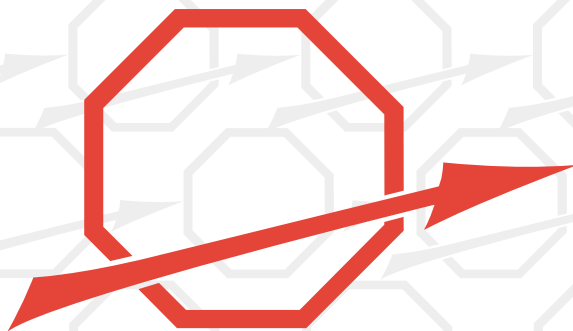


MASCOT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB



It fits! Thanks to Carson for Gordon Redman's K-Series image. Fast Car

ISSUE NO. 238

OCTOBER 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
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MUTUAL ASSISTANCE CO-ORDINATOR	David C. Hill , Penrallt-Y-Cordde, Glynarthen, Llandysul, Dyfed. SA44 6PE. Tel: 01239 811423 email: david@hillnet.clara.net
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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	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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: IF YOU EXPERIENCE 'MASCOT' PROBLEMS UPON RENEWAL, PLEASE CONTACT THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY OR THE TREASURER STRAIGHT AWAY. The Committee

© Midget & Sprite Club

October Editorial

Elections? Serious stuff first, DID YOU VOTE? MASC needs your support. In theory it's too late now and if you didn't vote you can't complain that you still have me as chief scribe, still scribbling away, still here!! Very grateful to my faithful public, as ever I will attempt to be worthy of your continued support. We may even have a full time Chairman, which will be nice, however a BIG thank you to Alan Barton who safely steered us through deep water into a safe cove. Thank you Alan.

Other committee/club stuff, seen the new look website, pretty neat eh? Excellent work by our unpaid webmaster, Chris Nevard. Remember the members only section also has back copies of Mascot to download. Double neat! Also: Beaulieu clashing with so many other events has started a debate with the club and the area reps, active members etc regarding the 2004 (2005?) venue, timing and theme. YOU had, 'have' an idea, an unspoken thought about how you would have liked to have seen an event organised, planned, the where and when of it, BUT have you told anyone? Please tell us so we can incorporate your plans into ours. Comments to your reps at the next noggins (or letters to the editor) so we can.

As you can see this month's cover photo is #2 in the, 'It's October so it's an engine bay cover photo' series (see also Oct 2002). This October it's a hot Midget with an even hotter engine, not PC, more FQ.....ask your dad ☺ or e-mail me!

Goodwood was without doubt the highlight of the month of September. It was a fabulous step back in time and a perfect day for Spridgets. Yes! Spridgets. An unprecedented number of our little cars were there, both in the car park and in the paddock. Elsewhere in this issue is a photomontage of the day, which includes some interesting stuff. Some guest appearances first: A three wheeler special with A series power, a famous '59 Turner 950 sport with RAC Rally history (a works car?) and below, a really nice Silverstone and yours truly. 'Our' stuff includes a nice shot of a 'Cream Cracker' team car, an (original?) BMC team transporters, some nice car park shots and, of course the racecars including our old friend 138DJB, the racing fastback! The racing shots I'll leave to better snappers than me but I hope the photographs motivate those of you that didn't go this time to go next year, but don't forget your flat cap ☺

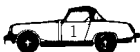
Talking of classic events (smooth link or what!) look for the NEC advert in this months issue, REDUCED cost entrance tickets for members, but only two per membership number and remember to have it to hand when you phone them. Well that's me done for another month, happy Spridgeting

Mike 'Ed' North



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 Green Dragon**, The Green, Sambourne, Reddich, B96 6NU, at 8.30pm as usual.
- 2nd Wednesday **North West Area** – Meet at **The Kilten**, 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 October,

User name: area

Password: 51

EVENTS

From David Hill & Webmaster Chris Nevard

Events organised so far for 2003.

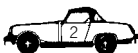
October

Sunday 5th

Cambridgeshire Area visit to Gaydon Heritage Centre. Meet at the Services, Jct 13 A14 if you would like to join the convoy otherwise meet at Gaydon. Arrive at Gaydon about noon. Contact Dave Dixon Tel: 01733 222810 or email: e-dave@ntlworld.com

Sunday 19th

Invitation to join the Healey Drivers' Exmoor Rut. Limited numbers. 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



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 David Hill have confirmed dates for new events asap, especially those organised for 2004.

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

Well, it was a great September for most of us. My abiding memory of this summer is going for a picnic in the Midget, parking in a wonderful spot on the coast of North Pembrokeshire, and eating our sandwiches watching the waves crashing on the rocks below with the setting sun giving real warmth. Fantastic!

The above memory will keep us going through the winter until next spring comes around again. How were your memories?

Hopefully you did not suffer a breakdown but if you did, was a fellow member able to help you? Let me know if so.

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 don't know someone who does, I will print off a copy and send it to you.

David Hill

Annual General Meeting 2003

The committee are pleased to announce and invite you to the Annual General meeting to be held on Sunday the 23rd of November 2003. The venue will be the Elm Tree public house where we have booked the functions room. The Elm Tree is at the end of Station Road, Chiseldon, near Swindon, Wiltshire. Chiseldon is just to the south west of junction 15 of the M4. From junction 15, head south along the A345 (Malborough) and turn right to Chiseldon. Station Road is then on the right. The meeting will commence at 2.00pm.

If you have any item for the Agenda, please contact Alan Barton or Terry Horler as soon

as possible. Items not on the Agenda will be placed in Any Other Business but time for discussion for AOB items may be limited.

If you require a copy of the minutes from the 2002 AGM, please send an A5 size SAE to Terry Horler.

This is your opportunity to meet your committee and to hear what the club has achieved in the past year. We would be very pleased to see you at the Elm Tree on Sunday the 23rd of November.

Terry Horler
on the behalf of the committee



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www.necclassicmotorshow.com

learn more about the show and book tickets.

(You will need to type in the password 'CLX' and your membership number to qualify for the special participating club members ticket price).

or

Telephone the International Classic Motor Show ticket hotline

0121 767 4767

Lines open seven days a week. Quote booking reference CLX when you order and please have your club membership number ready. Offer is limited to one ticket per club member.

We will donate £1.50 to your club for every ticket booked by a club member - just hand in your ticket stub onto your club stand and we'll make a £1.50 contribution to your club.

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The Healey Drivers Club has great pleasure in announcing that the 3rd EXMOOR RUT will take place on Sunday 19th October 2003, starting from the South Devon Railway's BUCKFASTLEIGH STATION (Grid ref. 746663). It may be useful to have Ordnance Survey maps Number's :- South West England & South Wales Road Map 7 and Outdoor Leisure 9 (Exmoor); these are not essential but could prove helpful. breakfast arrive at 08.30hrs.

CONTACT:- Colin Lennox-Jones (01752-892434) or e-mail :- clj@talkgas.net
6. Trehill Road, IVYBRIDGE, Devon, PL21 OAZ. For details



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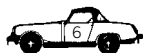
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Hardtop and Hoist

I was recently offered a hardtop for my Frogeye while out on a New Year's Day club tour. I think they took pity on me as it rained throughout the event and I always run without hood. The hardtop turned out to be in very good condition and the colour match almost spot on. I struck a quick deal on being asked for £50, clamped the top down with bungees and drove home. A phone call to Terry Horler identified the manufacturer as Peasmarch Reinforced Plastics of Guildford Surrey. The design is well thought out, being double skinned giving a smooth finish inside it also has a reverse angle rear window a feature of the old Ford Angela. It is fixed with four over centre toggles and two wrap around plates locating on the windscreen liftadot pins. If anyone has one of these tops I would appreciate information on fixings.

A problem quickly became apparent on how to remove the hardtop without damaging the

car or myself. I set to building a hoist. The joists on my garage run across the width spaced three to four feet apart so I drilled two 1¼ in. holes approx three feet from the wall then again the width of the hardtop in two of the joists. I then pushed two five foot lengths of pipe into the holes one being the drive, the other the support. Two lengths of plastic covered clothes line approx. 20ft long I now attached to the drive pipe about four feet apart with jubilee clips. Allow the short end to hang down and the longer to run across and over the support pipe. I now had four lengths of line dropping down to the corners of the hardtop. Cross holes drilled in the drive pipe to which the lines are attached enable it to be easily turned with a tommy bar. When the hoist is taking the weight of the hardtop the line coils neatly along the pipe. Although a stepladder is needed to reach the hoist it is reasonably quick to remove or replace the hardtop. Searching the depths of my garage I





found a 12 to one right angle reduction gearbox, fitting this enabled me to operate the hoist from floor level using a jack handle to wind the hardtop up or down. As I used

materials found in my garage all sizes are approximate.

Brian Pye



Nice shot of the MG record car: Copyright Chris Nevard



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WEBMONSTER: Auto site of the month



Number 5 in a series of featured sites that help members link to the world of motorcars, motorsport and motor enjoyment! This month is...

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

Got the car, read the book, seen the film, bought the T Shirt! So now you have to get

out and enjoy it...first event? You could do a lot worse than visit the Haynes site and check out the 'Classic' events. Everything from 24hrs to 7 day events. Every type of event for every budget and level of experience. Go on have a go ...

Ashley's Gallery

Ed says: Nice photo Ashley, that's a lot of lillys...



Frog Art



Excellent Frog Art this month. However the credit source for this image has been mislaid (sorry). If it's yours please contact me again so I can credit you properly. Meanwhile, thank you: Ed.

'Bodger's Corner'

The Anonymous Bodger's tip of the month'

Fancy an electric fan but don't fancy the cost of a kenlow? Take a trip to your scrappy, get a metro fan, wiring and radiator sensor with the rubber seal still intact. Cut the fan from its plastic housing, and then mount it with some suitable metal work (ali and s/s are nice) in front of the radiator in the cowl housing. Next you need to mount the sensor in the radiator top hose, I used a 6" piece of pipe with a hydraulic connector collar (available cheap from the likes of pirtex) to form a T piece. Weld collar to pipe and drill through collar, now the rubber bung of the sensor fits snugly in the collar. Lastly with suitable wiring, relays and fuses wire it all up, I also wired to an under dash switch, so I can switch it on in traffic jams.



Brad
The Mars Bar Kid
THE 'Not so Anonymous Bodger!'

Ed says: Thanks Brad. 'Cool' bodge! (och)
Come on you lot I still need more AND I need it now!!!



Warwickshire Celebrities

Warwickshire were privileged to accommodate some of the frogeye owners featured in the October issue of 'Practical Classics'. The front page was dominated by Chris Yates' supercharged Frog. Autographs were readily proffered by the 'Sprite Ideas' participants. Warwickshire are proud to know that Chris, Alan Couch, Jim Willis, Andrew Smith and Don Harris's Sprites gave first rate performances in abysmal weather conditions. They're a photogenic group!

An eight day old 'Baby Sprite' attended her first meeting. Tamzyn is the perfect product of mum Kim and dad Michael. Kim created our fabulous flags and now she has created our real live midget mascot. It is reputed that Tamzyn commented positively on the new venue and the club members.

Beaulieu was a great success. We stayed at a pleasant hotel in Lyndhurst. Sadly 'Doctor

Dave's' Sprite had alternator problems. He was forced to travel down in his new M.G. We forgave him as his vehicle acted as the security guard; blocked the elderly sports cars from being viewed from the main road. Geraldine and Roy joined us later. Roy wouldn't 'trust' his sprite for the distance. The modern car was very useful in acting as the intermediary when we got 'lost' on the Saturday run. Who was it Alan, we should blame? Thanks committee, we'll be back.

The Goodwood Revival was attended by three frogeyes and their 50's attired drivers. It has been noted that Jim's pipe, Chris's impersonation of his father and Rosemary's little number detracted from Stirling Moss!

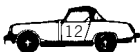
***From Phil and Mo Wood
(Sheila's computer is at the doctor's)***

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Lincolnshire Report

Back from sunny Greece what is there to look forward to! Ahhh yes the Midget is finally done wonderful off we go woooo!!! The children (now in their 20s) still shaking there heads and thinking why, the trouble being they just don't understand.

Anyway off we go to the meet in the Midget of course top down, Alan met us in his Frogeye, but how disappointed we were when Roger appeared on wait for it, yes his Motorbike can you believe it?

Off we go into the pub sit down have a bit of a natter about how the cars are going. Where we have been in them and, of course, where we are going to go in them. When we suddenly remember about Brian and Sue. Where are they? They always turn up. Eventually they appear, but not as you would imagine, in the Midget: but in their everyday car.

Why? I hear you ask. Well I am here to tell you the tale.

Setting off from Lincoln going through the city centre out onto the open road when all of a

sudden they hear a noise. This carried on for a while and to Sue's dismay getting worse. Telling Brian she thinks there is something wrong. Brian pulls into a lay-by, walks round the car scratching his head what could it be?

It was up to Sue to tell him (Yes wonderful we know when something is wrong) she walked round the car looked down at the wheel and told Brian "your wheel nuts are loose". Needless to say she is now the chief mechanic for their car, a wonderful leap for women's lib.

When I see her at our next meet I am going to get her a drink. Anyway I must finish this now as the Ed is getting twitchy for the reports. We do not want to "do a Cambridge".

As you may or may not know we meet the 1st Thursday in the month at The Henage Arms at Hainton at 8pm. Please do come and give us a whirl we like to see new faces (and cars) and we always have a giggle.

Bye for now

Sue Sumner

Dorset Report

Dorset MASC take on Kim Henson's local A30/A35 Owners – The Langton Arms, Tarrant Monkton, Tuesday 2nd September

Although featured in our Events List for some months, this evening almost took us by surprise probably due to the amount of Spridgetly activity in the preceding weeks. Having only returned from holiday the night before, I was delighted to accept Pete Downton's kind offer of a lift in the trusty Astra out to the Tarrants. On arrival, we knew we were in the right place, being confronted by a number of the charming little BMC bugs – Austin A30's and A35's. A close cousin of the Spridget, sharing many common components, Kim immediately warned us to keep an eye on any removable parts! In jest of course, and besides Astra bits



look a bit odd on an A30! There was a good crowd of Austin owners already ensconced in the Skittle Alley when we arrived. Colin and Vi Morris were the only Dorset MASC-ers in attendance at that time but we were soon joined by Roger and Sue Parker so took over a table near the alley. Kim came over, explained how the evening would run and



generally made us feel very welcome. Later Roger and Pam Taylor and Francis and Yvonne Bugler turned up giving us a respectable MASC team of 10 avoiding the need for us to 'borrow' players.

It's interesting how different Clubs have different cultures (witness MGOc 1020 and ourselves), and the A30/35s have a fairly formal opening to their meets with an address/update from Kim even allowing time for 'Any Other Business'. But this obviously works well as the Club has been around since the '70s! Business done, we moved on to the main Event and the board was duly chalked. Our relatively small numbers meant that we played more often than our opponents, the game being split into two rounds. We acquitted ourselves well in the first half, leading by just over 20 points. We even managed some 'strikes' if that is a skittling term. I must have been really concentrating because I nearly took out one

of the 'sticker-uppers' by bowling before he got off the alley!! Ooops! (I had to come clean – it would have got out via the rumour machine anyway!) The tension mounted into the second round and the A30's managed to narrow the gap considerably. However, we had our dander up and the sweet smell of victory in our nostrils! The final score? Dorset MASC 361, A30/35's 352. Congratulations to the MASC team!

Sadly, we failed to repeat this success in the Raffle which is quite unusual for us!

We must thank Kim and his Austin chums for a thoroughly enjoyable evening. I extended an invitation to his members to attend any of our Events or to pop along to our Monthly Meets. Kim is going to add me onto his mailing list so that we can keep tabs on what they're up to and possibly keep them company!

Ian

NW Area Report

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is an advance notice that the November club night will **not** be held at the Kilten.

On this night, 12 November, we are visiting the Trevor Farrington race preparation and restoration workshop at Allostock near Knutsford. If you are interested in attending then please let me know.

On the 22nd August we went on our jolly to the Morgan Car Company. Four of us braved it and went in our beloved cars (3 Sprites and 1 Midget). Altogether there were 14 of us on the factory visit, with 3 of the ladies opting for a visit to the shops instead.

We stayed overnight at the Malvern Hills Hotel. This was picked off the internet and chosen because the picture showed it in what appeared to be its own grounds. In reality it was located at the side of a busy road and looked just like a large pub, although it actually wasn't too bad. There was entertainment on the Friday night and the meals were very good. The French waiter on the Thursday evening was bit of a character and was apparently an ex army man – we

reckon he was actually on the run from the Foreign Legion. He took some convincing to give Carole a side order of potatoes because he was convinced she didn't need them!

The visit to the Morgan factory was, to be honest, very disappointing. I had arranged for a guided tour of the factory but when we arrived the guide wasn't around. We waited about 20 minutes before being told that he was out making a delivery in Brighton, so would we mind just walking around by ourselves and then told 'Oh and by the way the factory shuts in 1 hour so you haven't much time'. We were given a map and off we went. The workers were happy to answer any questions but we learnt nothing about the cars or the company.

I must admit that having seen the cars being built I don't think I'd buy one, they really are quite crude and not what I expected at all. In terms of a PR exercise, and that's why companies do these things, it must be rated as a disaster. This was the complete opposite to the TVR visit that we had which was very professional.



The week after the Morgan visit we were at the Cholmondeley Castle classic car show. Andrew went early to set up our plot and somehow managed to get half the field just for us. We had acres of space while next to us, the Daimlers I think, were squeezed in like sardines. It wasn't a bad day, a large number of cars and quite a good autojumble. This is very nice venue and always a good day out.

Well that's it for now, see you at the Kilten on 8th October.

Almost forgot, we have provisionally set Sunday 14th December for our Christmas meal, probably at the Holly Bush again. Please let me know if you are interested.

Regards

Les and Diane

Cambridgeshire Report 2003



Gransden was great, a perfect blend of classic cars and classic planes even a whirly bird (remember them, Bell 47 helicopters). There were Tiger Moths popping balloons and flying through goal posts, the battle of Britain memorial flight, stunning aerobatics, world war two planes, biplanes, miniature planes, a great array of cars and even a few stalls so the girls could shop! all in all a great day (well recommended Hubie) and firmly on the menu for next year. I think I need to make a bit of an apology though since I honestly could not remember if we said 10 am or 10.30 start for the short run to Gransden from the meeting place, I know both times were mentioned at the meeting and consequently I told Rob 10.30 when he phoned. The result of all this was that I was ensconced in the Little Chef (in a window seat) having arrived early (so I thought) blissfully unaware that Spridgets were arriving next door just out of my field of view. Sorry to

keep you waiting guys so from now on we will quote leaving times rather than meeting times since it is not fair to keep those people who make a point of arriving in good time hanging around.

The next event will be the Gaydon Getaway this is a club run to the Heritage Motor Centre (great opportunity to order your heritage certificate). We plan to meet at the services at junction 13 of the A14 in time to set off at 10 am on Sunday 5th October arriving at Gaydon

about 12 noon. Despite rumours that they have sold off all the cars including the sawn off Sprite this should be a great day since they still boast the largest collection of classic, vintage and veteran British cars in the world.

Pub night was a hoot not a huge turn out with a few of the regulars on holiday again, eight or so and a good deal of laughter and Mickey taking. Chris turned up top down on a less than perfect (weather wise) evening (well done that man) mind you after witnessing his strange barefoot dance outside the front of the Mad Cat at midnight in the rain I am not 100% convinced of his sanity. I of course turned up top down despite a near mutiny from Pat (do you have that problem Chris?). Steven (note I have taken the 'P' out of Steven this time) finally turned up correctly attired (in the Sebring) sounded great, I especially liked the grouching on the gravel,



worth the effort of bump starting it to hear it run and to see the sparks fly as it reached 130 by the end of the car park (not sure the inhabitants of Pidley would all agree though). Too dark for a photo, although the flames might have come out OK, so I thought I would include a photo of Carson and Ricky on a fag break in Cumbria earlier in the year (kind of suits the ambience of the meeting).

Run out of words so see you at Gaydon and the Mad Cat

Dave Dixon



Scotland Report

There's a trend. Every time I have a drink at the weekend [intemperately beyond one sherry], a recurrent uproarious dream glints the red eye: 120 bhp; 'K' series; blow hard exhaust; stoppers equipped to need. You know the kinda thing. Wiped off the highway no more. That's not evil, is it? Wicked, I think they call it. But mentally, it's an invidious financial encroachment; for the dashed thing, Hulot's up to eleven and a half grand, as is. Durn tumbleweed rip you, pardner Mike for your influential 'Sounds like my kind of car' [p. 27 Aug. MASCOT]. Ain't you got it yet that I'm weak minded, swayed by everyone presumed to know better than me on just about everything? Then there's Bob 'But you could have so many more driving experiences, Carson'. Then there's Linda, currently attending day long seminars on Angels with their human instruments predicting the end of the known world in 2012. Wouldn't that be a serious miffing for the originality team!? And at curtain call, those thin, pointedly chinned actuarial heroes of the pensions industry, having woven their last tortuous calculations, verbalise their equations ' Poor bozo, you should have lived more than you saved'. Filtering all this through the kaleidoscope, there's a trend friends and it's called BHP. And this leads into a generalised concern. For there we were, on the 2nd Jim McGuinness' Summer Run. Just to remind you, Jim does historic rallies and is the most knowledgeable of the knowledgeable concerning roads in Scotland

for our wee cars. But then, what does he go and say? 'The MK1 is still too noisy even with a new exhaust. I'm going to sell it and get an MX5. At 45, I'm entitled to a mid-life crisis'. Which had no agreement from me, because, 12 months later, his hair seemed lusher, his facial cheeks firmer. Or are these merely classic signs of trouble ahead? Anyway, Jim is the anointed one: the weather, once again, was sun without cessation. [Let's have another 'anyway']. Anyway, because I'm such a timorous little beastie [thank you Rabbie Burns], I suggested to Linda that she drive with Jim in the MK1 with its competition seatbelts; which she did and so experienced real drivin'. Meanwhile, following new chums, John and Betty in their '78 [the day after the last natter at Sheriffmuir they bot another '78-yellow- Betty's favourite color-encouraging, dontcha think?]; despite daring-do a-go-go stuff, I fell behind Jim and John whilst trying to the max. Just as Bob did in the Amazon, the brakes of which boiled and failed. Enuff said! You've got it. We both pushed real hard to catch them on a slivry snake of a road. But, there they were up ahead, pulled over, finished with engines; Mk1 and R/B, waiting for the tail enders. What a facile excuse for failed ability: BHP. More BHP! You poor bozo. You've been unmasked!

HEE ME OORI_ISHT.

Carson and chums



Surrey Report

Well, the Great Dorset Steam Fair was a first for Chris and I, and never before have I seen such a magnificent line-up of Showman's engines and traction engines, just dozens and dozens. The trade/autojumble area is as far as the eye can see, and all is encased in a mixture of smoke from the vehicles, and dust from the dry ground. What with a splendid BandB, and excellent dinner out, a great trip.

The 30th/31st weekend was a very popular one for many of the Area groups, and for us a number of us were already booked in to the Southdowns run before we heard of the National rally at Beaulieu. However, Southdowns is an event that just happens, the organization is impeccable, the cars – always around 350 of them, including this year some 8 MGCs, 2 MGA Twin Cams, and

approximately 13 other MGAs, and 46 Sprites and Midgets entered!

The weather was perfect again, and on arrival at Eastbourne we were able to catch up with old friends from the West Sussex MGOC, including of course Crawford Matthews, who has done the run even more times than me!

The following weekend was Goodwood Revival, a quite unique event that takes you back in time, and so my son Nick and I sped down to the circuit to get there for 8.30, in time to watch the Midgets and Sprites battling it out with Porsche 904s and Alfa Romeo Giulia TZ1s and 2s. Whilst the star of that Fordwater Trophy race was a quite determined mini Marcos GT, the Spridgets acquitted themselves well, although our very own Paul Woolmer had to retire at an early stage.



Surrey at Goodwood



Anyway, here are a few mementos of the paddock area where Sprites abounded – Number 28 is Paul's WSM Midget in red, Number 30 was a late entrant and unfortunately not identifiable by me, and Number 9 is the yellow Sebring Sprite of Michael Darcy and Ron Gammons. Other memories include classic ice-cream vans, Russian limos guarding fighter planes, Spitfire and Mustang buzzing us all, and Lord March strolling around with his children chatting – we were in his back garden after all!

Our September Blue Ball meet was taken up with much debate on the current craze – Austin J40 spotting – certain members seeking cars you can't even sit in!

We've now received our Surrey Area sweatshirts and polo shirts, and these were all handed out to those present.

Ashley is one of the organizers for 2004 May bank holiday weekend trip, and has already come up with an excellent hotel, the details of which were being fully debated. He was testing it out the following weekend – a tough



Surrey girls at play

job but someone has to do it – so we'll be booking for next May before long – seems crazy but to take over a hotel for 34+ people, it must be done.

Finally, the ladies are planning a weekend away in December, so if your hubby doesn't admit to an e-mail from my Chris, give him a nudge, and you could be on your way to Bruges!

All for now

David



South Staffs and North Birmingham Report

September sun...

Matt where are you?

Since we had an agenda, i.e. going to Le Mans en masse next year, I invited my friend Nick who co-piloted Lara with me this year to this month's meeting. It was the first I had attended without Lara since the rebuild was completed, while she was having her damage repaired at LeaceyMG, so Nick kindly drove me there in his Fiat.

There were already several cars there when we drew up in the car park and I spent a few minutes introducing Nick to the branch all sat at the outside benches, on another balmy Spridget evening, hasn't it been a great summer for Spridgeting. Summer was definitely on the wane though, it was almost dark when we arrived! I was sorry that Lara was away and that I'd had to travel by Eurobox, but silver lining time, at least I was able to have an extra pint or two.

Geoff had another torrid time getting served and that led to discussion over a possible change of venue, vis-à-vis Warwickshire's exodus from the Moat House. It is no good being at a pub that does not care if we come to them or not, so Gavin has a secret visit to perform in order to try out a possible venue near to Cannock. Since the Green Man is in N. Warwickshire a move to a Staffordshire pub makes some sense. Gavin will be reporting to us his findings next month, but if anyone out there has any ideas for a suitable pub to the north of Brummagem, we would welcome them. A couple of names are in the hat already, but an essential is a good-sized car park with access from the pub where we can keep an eye on our babies. (At least for the more nervous of us to keep a security eye open!) I suppose that access from the road would also be useful too! We are agreed that there needs to be a suitable outside seating



area too, well we do expect more great summers to come, tha knows!

I have had a few emails and phone calls since my name arrived on the rep's listing and I brought the branch up to speed about them and advised them that we now have the area news facility on the MASC website as well as our own site run by Matthew. Matt has been brave and put every photo that I took at Le Mans in June onto our gallery site. No complaints yet but if I had been him I would have blue-pencilled many of the "sameiest" ones out of there. I would point out that the human figure added to some of

them to denote "scale" to them is my mate and fashion model Nick "Tifosi" Phelps. I have no leaning towards Ferrari myself!

The Le Mans discussion involved little more than a show of hands, "who's going?" and at present it looks as if we may be four or five cars, probably camping at the circuit as Nick and I did this year, but this time travelling on Thursday in order to see and join in with the pre-race celebrations in the town. I have had little luck finding reasonable ferry prices yet but will persevere on the 'Net...

Bill Mohan, 1067, area rep.

Abingdon Revisited

We were slightly disappointed to find no M.A.D. Mascoteers in the county of "Ockfordshire" when we planned our recent two day break there. Happily, we did not at that stage, anyway, need any Mutual Assistance, but it would have been nice to meet up with like minded souls for a noggin in a local pub. Attached is a picture of B.O.B. outside the famous "Midget" now renamed "The Magic Midget".

The timing for the photo was crucial, as when we arrived most of the sign was obliterated by a rather large gentleman from York who was partaking of his mid-day repast, and we thought he might not take kindly to being asked to move. However when he re-entered the pub for a refill, we snapped car and sign!

After a quick call to say "how do" at Kimber House, and take advantage of the free parking in Cemetery Road, we set off to walk to the Museum, where currently there is an MG related exhibition, though here, as usual we had to accept that there are other models besides Midgets!!!!!!

The Abingdon TIC had supplied us with a map of historical interest to Austin and Morris buffs, including details of the Abingdon Test Routes. The route used from the late 40's onwards is the shortest and continued until Midget production ceased in '79. On the other hand the V8's - 73-79 needed a much longer test route.



On the second day of our break, we visited Oxford in the hope of visiting some of the sites such as William Morris' first bicycle shop and showroom at 48 High Street or the Morris Garages Queen Street Showroom, which is now a restaurant, but the temperature continued to climb, and we had to seek shelter in the University Botanic Garden, the Spring Walk offered some shade and the River Cherwell ran alongside the path.

All was well with the car until about ten miles from home. Similar to the power loss we suffered in June when the head gasket went. We did make it home this time without assistance, but a "big" investigation will have to take place before any more long trips are undertaken.

**Smiffffffffs - David and Jenny
(Devon area)**



Reggies Story, Saga of a Sprite

Part Three

But I am digressing, back to the saga of my Sprite: The next item I purchased was a pair of door handles being produced by Speedwell, the performance people. At around that time, the late sixties, we seemed to have had a succession of cold winters, which resulted in the side screens freezing up, making access to the car very difficult, particularly as I had the hardtop fitted in the winter. It was, if it happened to be at home where I had plenty of hot water, but if it happened to be visiting a friend, I would bid them goodnight, but then return five minutes later with a request for a bucket of hot water and a sponge:

The other event which precipitated getting door handles was one day when I was visiting a small garage the group owned in South London. It had the local Green Shield franchise, with the result that we had a very high petrol throughput; people used to come from miles around for their stamps. The MD had just a record figure, and suggested we went to the Savoy to celebrate, so off we went, he in his new Jag, a Mk2 as I remember, and I following behind in my Sprite. We drove into the courtyard, which of course was packed with Rolls and Bentleys and such like. Seeing this new Jag the doorman leapt to open his door, and then turned a disdainful eye on my car. Seeing this the MD called to the doorman that I was with him where upon he sprang into action holding his umbrella aloft in one hand and the door handle with the other, but of course there wasn't one: It was getting dark and his hand was waving about, so I had to undo the door inside myself, which rather ruined my ceremonial exit. He went off no doubt wondering what the world was coming to, making cars, without door handles.

After this I decided that I would fit door handles, not that I was expecting to dine at

the Savoy on a regular basis. The door handles, which of course are sliding ones were rather tricky to fit, but very well worth it. There was no locking mechanism, but then I had my gearbox lock. Around then I had a replacement gearbox fitted, a gold seal unit. I'd convinced myself that the synchromesh was failing, but the new unit had a very noisy first gear. I suppose I should have had it changed but whether I would have obtained another under the guarantee I didn't know. The local mechanic who fitted it said they all sounded like that, which wasn't much consolation. However it never got any worse and to this day 120,000 miles later all the gears work perfectly satisfactorily so I got my money's worth.

In general most parts have proved very long lasting. I've only replaced one wheel bearing, the back axle is still the original one, although there is lot of slack in it, particularly noticeable when I engage reverse, but no undue noise (unless I have just got used to it) and all the original dashboard instruments are still working. The rear Springs that I mentioned earlier didn't break, but just sagged over a long period. Originally heavy duty springs were produced, having fewer but stronger leaves, but I never found any dealer stocking them. One modification I did fit were telescopic (Spax) rear shock absorbers, which I found prevented bottoming over rough surfaces. The other modification was a four branch exhaust system; it seemed a good idea at the time. If I had known the time I was going to keep the car I would have fitted a stainless system; I really must do that next time.

Well I am up to 1970, only another 33 years to go.

Thanks Reggie, look forward to the next installment, 1970–1980 maybe? Ed



Goodwood Revival

12 images from the car parks and paddocks



The Phoenix Project

Part Three

After a break of two or three months (too hot in the workshop) I was finally shamed back into action by Dave kindly loaning me a box containing a great selection of clamps, grips, hammers and dollies and Mike printing part two a bit more promptly than I expected.

I decided to break myself in gently and get my welding eye back in, so rather than completing the tricky bit I had left when it



was time to go on holiday I decided to restore the bonnet. I actually think the bonnet repair would probably be interesting to a lot of people since this is a common rust spot even on cars that don't need a full rebuild.

My bonnet actually looked quite good and is one of the best fitting bonnets, for panel gap and alignment that I have seen. The truth was however that the front edge had rotted out and a previous owner had had the inner front panel repaired with 1/8 thick flat bar butt welded together and the outer skin with a piece of sheet steel overlapping and tack welded on the inside. The nose edge curve being made up of wire mesh and body filler. Most of the underside of the repair was hidden by the aluminium finisher plate which had its inner edge folded over at right angles to further hide the repair.

As far as I am aware repair panels for the bonnet are no longer available, so I decided to make my own, to do this I made a cardboard template of the 'D' shaped front underside part of the bonnet, by drawing around the front of a good bonnet. Next I drew another parallel curved line a couple of inches above the bonnet front curve on my cardboard (I knew all those years of watching Blue Peter would come in handy one day). I then cut the 'D' shape out to the second curved line allowing an extra half inch of card at each end of the 'D'. Next I transferred the shape onto a piece of 18 gauge steel sheet and cut it out with a jigsaw. I offered it up to the good bonnet (flat underside 'D' section and marked the bonnet front curve back on to it. I then marked and cut radial lines from the outer to the inner curve at about 2 centimetre intervals. I lined up the straight edge of my repair panel with the straight edge of the corresponding area of the good bonnet and clamped it in place, it was then quite easy to bend the metal strips (between the radial cuts) up round the curve of the bonnet nose.



The gaps caused by the saw cuts closed up due to the compound curves of the bonnet and the strips lay flat around the curves.

The good bonnet is a second hand one I picked up for the other car and will need



repainting so I indulged in a little careful panel beating with a small hammer to get my repair panel into perfect shape. If the saw cuts close up too much you can re-cut them with a hand hacksaw although most of mine were fine.

Once I had formed the panel I test fitted it to the nose of the rusted bonnet, taped it in place with duck tape and ground the ends to the same shape and length as the bonnet width with my angle grinder. I next made card templates of the skin edge where it is folded at right angles down into the wing gutters, these were about 8 inches long and formed the sides of the bonnet front back as far as rust free metal. I replicated these pieces in steel then cut away part of the bonnet sides corresponding to the repair pieces. I was then able to clamp them in place and tack weld them to the curved repair piece at the front edge. I removed the repair panel assembly from the bonnet and dressed the metal strips between the radial slots down



a little with a hammer to allow for the thickness of the steel and then finish welded the front corners of the curved section to the sidepieces of the repair panel assembly.

The bonnet consists of five main components two side frames, a front and a rear frame spot welded together to form a truncated triangular frame, and the outer skin pressing that is attached to the frame by spot welds along its edge flanges. The front frame forms the bonnet equivalent of the slam panel and it is this and the adjacent outer skin nose that

forms a rust trap. In my case the front ends of the side frames were quite rusted where they join onto the front frame so I carefully sawed through them just behind the front frame then removed the rust, old bodged repair and rust damaged front frame using a saw angle grinder and chisel. The inside of the outer



skin that had been covered by the front frame was completely covered in surface rust making me think it had never been painted. The surface rust was cleaned off and this area was treated with Jenolite and rust inhibiting paint.

I offered up the repair panel assembly and tack welded it into place this effectively restored the outline of the bonnet shape but left a letterbox slot in the front of the bonnet skin between the repair section and the sound part of the old skin, that would have to be filled with small plates tacked together to form the compound curves. These plates would then have to be welded together a little at a time allowing the heat to dissipate between welds to avoid distortion, as would the radial slots of the repair section. The complete repair will then need angle grinding and filing to dress the welds and restore the bonnet to its correct shape.

The next job is to restore the front frame panel and the ends of the side frames and weld them back in place but since the deadline is approaching I will tell you about that next time.

Dave Dixon



Midget Roads

Second in an occasional series suggested by Carl Warner
(Mascot August 03)



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Another, 'Best Midget road'

Start from Caerleon (just off J24 of the M4). Take the unclassified road to Llangybi and then to Usk (don't worry it isn't single track). Turn right into Usk and then left on to the B4598 to Abergavenny. At Abergavenny take the A40 to Brecon (dual carriageway at Brecon to finally overtake that caravan – or possibly in my case to let all the traffic behind pass). Keep on the A40 to Llandoverly (superb series of bends just before Llandoverly if you can get a clear run at them in the dry). Go through Llandoverly on the A40 and after about 5 miles or so take the A482 to Lampeter, where the roads get more bendy and more hilly. Watch out for the chicanes

just after Llanwrda. At Lampeter, keep on the A482 to Aberaeron and the seaside, where you can always get a parking space on the seafront even in August.

In good weather with light traffic and the hood down you can't beat it for the great roads and the great views (if you can find time to look at them). In bad weather in the dark it is really hard work.

Roger Chittock, PKD 664S

Ed says: First Scotland, now Wales! What's YOUR favourite MIDGET ROAD? Tell me and I'll tell the world, it's good to share ☺



Technical Feature: Hood Fitting

“First Read The Instructions”

Which I did. I have also seen professionals demonstrate it twice – what? How to fit a soft-top to a 1275cc Spridgley thing. So why did I do it another way?

Well, in all cases, it required two persons and some contact adhesive, so there I was, on my own and without requisite sticky stuff. Firstly, the header rail needs to be prepared. The hood fabric is retained by an aluminium channel section secured by 15 pop rivets. Peeling off the rubber seal will reveal these rivets which have to be drilled out. The snag here is the end of the rivet you don't see. It falls inside the enclosed cavity of the header rail. There is no way you can retrieve the remains of these rivets which means living with a rattle as the remains shake about inside the rail. Unless of course, the rust bug has been busy and has suitably vented the rail so that all enclosed matter falls out anyway. My rail was both rust free and incredibly rattly, the latter of which I was not prepared to live with. By drilling a 3/8" diameter hole either end of the rail within the area covered by the aluminium channel, any enclosed debris could be removed. No less than 45 rivets and a broken drill were extricated from mine. Thus indicating that three hoods have been fitted, and someone was none too careful in drilling one of them off! By inverting the rail from end to end, it eventually emptied itself, all peace being restored. Being an earlier Sprite Mk1V, I repainted the rail in cumulus grey and fitted a new "Caution" sticker in the centre.

So, onto fitting the new hood. All is very straightforward and to the letter of the instructions up until the tensioning of the fabric over the header rail. This can be achieved by a careful bit of measurement and a self-tapping screw in both of the outer rivet holes. This will be sufficient to tension the fabric and allow you to lower and raise the hood to check for operation. I did have to reposition the holes in the fabric to give

another 1/4" worth of tension but that was it. With the outer two holes positioned, it was then straightforward to tension the fabric in the centre section by pulling through from within the car. When all looked right, I marked along the fabric with chalk where this folded over the leading edge of the rail. With the hood lowered, the marking was lined up and the aluminium channel temporarily fitted with the two outer self-tapping screws. With the chalk line running parallel to the channel, the centre holes were pushed through and more self-tapping screws inserted. A final raise of the hood to check that the tensioning was still correct and I could then begin riveting the channel into position. One small point here, the nose of my riveting gun was too large to fit between the sides of the channel. Using a small (4BA) nut as a spacer over the rivet shank, I could then rivet away without damaging the channel. Do the holes without the self-tapping screws first, you must leave these in at this stage in order to keep the correct positioning of the fabric to the rail.

It is also important to ensure that the aluminium channel is in good condition, this can easily be damaged if not removed and refitted carefully. As this retains the rubber seal, any distortion or unevenness will upset the seating of the rubber. Any cracks in the aluminium could also lead to tearing of the fabric. Oversize rivet holes in both header rail and channel should be checked for. You do not want any rivets pulling out because of this.

It probably takes longer to fit a hood this way but you can do it without help or glue. Also, if you do make a mistake at the glueing stage, you are rather stuck with it! At least by using screws, you can reposition holes until you are satisfied that you have got it right. Mind you, if you are really unfortunate, you could end up with more holes than hood but I think that you would have to be pretty clumsy not to be



close to the mark first time. As is said in the instructions and by the professionals, a newly fitted hood will be difficult to fasten shut initially. This is further exasperated if fitting a new seal, as I did. This will ease off in time. It is tempting to fit the hood with reduced tension to avoid this but the hood will soon become loose and flappy. If you have glued the hood to the header rail, there is little you can do about it, if you do it as I have described, then there is the possibility of an

adjustment later on. In all, it's not a difficult job, just a bit of care and time is all that is required. But do read the instructions.

So, that's the hood done and looking like new, just the car underneath to attend to now!

Terry Horler

Ed says: Thanks Terry, just in time for the winter rebuild ☺

Technical Feature: My Frogeye gets an Alternator

As I use my frogeye as my every day car including night time driving I decided to fit an alternator. These can be sourced quite cheaply I paid £15.00 for two including brackets belts and pulleys. Cars with A series engines are now quite rare in scrap yards, but alternators from A series engined Metro's are suitable. Don't forget the plug and wires cut them long enough to reach the bulkhead mounted starter switch. Alternators are very simple and reliable but a quick strip and clean is advisable. I had good brushes and clean slip rings, but some debris inside.

I used an old RB 106 control box as a connector block after removing the working parts and linking the A1 and A terminals. Move the yellow Ig Lamp wire in the D

terminal to the F terminal. The three wires from the three-pin plug at the rear of the alternator are all brown but don't panic the two heavy wires connect to the battery side of the starter solenoid the lighter wire connects to the yellow and green wire that went to the dynamo field. The yellow wire at the dynamo should be insulated and safely secured.

Fitting the alternator has transformed the lighting and wipers; battery voltage is now much higher when driving at night.

**Brian Pye
Somerset**

Ed says: Thanks Brian, I did, would do it again!

Dynamo Connections WIRES	Alternator Connections WIRES
E Black Earth	E Black Earth
D Yellow Dynamo Yellow Ig Lamp	D Yellow Dynamo
F Yellow and Green Dynamo	F Yellow Ig Lamp Yellow and Green Dynamo
A Brown Aux Fuse Brown Battery +	A Brown Aux Fuse Brown Battery +
A1 Brown and Blue Light Switch	A1 Brown and Blue Light Switch



Notes On Race Car Harnesses – Design and Installation

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During private practice at Amaroo recently, a very quick Sports 1300 went straight on over the hill and down into the earth-filled tire wall outside the sweeper. The car was badly damaged, with most chassis rails bent and the engine/gearbox shifted substantially forwards. The driver, David Williamson, was extensively injured:

- fractures and dislocations both feet and ankles, necessitating a wheelchair after discharge from hospital;
- undisplaced fracture of cervical vertebra;
- fractured ribs, punctured lung;
- bruised spleen;
- fractured left lower arm.

Most of these injuries, if only slightly worse, could have been fatal or caused permanent disability. David has readily agreed to my telling his story.

None of us like to think about being hurt in a race car. But while exploring the edge of control is part of the kick we get from racing, it seems reasonable and socially responsible to minimize the risk of being hurt if we crash. I first started analyzing race crashes in 1966, and successfully convinced a sceptical world that it was better to be belted into an open car than to be thrown out of it. My development of the six-point harness with the GQ Parachute Company, taken over later by “Dumbo” Willans, was part of this work. I still analyze crashes, but road cars these days. Knowing my background, David asked me to examine his car and his injuries, to see whether they might have been prevented.

This process was so instructive I thought it was worth writing down some of the lessons in the context of what new research is showing about race car harnesses. First, we

worked out what happened to him in the crash. The actual speed of impact would be an estimate, but is likely to have been in the order of 100 km/h. The impact was slightly angled, so the speed might have been higher than that. The car was effectively crushed about two-thirds of a meter, and the relatively stiff tire wall probably compressed about one-third of a meter. The total stopping distance of a meter then gives the deceleration force on the car at around 40 g {Note1}. Now we know from the black box crash recorders in Indy cars that drivers can ride out 40 g crashes with no more than bruising (the limit of human tolerance is being approached at about 50 g). Why not in David’s case?

The first reason is that David “submerged”. Basically, he slid partly underneath the lap belt. As it rode up his stomach to his chest it bruised his spleen, then it went up and broke some ribs, which in turn punctured a lung. His feet were forced down to the footwell, with forces being directly transferred into a collection of vulnerable small bones and joints.

Hanging on to the wheel, his arm was broken as he instinctively tried to stop himself going forward. This was not enough to stop him being violently flexed over the lap belt so far that he hit his helmet hard on the steering wheel, bending the rim about 30 degrees forward. The impact was enough to break a bone in his neck, just as it was at full stretch.

Because problems with the harness and its installation and use could have contributed to these injuries, we studied it carefully. It was a six-point belt, with two-inch webbing. The shoulder belts had been routed over a transverse chassis rail behind his shoulders and down to a lower rail at the bottom of the car. The crotch straps were joined at a central single latch plate. David confirmed that they were quite loose, and could be clipped into the buckle very easily.

The submarining happened because there was little to stop it. Crotch straps are there for two reasons. Not only do they have a direct



effect in preventing sliding underneath the lap belt, they also stabilize the whole system. Unlike the three-point belts in a passenger car, the buckle of a race harness is in the center. This means as soon as the shoulder belts are loaded, they pull the lap belt upwards and the lower part of the body tries to shoot underneath. This killed Jochen Rindt, who told me in 1969 that although he had come to accept a harness in the Lotus, he would never wear crotch straps. In his crash at Monza his lap belt ended up near his neck, rupturing his liver on the way. Australian child car seats, which also have central buckles, have crotch straps for exactly the same reason.

The excessive flexion of the upper part of David's body started when he finally got held up by the loose crotch straps, by which time his feet were mashed in the footwell. The flexion was allowed by the geometrically loosened shoulder belts and increased by the stretching allowed by the long length of the straps.

General Motors has been doing Indy car crash simulation (sled) testing, using dummies, for about five years. We now know far more than we did about the details of what happens in this kind of crash. It turns out that what we thought was right in the beginning, was later proved to be pretty right all the time.

At impact, the whole body moves forwards until lap and crotch straps restrain the hips. Then the torso rotates 30 degrees until the shoulder belts stop the rotation. Most of this movement is due to changing belt geometry and shape changes to the body within the belt, even with the mounting points just behind the shoulder. High-speed movies of a correctly-restrained dummy reclining at 45 degrees show forward shoulder movement of about 250 mm in a 40 g crash. About 20% of this forward motion is due to belt stretch, working out to about 50 mm.

This confirms two things for us. First, to restrain body movement within the confines of the shoulder straps, the belts must be as tight as possible throughout the crash sequence. And that means tightness in both the shoulder and crotch straps, which balance each other. Second, the shorter the

shoulder belts, the less the total stretch. In David's Sports 1300, fibers in the shoulder belts were melted as the webbing stretched over the chassis rail.

Not only do slack belts allow more movement – or “excursion”, as we call it in the trade – but they also directly increase forces on the neck and chest because the body's deceleration is more violent. The body slams into the belts at the pre-crash speed of the car, instead of riding the crash with the car as it collapses. Loose shoulder belts are a threat to the neck.

It's very important to get the shoulder belts loaded as soon as possible in the crash. The best way to arrange this is to place the mounting points so that the belts leave the shoulders at about 90 degrees to the spine. If you sit bolt upright, take the belts straight backwards; but when reclining, the mounting points should be below the shoulder but not so as to take the belts back along a line 40 degrees below the horizontal. When the driver is reclining, horizontal shoulder belts don't get fully loaded until well into the crash, by which time the shoulders will have moved well forward.

Whatever the car, lap belts should be anchored near vertically (say, 80 to 90 degrees), with the webbing passing over or in front of the hip bones.

In a 40 g crash, an 80 kg driver will be loading the belt system with a 3,200 kg force, about twice the weight of a fully-laden Falcon. The more widely that load is distributed, the lower the risk of belt-induced injury. That's why three-inch (75 mm) belts, with reasonably stiff webbing, are far better than belts with two-inch straps. They'll soon be mandated by the FIA.

Crotch straps can't be made of three-inch webbing, but in any event they should bear on the bones of the pelvis between the legs. This allows them to be really tight without discomfort, and puts crash loadings into strong (and hard) body parts rather than weak (and soft). Crutch straps take a heavy beating in a crash. A friend recently stuffed a March very hard into an earth bank at Oran Park, and two days later – without other injuries – had two jet-black bruise lines across the top fronts of his legs.



To get the right geometry the crotch straps must be widely separated as they approach the lap belt, just like a parachute harness. Easily the best way to do this is to take them up through D-rings on the lap belts. Every Formula One car has this kind of system. Taking the twin crotch straps (or, worse, a single one) via a single latch plate to the bottom of the buckle is a compromise aimed at cutting cost and adding convenience, mainly for Sedan cars.

Only a few race harnesses comply with my criteria: three-inch webbing, D-ring crotch straps, a central rotary buckle of course, and details such as spring-loaded anti-slip adjusting buckles. They include the following,

and I readily concede there may be more I don't know about:

- Willans 3" Silverstone 6;
- TRW/Sabelt 3" Professional 6-Point;
- Stand 21 STH-36SS 3";
- Simpson 3" 6-point.

The best harnesses don't cost a lot more than the worst, and less than a couple of tires these days. Fitting and wearing them properly is free. As David told me when I was writing his story, if only one driver's pain is prevented by better understanding, then it makes his own pain worth while.

Ed says: Also thank you to our friend Eriks and The Sprite Club of Australia

'T T T' (Technical Tip Time)

In ploughing through the September edition of our monthly crop of all things Masing, Phil Bollen raised some questions; perhaps I could offer some possible answers.

Our old friend has petrol all over the place thanks to flooding float chambers. Assuming new valve assemblies have been fitted and that the plastic floats are not letting in fuel. Then start off by checking that the float arms have been set correctly as per the workshop manual. It is important that the correct fuel height is maintained within the float chambers, these arms can easily be bent. Now then, if a leak persists, fit a fuel filter to prevent debris from the tank and pipework entering the float chambers. It is very important in my experience not to detach the fuel pipes from the stubs when removing the float chamber lids. The lids can easily be removed without having to pull off the pipes. The reason I say this is because it is very possible that when refitting the pipes to the stubs, a small amount of rubber can be shaved off and may enter the valve assembly causing it not to seat and yet another overflow. Always use the correct Petroflex or Aeroquip type petrol hose. Plastic hose is a definite no – no in my book. Furthermore, do you have a non-standard fuel pump that is providing excess pressure? If so then a combined fuel filter and pressure regulator such as a Filter King should be used. Or

revert to the standard SU pump, which is perfectly adequate. The needle valves are very finely made and any wear can cause a leak, if foreign object invasion is not the problem, float chamber and you need to check this carefully, then replace the valves as a matter of course. This is far cheaper than an under bonnet fire!

Phil also asks as to why his USA imported Midget bodysell has three windscreen wipers. Blame (or credit) the Federal safety regulations for this. From 1968 onwards, federal regulations had a great impact on vehicle safety and emission standards. One of these regulations referred to the area of the windscreen swept by the wipers. Quite simply, the original two wipers couldn't sweep enough so an extra wiper was added. (Also the reason why S1 E Types have three blades: Ed) As the USA were the largest customer for all things MG, Abingdon had to comply with this and many more regulations to stay in business. For a full list of all that went on, see that really useful book that has just become available again. I think it is called Original Sprite and Midget. (Never miss an opportunity when it presents itself!)

Terry Horler

Ed says: Yet another example of why we keep on good terms with Terry, he knows everything!! ☺



LETTERS

Rollbar Tonneau

At the recent 20th Anniversary Celebration at Beaulieu which we attended we saw a Midget or a Sprite with a Rollbar fitted and a Tonneau Cover that fitted very professionally around the rollbar. We were going to ask the owner where he obtained it but somehow managed to miss him later on. As he was keen enough to attend at Beaulieu he is probably an avid reader of the Mascot magazine. My e-mail contact is ian.beaver@tinyworld.co.uk. If you could put something in the Mascot I would be very grateful. We have a 1974 MK3 Midget with headrests and a rollbar and it is proving very difficult to find a Tonneau Cover to fit. Thanks.

Ian Beaver, MASC No 3164A

Ed says: Was it yours? Contact Ian and then tell me how's its done for the technical section☺

Modest Member?

At the Royal Agricultural Showground, Stoneleigh, during August bank holiday there are about 100,000 people per day. It's a large show with something for everyone. Hundreds of Classic cars, vintage motorbikes (I was there with my 1927 Sunbeam), military vehicles, steam traction engines, horses and other animals, craft stalls and a Sunday type market including a fun fair for the kids.

No MG club involvement this year, i.e. MG Owners or MG Car club. However, a maroon frogeye won the best '60s sports car class. A Midget and Sprite club member judging by the sticker in the centre of the windscreen. I enclose a pic or three. Will the owner please stand up and be counted? Cheers.

Alan Jones

PS it's the same place where they hold the MG and Tr**mph restoration shows – one coming up in October.

Ed says: Double helping from Alan this month as he does the rounds! (See page 32.)



Setting Sun

Dear Mike

I do agree with your views on that stretch of the A303, it's an enchanting piece of road. Janet has a cousin that lives in Cornwall so we have travelled it a lot, unfortunately not so often in the Frog, but generally in one of the Euro boxes I have owned. In either direction it is a delight, early morning, travelling west with the first rays of the sun striking the Henge it's a magical sight and travelling east in the late afternoon, the shadows of the stones lengthening, it's a welcome indicator that the end of a long journey is only an hour away.

I loved your phrase 'pace quickening as you try to hold station with the orange globe'; but was a little confused, the sun would be setting behind you and to hold station with it you would have



to do a handbrake turn and travel west at approx 900 miles an hour. Sorry, I am being pedantic, ignore these remarks, it was an excellent editorial and hope it results in members responding with their favourite roads.

A new favourite stretch of road for me is the A31 between the Rufus Stone and Ringwood, we are travelling west, returning from Surrey where we have been visiting our new granddaughter, it is just before midnight and the open forest is bathed in moonlight, it's been a perfect day and an alcoholic nightcap is only ten minutes away. Unfortunately I have not done this trip in the Frog yet, but when I do, I will write it up for you. Cheers.

Tony and Janet Scott

Ed says: Tony is right of course, I used a certain licence in my telling of it, as 'in memory', that's how I remember it. However, as with all life's best memories they are often enhanced as we get further away from them! Happy days remembered of the Frog! Come on Tony, lets get the A31 down on paper...

Wiring Made Easy

We've seen a fair bit of the Anonymous Bodger, now's the time to introduce his associate the Crafty Leckie. CL was trained by the Prince of Darkness and here are two of his guiding principles to be going on with:

- 1) When installing an accessory all wires connected to a switch should be all the same colour.
- 2) New wires should never be in one piece and must be different colours at each end.

Both the above make fault finding more fun! He has many other bad habits, let's see what the rest of your readers can come up with. One beauty he sprang on me was to put a wire into a Scotchlok between the blade and the plastic closing clip. Intermittent contact guaranteed and graphic description of previous owner's leckie friend when I eventually found it.

Suggest Phil B on page 31 (*Sept issue, letters: Ed*) should fit an inline filter, if he hasn't done already. I assume he's got plastic floats and the latest needle valves.

Willie Richmond (1973)

Sprite Salvage

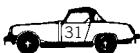
Work has started on the salvage of my Mk III Sprite which was flooded under 10ft of water in Lewes some years ago. This car was purchased by me a couple of years ago having been standing since it was flooded. As can be seen from the photo the engine has now been removed and the top end does not seem to be in too bad a condition, however it will be totally stripped and rebuilt to go in my other Sprite Mk III to try and keep it on the road. The current engine in that Sprite being so clapped that it only does about 150 miles to the pint of oil!

In the pic you will see the engine being removed by the alternative (easy) method. None of that pumping of a manual engine crane, just press the starter and pull the lever. Also makes moving the engine a lot easier.

Next report, I will let you know what I find when I have stripped the engine.

Chris Harding

Ed says: Thanks Chris, good to see another coming back to life. Look forward to the next update.



Show Winner

I attended the annual town and country show at Stoneleigh during August bank holiday. Lots of vehicles and clubs there, but no MG club of any description. A big show with classic cars, military vehicles, steam engines and plenty of crafts and animals for the missus if she's not into MGs.

A very tasty frogeye won the best 60's Sports car, I enclose the photos.

Alan Jones

72 Midget undergoing full restoration.

Ed says: Second instalment from Alan, Mascot's roaming reporter!!



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SALES

Frogeye Spares: 948cc "Gold Seal" engine (no ancillaries, condition unknown). Gearbox (condition unknown). Hood (V.G.C.) Side Screens (V.G.C.). Hood Frame. 4 Steel wheels (2 with good Michelins). Dash (with instruments, except fuel gauge). Pair 1 1/8" S.U.'s. Mech fuel pump. Plus various other items, would prefer to sell as a complete lot, all sensible offers considered.

Ron 01959 532355 (N.W. Kent)

MG Arkley 1338cc, FRE, Red, lowered suspension, wide wheels, fully refurbished interior, MOT, Wolfrace Alloys, 185 Front, 205 rear nearly new tyres. All round great fun, summer car, offers around £2600.

Paul 01327 262411, or paul@tyzacks.co.uk

Mini Cooper cylinder head (998cc 12G295) £70.

Mick 0115 8494521 (Notts)

Works style O.E. hardtop, Midget III Sprite IV. Fully restored, including new clips, rubber and seals. Must sell as space needed, offers.

David 01395 446353 (Devon)

Smooth case gearbox as seen £25. Wire wheel axle (semi elliptic type) – tube only £75.

John 01420 87947 or 07950 853508 (Hants)

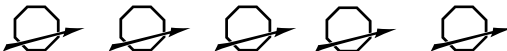
Hood Mk III Midget/Mk II Sprite new Moss top quality, fitted to car then never used. Cost £180 will accept £90. New O.E. Mk II Midget/Mk II Sprite full tonneau in red £45.

Nick 01527 579511 (South Midlands)

WANTS

Useable and reasonably priced Spridget, also good condition bonnet.

Hugh 01395 568828 (Devon)



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