with them. Reports later if achieved, Mike.

We have pencilled in our first day out as May the 11th which will be a run from Middleton (or Bassetts Pole MacDonalds!) down to Coventry Airport (Baginton) for a gaze at the Vulcan being restored there and a look around their museum. Then down the A46 to Wellesbourne to see their Vulcan followed by a gentle ride up Edge Hill and a run along the Fosse Way into the Cotswolds stopping early evening for a meal at some suitable pub. Then back towards Brum along the Stratford Road to round off the ride. No racing or rallying involved! Meet at whichever spot is decided at 10 o'clock-ish. Any others wishing to come along, come along, do. If any need

to ask, the Vulcans are just an excuse for a ride and actually entering the relative museums is optional.

After the meeting we all dispersed in Topless Spridgets, except Alan whose car is, he assures us, in a million pieces. Perhaps he had better adopt us as well as Warwicks and maybe we may wander around some times and screw some of its bits together for him. I was last off the car park with Lara and found it a really exhilarating trip along the Middleton Mile in the total darkness, except for my Halogen Fox startlers, under a blaze of stars. (ooh get him, gone all lyrical, in his old age!) I caught up with Geoff in Roughley and we drove sedately, honest hoffer!, home to Four Oaks and Streetly.

Seven cars and no sign of Steve or Matthew our Webmaster who told us by email to expect them, at the meeting. Any queries about the Vulcan Run call me on 01213537211 or email me at bill.mohan@btopenworld.com I'll do my best to answer them for you.

Bill (Temporary Scribe) Mohan

NW Area – May Report

There are a few changes to our events schedule. The visit to Holker Hall has been moved to 16th August. This is to coincide with their 25th Anniversary. If you wish to attend then please let me know a.s.a.p. The second change is the planned visit to Morgan cars. This will now take place on Friday 22nd August (although still to be confirmed). Places are restricted and filling fast, so again contact me a.s.a.p. if interested.

There was a good turn out at the last meeting. Unfortunately I didn't go in the Sprite as my dynamo wasn't charging. Took it to the local auto electricians for a second opinion. At this point I was given the professional diagnosis – 'its knackered mate'. Anyway its now sorted and I'm back on the road.

On 10th May we are going to Oulton Park. The MGCC have an event here. The plan is to meet at the Little Chef on the A49 at junction with A533. Meet about 11:00am and then travel in convoy. You can always arrive earlier for breakfast or a coffee of course. Hope to see you there.

Finally, good news, we have had our first baby. No not me and Diane, those days are long gone thankfully, but the NW Centre. So congratulations to Andrew and Rachael on the birth of their baby boy. That's it for now, see you at the Kiltern on 14th May.

Les and Diane

Ed says: Congratulations on the new member and a busy couple of month in prospect



Dorset Area

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'Robsfrogs': An inside view of a business that advertises in 'Mascot'

Part 16 (cont from last issue)

Special 'K' is finally up and running. It seems that it was ages ago that I first started rebuilding the shell, in the cold grey garage that had to first be brought above freezing with the help of my little space heater, and now to think that it's spring, spooky. I am very pleased with the way it has turned out, it handles much like a froggy, with the hard rear banging over the bumps and the steering sharp and precise, turning the whole car into bends like no other normal family or even hot hatch can do. No wallowing or leaning.

The engine is superb, it has so many advantages over a tuned 1275cc capable of keeping up with the 'K' series. It can be driven slowly through traffic without fuss from up rated camshafts and when ordered to it will accelerate away at a very decent rate of knots leaving others in its wake. The engine seems very flexible and strong, as well as quiet so as not to attract the wrong sort of attention from the old bill etc. It's stock looking body has people looking on with smiles and pointing, that left me feeling embarrassed with pride. I was a bit sad to see it go to its new owner, even after some trying times that caused one or two fraught moments. I would have loved to have taken it to some shows to show it off. Strangely I bumped into a guy that had a moggy traveller that also had a 'K' series under the bonnet, check out www.minormania.co.uk.

One or two things I would like to have changed on the frog would have been to add a brake servo to make the brakes stronger, the brakes were OK and would have got better once the new discs and green stuff pads had bedded in.

The clutch set up worked superbly from the start with no problems once the correct cable tension was achieved.

The gearbox with it's short gear stick is very positive and now that it's further back feels really to hand. It's great having that fifth gear, the driving experience has to be felt to be appreciated, there's no thrashing the engine to keep to motorway speeds, just much more relaxed.



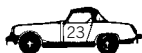
Oh well special 'K' is gone so on to my next project, no sorry not the green monster just yet, the countryman has to wait a while longer until my MGB is re-trimmed, after all it has been in the garage for a few more months than I had planned since special 'K' took

the limelight. I am thinking of putting a 'K' series into the MGB, but only if anyone is interested in buying it, open to sensible offers you, know how to contact me. **Rob**

Owners View (The Final Word!)

Rob did exactly as he said he would and could do! He completely re-built an Austin Healey Sprite Mark 1 (Frogeye) squeezed a Rover 1.6 K Series engine into it and modified the various running gear and suspension components to handle it all! I have a passion for fast modified classic cars and RobsFrogs was able to fulfill my requirements exactly in the form of the appropriately named Special 'K' as painstakingly detailed in the progress reports! The Ford gear box is smooth and concise with a nice low down rev range in gear 2, stepping up to gear 3 at about 5 Grand makes things hairy and the exhaust sounds give it more intent! The tuned suspension with telescopic dampers keeps things interesting, Brembo discs give me the confidence! and I am sure that the Pan Hard Rod Kit keeps it all together! In a Nutshell? Well, its fast and furious, nicely sorted and would make the hardest of pure track day specialists queue up for another drive!

Hard to believe it's finished! Big thanks to Rob for sharing. NICE car!



1967 MK3 MG Midget Brochure



Ed says: Thanks Ashley for this excellent brochure reproduction. All rights acknowledged, illustrated for review purposes only. See next month for the external illustration.

Letters

Another, 'Letter from America'

Baby pigeons and rats are making daisy chains amongst the bucolic setting of slime covered subways and decaying park benches. Love is in the air and allergies are settling in for a month long stay in my nose. It's springtime in New York!

Other than a bias I have against these most pollinated of months, life in general is going well in the Big Apple. The world has yet to model itself on a Lennon-esque ideal of peace and harmony, but my sphere of being has been filled by nothing but good news and exciting prospects.

Firstly, I must report on the reason you receive this fine newsletter – hint, it is Spridget related. My '73 Midget is a bit sickly but the prognosis looks okay. After a tune-up and various system checks, a hesitation under acceleration reared its ugly head. A shame, since the engine feels strong and smooth under steady throttle. A splash of 'dry-gas' solution in the tank should clear the problem – or so says the man who took my check (that's Cheque in English: Ed) and knows better than I.

So the Midget is under the weather. So why the upbeat attitude? Well, I have been lucky enough to start upon a career path which will one day will lead to a job doing what I love. The



good folks at Classic Cars Magazine have published my first gin-u-wine (as us Americans like to say) automotive article. I know, it is a shameless plug. But it is not as if I am forcing you to pick up the (May!) issue and read the article (titled 'Cold War Thaw'!!). I am merely mentioning this good news in passing, nothing more.

I was also fortunate to attend my first auto show as a member of the press. For two days I was amongst the automotive big-wigs at the New York International Auto Show. It was a new and strange experience to be pampered and catered to. The doors to all the vehicles were unlocked, and the gearknobs were still there! I could get used to this journo. gig.

I couldn't resist hoping into a few of the more ridiculous examples on display. The Mercedes-Benz G-wagon was present in all its chrome and leather glory. Did you know AMG has begun tuning these monstrosities? For \$91,000 you too can own a solid-axled ex-German military vehicle dressed up for inclusion in any number of gangsta-rap videos. I swear, stuffing a roll of socks down the front of your trousers has the same effect and costs a lot less. Don't even get me started on GM's Hummer lineup.

There were some fantastic models on display. Chrysler's Crossfire has to be seen to be believed. The proportions are right and it is much smaller than it looks in pictures. But the highlight of the show had to be piloting the Honda FCX (see photo) hydrogen-powered vehicle in New York City traffic. I was doing well until the Honda engineer in the back informed me that the car costs around two million dollars. Yes, two million dollars and I am weaving in and out of yellow-cabs and crumbling Ford pickups. My palms went sweaty and I made sure to thank my co-pilot and fellow part-time auto journalist who had decided to ask the 'how much is it worth' question. There I was, 24 years old and driving my first press-car. And the damn thing is worth two million dollars!

All in all, it was a fantastic and frantic few days. I met an amazing array of friendly people and have leads on many more articles for the near future. Hopefully my own car will be in fine fettle to begin what promises to be a busy summer of driving and writing. It should make my allergies a bit more bearable.



Does this look like a two million dollar vehicle? No, it didn't to me either!
Picture was taken from <http://hondacorporate.com/fcx/>. Full copyright acknowledged, reproduced here for review purposes only.

Ed says: Another masterpiece from Nick. Also, a big 'well done' on your first commercial success (Classic Cars May issue). Another famous author who got his start in Mascot!

New York Nick



Scottish Letter

I mention fun a lot. But here are revelations on getting there.

Starting the Midget calls for a disciplined series of actions. First. Go to the toilet [twice]. Then have two smokes in the garden. Proceed to open side garage door. Disconnect heater or dehumidifier depending on weather. Go back into house and apply more anti-stink [deodorant]. Come back out and pace about a good deal. Open garage door [front]. Admire stainless steel boot rack and wonder if you really have to do this today. Well do you? Try and get at least some kind of mental grip. Approach car thru open door. Sway about a bit and do deep breathing exercises. Then apply the I- was- Houdini's- assistant squiggle to get in [well done snakehips]. But what's the firing technique going to be today? Foot on clutch and leave it there. Technically naughty. Slight touch of gas pedal. Lift can of 3 in 1 oil from passenger seat. Apply to choke cable. This involves contortions still holding feet steady. Pull slowly. No use. More vigour required. To hang if it snaps for these are desperate moments. Long or short bursts of the key? Get confused. Use both. Practise a smile. Brrrrrr- uh- brr blurp. It's not going to catch- oh my gosh AA! Again. Try again. Does catch. Runs. Sweet relief. Never really had a moment's doubt you know. Attaboy Hulot. Listen for diff. backlash reversing out of garage. Heard it. Reassuring. Fuss? What fuss? Now we are on our way to fun.

Carson from the North

Ed says: Southern version differs in so much as we have a clothes Peg on the choke!

PS: Has Carson sneaked in a 2nd report ☺

Sri Lanka Membership Pending?

I do hope it is not too late to submit my entry for the 2003 Terry Horler Most-Off -The-Map-Spridget-Spotting Award.

I know that the cruel and unrelenting Mr Horler (the "jury-of-one") has heaped abuse on entries in previous years, and I accept that my earlier submissions (of Spridgets in Laos and Vietnam) did lack photographic proof.

So here we have it – photographic evidence of a Spridget in Sri Lanka. Now I am sure that Mr Horler will dispute this, and claim it is a photomontage taken behind the corner-shop of Mr Patel the newsagent, but honestly, it WAS in Sri Lanka....

Sri Lanka is a paradise for Brit car fanatics. The place is crawling with Morris Minors, and of course the ubiquitous Hindustani Ambassador (a Morris Oxford built under licence in India), which is the taxi of choice throughout India and the subcontinent. One of the reasons both these cars have withstood the onslaught of Japanese brands is their rugged simplicity, coupled with a whole subculture and backyard infrastructure of little chaps squatting in alleyways who can fix anything, source anything, or remanufacture what they can't. Also, as one taxi-driver pointed out, if you hit a water-buffalo in a Mitsubishi, the car disintegrates; if you do the same in an Ambassador, you don't even notice it... (although the water-buffalo generally doesn't think much of it...)



Bob Bunker – Hong Kong

Ed says: Thanks Bob, also see editorial, any more?



In Praise of the MASC Website

I'm not your usual sycophantic letter writer, but how about this for reaching the spots other websites can't?

Some of you will know that my midget has to share garage space with two other older cars. Getting my 1955 Hillman ready for the season I was considering changing the polarity of the electrical system from +ve to -ve earth, but wanted to check out the pros and cons first. Thinking that there's something about every subject on the world wide web I looked up a few likely sites but gained no real information. OK lets do a search I thought. Result – a very comprehensive and informative two pages from our very own MASC website. Truly world class!

Does anyone out there know, or can recall, why cars changed from -ve to +ve earth in the 1930s?

David Southcott, dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk

Ed says: WEBMONSTER would be proud!!

Metro Carbs

There was a very good article in the May 1997 edition of mascot (page 8) written by Sam Barraclough on the subject of fitting a MG Metro manifold and carb. Before you think that I am a bit sad for remembering a 6-Year-old article, I was in the process of doing the same conversion at that time.

This is a brief summary of my own conversion, although there is quite a number out there some using the Metro Turbo manifold, as the carb sits at a lower level negating the need to chop the top of the carb.

The carb off the MG Metro is a HIF44 (I seem to remember that the HIF6 is similar); it's quit a simple conversion but the tricky bit is removing about 5 to 7 mm from the bottle neck depending on how new (high) the engine mounting rubbers are. I carefully cut the top off with a hacksaw; if you have access to a suitable lathe then this would be a better bet. The damper rod needs to be shortened by the same amount, meaning that there is now no room for the top circlip, which is, dispensed of. The manifold accentually just bolts on; the same vacuum blanking plug off the twin carb manifold can be reused. The new manifold is then plumbed into the cooling system replacing the copper pipe that runs at the top of the block. New accelerator and chock cables may need to be purchased, as the old ones could be too short. Also use steel braided fuel hose has their is no exhaust heat shield.

Please find attached a photo of my single carb conversion.

Note: The neck of dash pot in this photo has been cut too low so there is nothing to screw the damper into (this became the Mk1!). However it enabled us to find the right height for the Mk2 version.

Chris Tideswell

Chris.tideswell@ntlworld.com

Ed says: Sad? No, impressive yes. Nice follow up, thanks Chris (Nice photo)



More Carbs

Firstly thanks to both of you for answering my plea for help in MASCOT. The reason for the joint reply is that you both have suggested that a reduction in carb height may do the trick. I must admit to have only done some ad hoc measuring but I had come to the conclusion that I was going to be overweight by something in the order of 1.5" +. Am I really less (much less) than an inch too high with the metro manifold?

Any ideas how to check? I enjoy running Midge so much that I don't relish doing a trial run. I had actually considered putting a plasticene "hat" on the front carb and shutting the bonnet on it to get some idea of clearance! Any other ideas??

Once again thanks for your input.

Gavin Manion

gavin.dawn@virgin.net

Longest MASC ownership?

I was interested in the letter from Reggie Roberts in the March 2003 edition of Mascot. Whilst appreciating his technical tip for replacing the Jubilee clip on the bottom hose, I was particularly interested in the Editor's footnote which said that Reggie has (he thinks) the longest ownership in the club.

I also bought a new Sprite Mk2 which I have managed to hang on to! It featured in the February 2000 edition of Mascot where I gave an account of my ownership of 416 UNY. It was first registered on 10th June 1963 and is therefore coming up to it's 40th birthday. At the end of my article I said that it was my ambition to keep it for 50 years and I am sure the car will last but occasionally have doubts about myself!

I would be fascinated to find out if Reggie has had his Sprite longer than I have or, indeed, if there are any longer ownerships in the club.

Tom Shell – Devon Branch

tomshell@amserve.com

Ed says: Thanks Tom for this friendly Challenge!! David Symes may be able to help? Reggie, when did you buy yours? Anyone else got a Mk2 from new OR EVEN A frogeye ... lets find out.

Members services letter

I hope that all is well with you. I wonder if you could place the below advert in the next issue of Mascot. Are adverts free for members?(Yes. Ed) I can't remember. If not please let me know how much I owe you.

Holiday Cottage in West Wales. Situated on a non working farm near to the lovely West Wales coast this 2 bedroom (4 beds) 17th century cottage has modern bathroom and kitchen with traditional dinning room and lounge. Secure parking, undercover if required. Superb roads, friendly people and in a quiet, secluded spot. Phone David Hill on 01239 811423 for details.

David

Ed says: Not strictly a car/ car parts advert for 'Sales and Wants' so its here in letters, but it is a genuine advert from a trusted member. So if you want to rent a cottage in Wales, here you are! NB. All non car related adverts subject to Ed's approval.



London Bridge Meet

I'm organising a Midget and Sprite drive from Tower Bridge ending at Ham House (car park) on 1st of June this year.

Along the way we will be driving over approximately twelve bridges from tower Bridge to Putney Bridge then through Richmond park (for the third year running).

Obviously you are completely welcome to join us.

Please find the enclosed invitation. I would be grateful if it could be published in Mascot but appreciate firstly, that it is not an official Midget & Sprite Club "sanctioned" event. And secondly, that deadlines may make it's inclusion impossible. If it's not possible, could you at least print my e-mail address so that people may get further information from me.

I did the dry run last Sunday with the Frogeye in beautiful sunshine, and had an absolute ball.

Gary L

anything@frogeye.glowinternet.com

Ed says: This sounds great, see advert else where.

An Invitation to



The First Ever Sprites & Midgets Across The Bridges Meeting at Tower Bridge

1st June 2003 2:00pm

It will be **FREE**, It will be **SUNNY**, It will be **FUN**

**And you will not get lost, as you will be
given directions**

Contact Gary Lazarus

H) 020 7267 8058 W) 020 7485 7485

e-mail gary@frogeye.glowinternet.com



More on Screws and Screwdrivers

Editor's Note: Following our book review about the history of the screwdriver, and the reference it contained to an old article in MASCOT about Phillips head screws, we have been inundated from newer members wanting to see this article, including a particularly poignant plea from "Worried Scuffed-Knuckles" of Bristol, who wanted to know why his screwdriver kept slipping out of the slot. Fortunately the editorial office of MASCOT these days is a seething hotbed of cutting edge technology operating 24/7 to bring members the very best. By utilizing our new specially developed software suite, MASC Automated Search, Collation And Retrieval Archive (MASCARA), we have instantly found the article, which was written by somebody who called himself "Frank Lee Spekin", and who described himself as "Our American Correspondent" (clearly a "nom de plume" – or should I say "nom de laptop"?). Actually, looking through MASCOTs of that period, we had a lot of very shy writers hiding behind pseudonyms – we had a "Norwegian correspondent" who called himself "Bengt Axelrodd", and a "French Correspondent" called "Jacques le Trollez", who at one stage engaged in a ding-dong war of words with another "Frenchman" who signed himself "A.X. le Stand"....

Anyway, here is the article...

If frustrated motorists and handymen ever unite and take up their spanners in protest, the small town of Gloucester, Massachusetts may well be their target, since this is the headquarters of the Phillips Screw Company, producer of the screw with the recessed cross, probably one of the world's least-loved inventions. The reason for this lack of favour is, as we all know, the screwdriver's maddening tendency to slip out of a Phillips head instead of turning it – a phenomenon known in the trade as "cam-out", which causes stripped screw-heads, skinned knuckles, lost tempers and untold domestic discord. One might well feel that this results from some innocent design flaw – not a bit of it! Read on...

Another disadvantage of Phillips screws is that they come in a variety of sizes, and if the screwdriver doesn't match the screwhead, it won't work. A coat of paint can make a Phillips screw almost impossible to remove, whilst a coin or similar – which can often work on a conventional slotted screw – is useless when it comes to the Phillips screwhead.

Even Ben Taber, the president of the Phillips Screw Company and a keen DIY man, admits that he has cursed his company's temperamental fastener when doing odd jobs at home. So, was all this part of an evil plot by the Phillips Screw Company? Some bruised handymen certainly think so, whilst others subscribe to the theory that Phillips screws were invented to stop schoolboys from removing signs from toilets with a coin.

The screw itself was invented by one Henry Phillips, a businessman from Portland, Oregon with a bent for gadgets and things mechanical. He knew that car makers needed a screw that could be driven with more torque and one that would hold tighter than the slotted screw. Moreover, it was also vital that the screwdriver would centre easily and quickly. In the 1903's, Mr. Phillips came up with his now-familiar recessed-cross screw, cunningly designed so that automated screwdrivers would turn the screw with increasing force until the tip of the driver popped out.

This really brings us to the scandal behind the whole invention of this fiendish little screw – it was actually DESIGNED so that it would cam-out as the power driver screwed it home, and the screw-head wouldn't be ruined by having excessive torque applied to it. The big U.S.screwmakers were at the time quite happily making slotted head screws and saw no need to let their oligopoly go. They just laughed at Mr. Phillips and his screw. "The manufacture and marketing of these articles does not promise sufficient commercial success to warrant involving ourselves further" – so wrote the American Screw Co to Mr Phillips in 1933. But he persevered. In the late 1930's he finally talked General Motors Corp.'s Cadillac division into giving his invention a try. The Philips screw took a hold and just never let go. Soon, World War II broke out, and Detroit started making jeeps and other fighting vehicles for the armed forces, and the newfangled fastener went behind, and gradually the Phillips screw worked its way into other industrial applications, and then into consumer products, and eventually showed up in hardware stores.



Just to cheer you all up, new developments are coming on the fastener front, and the news is good and bad. Cam-out can be defeated, but to do so you need yet another full set of screwdrivers. Phillips Screw Co. is promoting what might be called the “Phillips Antidote”, but it is actually known as ACR, for “Anti Cam-out Recess. The screw looks just like a Phillips, but there are tiny ridges inside the screw head. On the tip of the screwdriver are matching ridges. The ridges lock together to prevent slippage – and in fact astronauts have used ACR-type screws and drivers to make repairs in orbit. Also, a competitor has arrived on the scene, called Torx. A Torx Screw looks somewhat like a Phillips, but the sides of the recess are straight up-and-down, instead of angled inward, so the screw does not cam-out.

Frustrated handymen can take some comfort in the knowledge that Mr. Phillips and the Phillips Screw Co. didn't live happily ever after following the introduction of their diabolical instrument. The company never actually produced the screws or drivers it invented. Instead, it licensed others to do that under its patents. But unlicensed copies of the Phillips screw proliferated as the original won more and more acceptance in the tool and hardware trade. Eventually, the company lost control of a market it created and dominated, and in 1949, Mr. Phillips by then in retirement, was stripped of his patent.

Oddly enough, little is known about Mr. Phillips. Phillips Screw says it lost touch with him after he left the company. He died in 1958 at the age of 68. It isn't known whether he died a pauper or a rich man. “Although if we still owned the patent,” says the company's President, “we'd all be billionaires.”

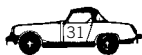
Ed says: Well that's all cleared up then!

‘59 Frog Technical Answer

In the April edition (issue 232), Geoff Hunter asks, on page 28, about a clearance problem he encountered in fitting later twin piston rear wheel cylinders to his 1959 Frogeye. Straight away I can say that the clearance between the wheel cylinder dust covers and wheel hub is very minimal indeed, even on the later cars designed to have these cylinders. It is certainly very common to see the rubbers worn away or dislodged by the rotation of the hub. This is exasperated by the rather hit and miss retaining spring clip that supposedly secures the wheel cylinder to the backplate. However, the fitting of the twin piston cylinders and corresponding backplate to Spridgley things formerly fitted with the single piston cylinder does indeed throw up another problem. When I went down this road I encountered the brake drums rubbing against the brake backplate. No amount of measuring up really exposed the cause of this error. The distance between the backplate mounting flange and bearing shoulder on the axle appeared to be the same. Certainly, all the brake drums are the same in this respect. I can only therefore suspect the hub itself as this was the only item I didn't check as I believed them to all be the same – but something is different. If your brake drum clears the backplate then you should have less of a clearance problem with the dust covers to hub than I must have – so ignore it. Should you find that the drums scrape against the backplates when the wheels are on and fully tightened, then you can overcome this by fitting a spacer between hub and brakedrum. This, I had to resort too. I made mine from 0.062" thick aluminium sheet.

I assume that everything has been assembled correctly and that the wheel bearing is fully seated down in the hub. If not then this would effectively move the hub inboard and reduce clearance. When fitting new a bearing, it is essential to check that the shoulder face in the hub is clean and free from any burrs. Also, if the bearing is not pushed in absolutely square, then a shaving could be taken from the hub which could then become trapped between bearing seating face and hub shoulder face. It may also be prudent to check that the backplate is properly seated down against the axle flange, again, are there any burrs or foreign objects trapped between? Then of course is our old adversary, the cylinder spring retaining clip. Notoriously difficult to fit properly, often leaving the cylinder with more freedom than is good for it. I much prefer to remove the backplate from the car as doing this job in situ is both awkward and often unsuccessful. Why can't these cylinders be bolted on as per most other cars?

Then again, you could be just unlucky and have all the manufacturing tolerances working against you. One dodge that I haven't tried or seriously considered, is to put a spacer between axle shoulder face and bearing. This I cannot recommend and only mention it as a possible



solution if all else still leaves you in trouble. Remember, any spacer must still allow for the tab washer to sit in its hole and for all the threads on the hub nut to engage properly. I really don't think that it should come to this and most likely, you are observing a design feature that is common to many Spridgley things. If the wheel turns freely and there are no clunk – clunk – clunk noises, then a torn dust cover is not a newsworthy discovery! In retrospect, I would have fitted the smaller bore single piston rear wheel cylinders from a Morris Minor to obtain the specification I was seeking, it would have been a lot easier (but more expensive so that was probably my motive at the time!)

Terry Horler

Market Place – May 2003

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Anthony 01763 247687 (Herts)

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John 07931 646794 or email kindofblue9@hotmail.com

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Chris. Chris@comfrog.com (Adelaide, S. Australia)

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Alec 01259 743044 or kermite@oakburn.demon.co.uk (Central Scotland)



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