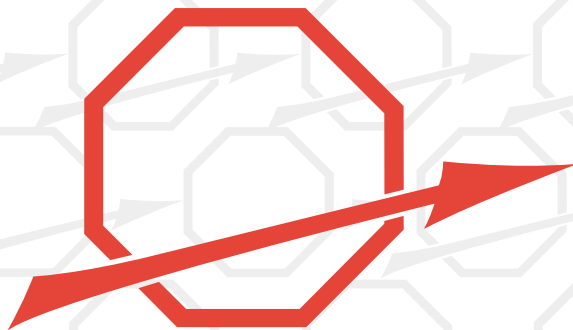


MASCOT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB



Carson's gang visit (guess?), Tip, see August report

ISSUE NO. 239

NOVEMBER 2003

www.mgcars.org.uk/midgetspriteclub

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

Club Mileage Competition

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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

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November Editorial

Well it's a done deal, official results inside. We DO have a new chairman and I AM your editor (sorry!). Quite a good turn out actually, for us and you are all invited to attend our Annual General Meeting Sunday the 23rd of November at the Yew Tree, Station Road, Chiseldon, Nr Swindon, Wiltshire. Full details inside.

Busy month in prospect, in addition to the AGM we also have the Classic Car show at the NEC with your very own club stand, so make sure you support us. Cut price tickets available to club members, just use the number printed inside. Talking of motoring events (smooth link!), I attended the totally MG event at Epsom Downs a couple of weeks ago. Don't remember seeing you there but did see some interesting Midget and Sprite stuff including 'The Mirror', a concours 1500 Midget, very clean. Cleaner than the basket case trailer'd 1098 Midget with 'airflow' bodywork (but it was cheap!)

Also spent a busy night last Tuesday at both the Surrey meet and later the same evening at the 'ACE' cafe meeting. The Surrey boys were discussing Car and engine rebuilds and (surprise surprise) each had a tale of success and satisfaction, BUT for the SAME supplier somebody had a horror story. Mine was one of them, had my engine built, very happy great job. Recommended somebody in the club to them, disaster after disaster. Somebody else used a company that advertised in one of the MG club magazines, it all went wrong and he wanted to blame the magazine for supporting the advert, the MG boys then produced loads of satisfied members!

SO THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS: whether it's engines, panels or rebuilds. Don't blame the club. Don't trust to luck and the adverts, get recommendations! (But even then it can still go wrong). 'ACE?', Big Healey's and two early A series LOTUS Sevens on wires, very Nice. Also spotted a Cherry Red Frogeye, one side screen, a Rally plate and a MASC sticker (Reg 8084ME). Couldn't find the driver, so who are you? Letter please.

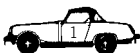
Outraged of Tunbridge Wells rang me regarding *Mascot's* late arrival. Quorum, our printers, have apologised and have explained it was due to technical reasons. Well despite it's late arrival, last month's issue certainly answered the "why isn't there more technical stuff" brigade. SEVEN pages last month, nine if you include the Phoenix! Hard tops, race harnesses (seat BELTS are this month!), alternators, hood fitting, the list was endless. Plus more photos, adverts etc. Content OK? Tell your friends, Not OK? Tell me!!

Lots more going on inside this month including even more technical stuff, could have easily gone to 40 pages, had to dump some copy but the stuff that made the cut, quality! Terry answered the question, 'how do I fit seatbelts to my Frogeye?' *Inside*. Wondered if the Mk3 Spitfire really was better than your Midget (as if!!) *Inside*. How fast are you going? *Inside*. It's all INSIDE this month.

Well that's about it from me, I'm sure I'll see you all at the AGM (!) Well it would be nice if one of you came ☺. I'll be there with the committee, full report next month. Meanwhile cram the last of the Spridget-miles in as the winter sunshine won't last much longer....regards to all



Mike 'Ed' North



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Telephone the International Classic Motor Show ticket hotline

0121 767 4767

or

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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Club Nights

- 1st Tuesday **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Forresters**, Leigh, near Cricklade.
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs and 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 Kiltan**, 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 and 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

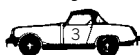
Members Only pages for November:

User name: area

Password: 51

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.



Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Chris Nevard

Events organised so far for 2003

November

Sunday 23rd

Club AGM. To be held at The Elm Tree, Station Road, Chiseldon, near Swindon. Please see announcement elsewhere in this *Mascot*.

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.

Annual General Meeting 2003

This year's AGM will be held on Sunday the 23rd of November at the Yew Tree, Station Road, Chiseldon, Nr Swindon, Wiltshire. The meeting will take place in the functions room of the Yew Tree and will kick off at 2.00pm sharp (or thereabouts). This is your opportunity to come along and meet the committee and to hear what the club has been up to over the last twelve months. The committee will present their annual reports with an opportunity for you to voice any

questions you have of the committee. (No guarantees on what sort of answers will be provided however!)

Chiseldon is just to the South of Swindon and is easily accessed from Junction 15 of the M4. Heading south on the A345, the village is to the west of this road.

We hope to see you there. (If not, please send any letters of apologies to Terry Horler)

Terry Horler for the committee

Mutual Assistance Directory

I can't believe the weather we have had in West Wales. Yesterday we went out in the Midget with the top down and had a whale of a time. In mid October, in West Wales! Fantastic.

Our army of MAD members continues to grow but there are so many more members who must be thinking about joining the scheme. Well, in those immortal ad words – Just do it. You can join online at the website or by

contacting me. Details are in the front of this *Mascot*.

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





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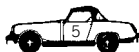
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Letter from the Chairman

Hi everybody, thanks for voting me in, it's been a while since I was on the committee! I guess my first job will be at the AGM, so it would be good if lots of you turn up this year. It's your opportunity to air your views, challenge the committee and offer to do things to help with the smooth running of the club. The club will not run with the committee alone, the views and wishes of the membership is what makes it all worth doing.

What am I up to? My Midget is off at the weekend to Dudley for an engine rebuild.

Those of you who were at Beaulieu will probably have noticed it was a tad smoky – Step forward Steve Raggett – A series builder extraordinaire! The last one lasted a good long time and went like stink, here's hoping.

Then to Le Mans for the 1000kms race. I will report on this next month. It's a new race and promises to be exciting.

Bye for now, see you at AGM

John

The Annual Ballot Results

Firstly, our apologies for the rather short period of time between you receiving your ballot papers and the returning date. Holidays and technical problems served to reduce the usual 30-day period for this. However, 147 ballot papers were returned which is a really good result compared to most years, our thanks to all for their prompt attention. The votes were cast as follows -

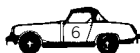
CHAIRPERSON	JOHN RUDERMAN	146
GENERAL SECRETARY	TERRY HORLER	146
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	NIGEL WILLIAMS	146
TREASURER	PAULINE WALTERS	144
DEPUTY TREASURER	BRENDAN JOYCE	143
EDITOR	MIKE NORTH	147
REGALIA	CHRIS BARTON	147
GENERAL COMMITTEE	ALAN BARTON	147

Our thanks to our independent adjudicator, Mr Brian Wigginton J.P. for once again ensuring fair play and counting up all the papers.

Also, thanks to retiring committee member, Dave Symes and Alan Barton as stand-in Chairperson for the last club year. We now welcome John Ruderman as the new club Chairperson (Although 'NEW' is not exactly true as he has held this position in the earlier years of the club). We wish John well and look forward to him shouldering all the blame when things go wrong!

The above take office from the 1st of October 2003 and can be contacted via the Contacts list on the front page of *Mascot*.

Terry Horler for the committee past and present



WEBMONSTER: Auto site of the month



Number 6 in a series of featured sites that help members link to the world of motorcars, motorsport and motor enjoyment! This month is... <http://www.hpc-ltd.co.uk/>

Improve yourself! Yes, HPC were the first and some say the best of the 'on road' driving schools to offer continual tuition. How long since you past your test? Got a faster, better, sportier car now than then? What have you done to improve your skill level? Here's your chance (and get cheaper insurance as a result)

'Bodger's Corner'

The Anonymous Bodger's tip of the month'

Ever tried to bleed the cooling system of air? How do you make sure the heater's full when the fill point of the radiator is below it?

Take another trip to your local scrappy, look for an line hose adaptor with a bleed point, there's lots of modern cars with them fitted, give your scrappy man 50p for one.

Fit this adaptor in-line at the upper most heater connection, you now have a vent/fill point where it should be, at the top of the cooling system.

Brad The Mars bar kid, THE 'Not so Anonymous Bodger!'

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



Cambridgeshire Report

October is here already (it will soon be Christmas) speaking of which the arrangements for the Christmas meal are the same as last year. The venue is the Cross Keys Hotel in Chatteris in place of the normal Mad Cat meeting in December, we plan to sit down to eat at 8pm. I have made a provisional booking for 10 and will allocate seats in the order people book them with me, however I expect actual numbers of up to 20 so please let me know ASAP so that I can amend the booking (bearing in mind there is no guarantee the Cross Keys will be able to accommodate us all if we leave it too late). As was the case last year there will be a vegetarian option.

October's last Spridget run of the year the Gaydon getaway turned out to be a bright sunny autumn day and a very pleasant cobweb blowing top down 160 or so mile run. We arrived at the meeting place in good time but no sign of the scarlet Quitenell (well old English white anyway), a little odd since he had organised the event, anyway Nigel had a variety of mobile numbers (none of which turned out to be Quentin's) however by 10.30 we had convinced ourselves that Quentin was meeting us at Gaydon and so we set off. Nigel led the convoy and we arrived at Gaydon at midday, our visit coincided with a mini day so there were lots of small 'A' series cars on show. My favourite exhibit was the sliced in two (lengthwise) MGB (maybe they should do this to all of them). It is a stunning collection and well worth a visit.



The pub night was good fun as usual and fell on a dry and very mild evening (not so usual), which made for a very pleasant top down outing (great for October). The main business of the evening was confirming the date and venue for the East Anglian MASC rally (Dave Hawkes tells me his stunning red frog will be completed in time – well done Dave), and the details of the Christmas meal. Nigel produced a fumble bag and surprisingly between us we managed to identify all six objects (Nigel must be losing his touch) Diane also provided a dinky little (ladies) fumble bag which amazingly contained a wonderful piece of a formula one car. Amazingly I managed to identify the formula one part (more by luck than judgement) so I guess the result was Christians two Lions nil (sorry I just got back from Rome).

The East Anglian MASC rally will be held on spring bank holiday 2004 at Eric St John Foti's Collectors World near Downham Market. The first 40 Spridgets will be given pride of place in the main display area and their occupants will be given entry to the fantastic exhibits and a guided tour through the Dickens streets at a special reduced entry fee of £2 per person. We intend to open this event up to all Spridget owners (both MASC members and non members) since we see it as a great recruiting opportunity as well as a chance for East Anglian Mascateers to meet up without having to travel hundreds of miles.

Dave Dixon



Warwickshire's Report

I am very grateful to Mo, who did a wonderful job last month and should consider becoming our permanent scribe. As I was not able to submit the photographs I had taken for the magazine, here they are now, although a month late. Alan and Chris Barton, Nigel Williams and John Ruderman organised a very enjoyable event at Beaulieu and it was a shame that it was not better supported, however we were all very proud of Andy Smith who won the prize for the best car.



Andy receiving his prize

Mo also mentioned our trip to Goodwood, which was very enjoyable. It was disappointing not to see our cars in the snapshots last month, but thought this one had local interest.

The group has had a relatively quiet month, but our monthly meeting continues to attract about 30 members as we plan our programme for next year. Alan presented a questionnaire about this year's events and we hope that the collated responses will aid the decision making process. Next month we plan to put some dates and details to our ideas.

Although there was no organised run, many members visited the Malvern Show at the

Three Counties Show Ground and enjoyed the day. Our next club event is The Classic Car Show at the NEC, where we will, literally, be flying the Midget and Sprite flag. The Stoneleigh Restoration Show is likely to attract members seeking parts for their cars and we look forward to a Christmas Celebration with Desert Island Discs at Mo and Phil's "Des. Res." Please do not forget to respond if you are intending to go.

Sheila Yates



Jim (McWillis) and Rosemary ready for Goodwood

Ed says: Nice to have you back on line Sheila. Thanks for the Beaulieu report, sounded like a good day. Well done to Andy Smith for Best Car!

Lincs Meeting

We all met in the car park of The Henage Arms on Sunday 28th September for our first run. In all an impressive 8 cars took part. It is nice to see so many new members. What a good turn out being as we are still in our 1st year. Alan had volunteered to do the route for us, which took us on the prettier roads of Lincolnshire through Spilsby, Stickney etc. finishing off at The Red Lion at Revesby.

The only thing that did mar the day was the attitude of the Landlord. Saying he could not provide us with lunch without even asking how many it was for. Never mind we all had

the usual beverage just to be polite then we all dispersed on our merry way. Some going to Horncastle to eat others going home etc. Reflection in saying how good the day was and what an achievement.

Our monthly meeting took place without us due to personal circumstances, but Sue reliably informs me that there was indeed a good turn out. Apparently there was conversation about Ostrich meat (Brian and Sue went past the local Ostrich farm at Revesby) and conkers. Goodness knows why, but there we go, anything and everything is talked about at our meetings.



They did discuss however the Christmas Meal with the Landlord. We are going to have party hats, the lot, it's exciting!!! No date yet though.

We have been waiting for Roger to email us with pictures of our day out but they have not

appeared, never mind we will have them for next month's notes. Must go as the Ed is chasing yet again. We meet at The Heneage Arms at Hainton the 1st Thursday of every month at 8pm see you all soon.

Sue Sumner

Surrey Area Report

This report must start with an apology – in August Surrey Area held its first autojumble, at the expansive estate of Chris and Jacqui Harding, and although a photo appeared of our ladies competing hard at Croquet in the October mag, no mention was made of the hard work put in by Chris and Jacqui to prepare and deliver this event!

Advertised in local Classic car groups, we had a field to ourselves, and a range of books, spares, toys and even offers of complete cars for restoration were available. Two people joined the club and our area directly as a result, and with Chris and Jacqui's hospitality, the day was a great success. We all hope that your Austin Healey 100 project on display will progress much faster in its second twenty years of your ownership Chris!!

From the heavily contested Croquet match on the lawns of Furzewood after the Autojumble, the ladies trip to Bruges was born, and this is now confirmed for the first weekend in December, definitely not in sports cars! Chaps are now desperately looking for car-orientated events to pile in on that weekend!

Editor Mike has asked us for photos of sports cars seen abroad on holiday – well, Chris and I spent the second 2 weeks of September touring the USA, and on motoring through the countryside from Rocky Mountains National Park to Steamboat Springs (Wonderfully evocative names) I happened across Kurt Engles, of Healey Drivers Club, in his 3000, whose Smiths gauge had temporarily embarrassed him! Photo taken, we then met up again in Steamboat Springs, where the photos here were taken, and in the space of 30 minutes, approximately 6 big Healeys, 6 XK140s, a Ferrari 166, Mercedes 300SL, HRG, Aston Martin DB2, and some



D-Types all motored through to various screaming pitches of engines!

What a sight – on a 1000 mile rally too, so hey, can anyone beat that!

Ashley and Sue have been doing sterling work checking out hotels for our May 2004 jaunt, and one has now been booked in Midsomer Norton. Ashley is taking bookings, which require a £10 per head deposit, and if there's any more Surrey Areas friends who would like to join us, let's make it the biggest turnout yet – this is May 29th – June 1st 2004 inclusive.



Latest on the model front – thanks to a very good friend in France who I've exchanged models with for over 20 years, I now have a small number of 1/43rd scale Solido Frog-eye models, in yellow. These have not generally been made available here, and are extremely well detailed. If anyone's interested, do contact me.

Blue Ball meet in October, focused on plans for our Area Christmas dinner, and deposits will be needed from all who wish to join us for the November Blue Ball meeting. The ups and downs of restorations were discussed at length, and suffice it to say that it is very important that anyone contemplating any restoration work with any known restorer, would be well advised to ask for recommendations.

We were pleased to welcome Andrew and Lea Simpson, who I discovered in a local petrol station, they seemed to enjoy our local meet, and have joined up!

Future Plans include –

9th December – Christmas dinner – so NO BLUE BALL meeting

February 2004 meeting – Hobbies and Collecting evening, at the Warren, Hayes, Kent – anyone who fancies giving a 10 minute chat on their favourite hobby/collection, step forward!

All for now

David Wright

October at the Green Man – South Staffs and North B'ham Branch

After a day setting up the HIF44 on Lara, with Stuart's Krypton analyser (posh eh?) we set off to the club in high spirits, he and I.

On arrival at t'Green Man just after Gavin and Dawn, I sent Gavin out for a test ride in the revitalised Lara. With Dawn we went into the pub and we met Bill 3 (according to Geoff's "Standard Method of Nomenclature") and Trevor sitting out in the garden. "No room inside" they said, but Stuart, Dawn and I went in and found an empty table in a corner. We got served at once, a welcome change for this pub these days. Geoff turned up from around the corner inside the pub and we moved around there with Bill and Trevor who had come in from the 'Cold'!

Steve, Matt and Bill 2 were there so we had a lively chatter across two tables. All the usual things discussed, carburettors for elderly sports cars and after Gavin came in we discussed to my consternation, why had Lara been fitted with a rev limiter? Gavin found that he couldn't even get up to 5000 revs in her, something was holding back the car after he drove off the car park.

That was something to worry about after the meeting as we were by now into a discussion on the branch trip to Le Mans next year. Gavin is not able to come (due to contractual agreements, being a teacher does have some drawbacks) and Trevor and Bill 3 can't make it this time, but we have a healthy "I'm Going!" list for now. Stuart is planning to come in his Volvo Amazon when she is ready which will make a gorgeous service barge for the group. I still think I will have to fit new rear springs, though, the 1966 vintage ones are showing their age nowadays. At this years visit to France, two up, the French roads were



making the exhaust pipe “bottom” too often for comfort.

We still have not been able to decide on an alternative venue for the “Natter”, Gavin hasn’t had time to check out the pub we’d been advised to try yet, so, still searching if anyone can come up with a suggestion!

No new faces this month but plenty of “the usual suspects”! A convivial meeting concluded around closing time, a happy coincidence, so Stuart and I set off in search of Lara’s potential problem.

Just up the road, as Gavin warned us, the revs just stuck at around 4,500 and the ignition kept cutting in and out. Reassured (can you be reassured at 11 o’clock at night

in pitch black countryside?) that the problem at least had nothing to do with the new carburettor and manifold, we set about an analysis of the fault. The rev-counter actually reached 5000 and stuck there for a minute or so then dropped to next to nothing. Obviously an ignition fault and maybe not a distributor problem I decided to disconnect the loop through wires on the back of the instrument, clean them up a little and connect them together so that the coil and ignition module got a “clean” supply with no tacho. The engine started and ran smoothly so it looks as if its new (ish) tacho time!

I wonder why Lara seems to pick club nights for her temperamental sessions!

Bill Mohan

Scotland Report November



And. Now we have a film star. An instant cult figure. David Baldwin. Based in Inverness. A ski instructor. 21. A babe-bait surf rider teacher. An Eiger climbing expert. A guy who came from Inverness. A hero. Check the map. Then he went back there again at 5.30pm the next morning. Oil pressure close to shot. Forget the map. Let me help you out. That’s a 280 mile round trip. Why? ‘I’ve read your natters are poorly attended!’ That’s it. The rout of the wimps. Turmoil amongst the old! Wish you could have seen his insect bespattered screen. And the patina. Fabulous. Not beat up. Nope. Just livin’ from hard runnin’. [How sad, Hulot and its polish receiving paint]. But, when in France this winter skiing, David’s car will be

refurbed. What a shame to lose that Nick Cage/ Laura Dern ‘Gas and go baby’ look. Don’t be like us poor pitied ‘Crivens; it’s Lash Laru outside. Keep the dehumidifier on. Let’s listen to The Archers’. Can’t you just stage 2 it, Dave, like you said and keep the paint job? Here’s help- Paul Newman used to drive a station wagon heap that no one looked at twice. But under the hood was thunderous power. David. You’ve seen we’re all brite and shiney, down in Central Scotland; afraid of a tear drop. Haven’t ya? Please. Be different. Well. Anyway. The troops rallied for the big nite. Eleven of us + ‘GT’ the collie shown at Crufts. What a lovely dug. Yes. It was a real occasion. Even ‘The Sawman’-Nigel Duncan [MASCOT issues 213 and 215] turned out and went for a run in David’s hoodless ‘70 Midget, Nigel’s hair wisps exercising their failing follicles following Hulot down a country road, only to come back, step out in his unbuttoned blazer and pronounce the nite darkened bravura ‘Exhilarating. Not cold at all’. Maybe he’ll jack the M-B for an MG. Maybe he won’t. Don’t really matter. For he enjoyed the moment. And that’s all there ever is. This minute. Rite now. For us men of the MASC. Minutemen. [Yes, yes, I know I’m driving faster]. Because the nite belonged to David, at this point, he was presented with a general issue MASC medal, exclusively engraved ‘True Service’. [If he ever visits



again it'll have to have a Bar added to it!] In reply, David said he shall try to form a Highland Area of MASC and he will write the Scottish Report for *MASCOT's* Jan. issue; symbolic of a new beginning. How can we help him? The plan is to infiltrate the MGOC Highland from within. But I call on Dave Dixon, that expert on area expansion, for ideas. Help, Dave! Finally, I'd like to give warm thanks to Alex Taggart for an incredibly

thoughtful gift to MASC Scotland, to mark the success of our area, as he sees it to be. Rejoice! [Whose distant stridency said that? It's 1982. Remember?].

HEE ME OORI_ISHT.

Carson and chums

Ed says: 280 mile round trip! David Balwin sounds like a 'Carson Man'

Somerset Area Report

As I write this report the rain has started to fall so I guess the summer is now officially over in Somerset. We cannot complain having enjoyed at least four months of warm dry weather which has allowed continued use of the cars and attendance at many local Classic Car shows and summer fairs.

The most recent was organised by the Dorset Region Jaguar Owners Club at Bovington Tank Museum. This Wessex Classic attracted some 700 classic vehicles including a large number of MGBs and Midgets.

Peter and Valerie Young and myself met at Chard and motored in convoy to the show where we met some of the Dorset Area MASC team. I made the journey with some trepidation as the Midget had developed an intermittent fault on the low-tension ignition circuit. A recently fitted electronic ignition

system was the likely cause of failure but despite many attempts to try and replicate the fault on static running it would not fail. I decided to revert to conventional points for the trip to Dorset and these proved trouble free.

Our journey home was uneventful although my 1275cc power plant was a little stretched following Peter's 1500 on the climb out of Maiden Newton but I managed to stay on his tail with some to spare.

As usual our next meeting will be held at The Lord Nelson.

Ps The ignition fault lies in the control box, which I have now dismantled only to find the whole unit is sealed in epoxy so in the bin it goes!!!

David Bearne

North West Area Report

IMPORTANT REMINDER: we are not meeting at the Kiltern on 12th November.

For this club night we are visiting the Trevor Farrington restoration and race preparation workshop. If you wish to attend then please ring me a.s.a.p. on 01772 432138.

Last month we joined Carson and chums from the Scottish centre for the 'Solway Shuffle'. This was a weekend in Dumfriesshire staying overnight on Saturday in Castle Douglas. Diane and I plus Andrew, made up the NW area contingent. We met up

at Forton services on the M6 and drove in convoy, albeit only two cars, up to our first rendezvous for lunch just outside Castle Douglas.

We arrived a bit early so had a coffee just as a wedding party arrived. Soon after a piper started playing, I assume to announce the arrival of the bride, but who should walk through the door at that time but Carson – perfect timing.

As an aside, have you ever wondered what a Scotsman has under his kilt, then speak to Andrew. He had a sneak preview (we didn't



go into details of how and where!) and saw a woolly monkey placed in a strategic place!!

After lunch we went on a drive ending up at the Urr Valley hotel where we were stopping for the night.

On the Sunday, after a hearty breakfast, we set off on a drive through the countryside stopping at Port William and eventually finishing at Wigtown for lunch. There were some lovely views along the coast and across the sea made all the better by the sunshine that Carson had arranged.

All in all it was a very pleasant weekend and I think enjoyed by everyone. So a big thank you to Carson and Linda for organising it and inviting us.

For next year we (the NW area that is will be organising a similar event possibly to be held in north Cumbria or Westmorland. It is likely to be early September so put it in your diaries now. I will give out more details as they unfold.

Les Robinson

Never Seen Anything Like It

Twenty years of the Midget and Sprite Club would tend to lead one to believe that everything Spridgley wise would have been encountered. Boring old life if that were true! It therefore comes as a refreshing attack of bewilderment when not one, but two items of Spridgley history come to light that leave me, well, bewildered.

Firstly, Dave Groves of PERFECT NOSTALGIA sends this photo of his recently acquired Frogeye "Saloon". Saloon? Well, that's what is says in the logbook. This is no bodge job either; it's a properly and skilfully crafted piece of work by Streamline Airflow. When was this conversion done, why was it done, for whom it was done and are there any more are all questions yet to be answered? Dave is hoping to bring along his Frogeye "Saloon" to our 20-Year Celebration at Beaulieu so come

along and see for yourself this highly unusual car. Dave is also hoping to bring along some Speedwell Sprites, a speciality of his and also well worth seeing.

Secondly, Tony Lindsay has a piece missing from his Frogeye. It's not rust, nothing has dropped off and nothing has been stolen, but this semi-circular cut-out in the rear shroud. Tony doesn't want the errant piece of steel returned, rather, some information on who did it. Investigations so far have yet to pin point the culprit but Tony insists that the workmanship is of a sufficiently high standard to suggest that this was a very "proper job" (as they say in Cornwall). Registration number XDF 517 (a Gloucestershire issue), Tony would welcome any help concerning this modification and any other history of this Sprite.



If anyone out there in Spridgley World can help, please forward your comments via Terry Horler – 'cause I don't know the answers.



Midget Roads

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

Chard to Wiscombe Park

Chard, a small town in the West of Somerset, is famous for being the birthplace of powered flight and where artificial were first developed. It has a long history and existing at the base of a valley, although still the highest town in the county, has some roads, which seem to just melt into the sky!! 20 and 25% gradients (1 in 5 and 1 in 4 to you and I) are fairly common in the area.

It's 7.30 on a sunny, crisp Spring Sunday morning.

Leave Chard town centre on the A30 and head West up Snowden Hill towards Exeter. Once leaving the 30, 40 and 50mph limits you can sweep around the twisting road before dropping down again to cross the Devon county boarder. Arriving at the village of Yarcombe, and navigating the hairpin at the pub in 2nd, you start to ascend the infamous Yarcombe Hill. If you look to your left you can see some spectacular views of

West Devon. You then climb for about 1 mile with 90° bends right, left, right and left again, full throttle in 3rd if you are brave enough, with the sound of a well tuned engine emitting its wastes through the exhaust pipe all the way to the top. A further mile on you join the A303 (now becoming the A30) and, being one of the arterial roads for the West Country, is a chance to experience the open but still twisting road as it winds its way down again, passing through the village of Monkton and on to the dual carriageway which continues to the M5 at Exeter. No dual carriageway today though, as you leave the A30 to enter the picturesque town of Honiton, famous for its lace. At the end of High Street you turn left onto the A375, once again climbing up a twisting hill heading towards Sidbury. Arriving at Putts Corner it's left at the cross roads for a 4 mile run (mostly straight but narrow) before finally turning left signposted Blackbury Camp, an ancient encampment set in a wood. Another mile and you arrive at the entrance to Wiscombe Park.



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This is private parkland, set in a glorious valley, complete with country house, woods and a stream running along the bottom of the valley.

The setting is normally tranquil with the grazing sheep and the pheasants aimlessly wandering about, but not today. You have come to enjoy a day of noise, fun and action

at the home of the Wiscombe Park Hill Climb course. Enjoy every moment and look forward to the run home. This is Spridget country.

Peter Young – EMW 445W

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

Spotted Abroad



David Wright spotted this fast Big Healey whilst on tour in the States. Nice car, see the Surrey area report for the full story. So who else has found what else abroad? Surely it's not just David, Bob and me that have spotted classics abroad. Come on you lot, photos pls! Ed.

How to Fit a Seat Belt

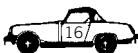
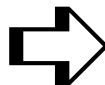
Ed says: remember EGG FROG in September's letters?

"Also I want to put seat belts in it and being a 1960/1959 Frogeye it has no mountings – any members got any advice as to how I do this or get it done.

barbara.addrison@ntlworld.com"

Terry Horler (who else) kindly supplied the following four pages from the Austin Service Journals. Thanks Terry

Ed says: Before the letters start, ref the PTO on the last page, Terry didn't advise so I assume it doesn't relate to us!



Distributor & Dealer
Organization

No. A / 437

Fleet Users

No. AP / 304

16 November 1961

SEAT BELTS

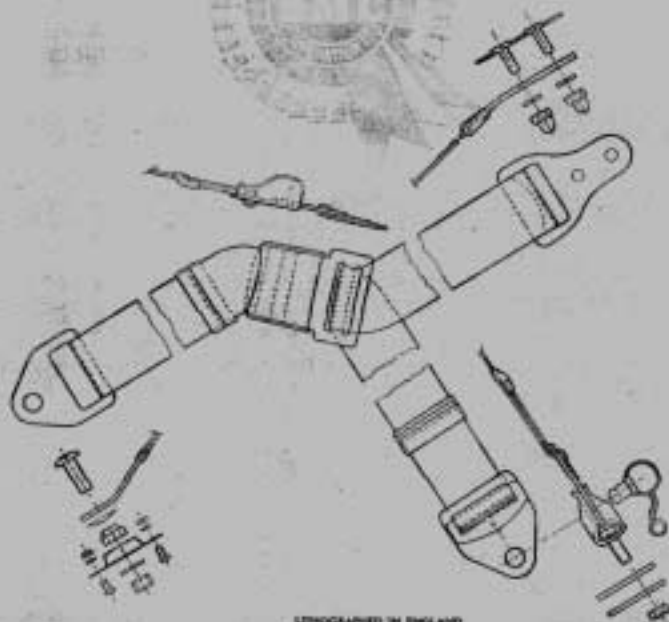
HEALEY SPRITE
HEALEY 100 SIX
HEALEY 3000

Seat belts with anchorage fittings for either driver's or front passenger's use are available as follows:-

Healey Sprite (ANS) Part No. AHA6363
Healey 100 Six (BN4 & BN6) Part No. AHB9141
Healey 3000 (BN7 & BN7) up to Car No. 13750 Part No. AHB9141

The harness comprises a long and short belt both adjustable for length. The bracket with adjuster of the long belt is fitted to the sill or floor and the other end to the wheelarch. The bracket on the short belt at the opposite end to the buckle is fitted to the side of the drive shaft tunnel.

Note: It is important that the short belt is fitted to the same side of the tunnel as the seat for which the belt is to be used.



LITHOGRAPHED IN ENGLAND

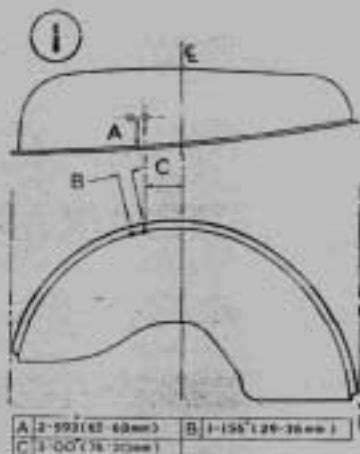
P.T.O.

FITTING INSTRUCTIONS

Realey Sprits

Rear Wheelarch - Fig. 1

Drill two 11/32" (8.73 mm.) diameter holes in the wheelarch from the underside and forward of the centre line as shown in illustration. Pass the two bolts attached to the reinforcement plate through the 11/32" (8.73 mm.) diameter holes and secure the belt bracket with the capped nuts and spring washers.



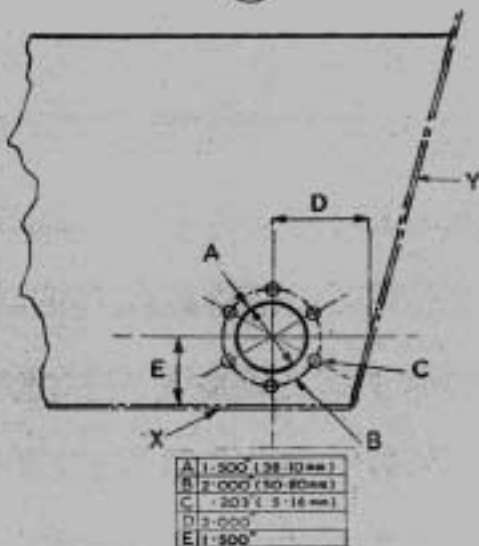
continued

Drive Shaft Tunnel - Fig. 2

Cut a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38.1 mm.) diameter hole $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38.1mm) from the floor 'X' and forward of the heelboard 'Y'. Drill six $13/64$ " (5.16 mm.) diameter holes, round this hole, equally spaced on a 2" (50.8 mm.) pitch circle diameter, as illustrated, using the mounting bracket as a template. From inside the tunnel place the mounting bracket into position and secure with the six No.10 UNF pan head screws, the heads of which must be inside the tunnel and the nuts and spring washers inside the car.

Cut a 1" (25.4 mm.) diameter hole in the carpet to coincide with the belt bracket facing away from the centre line of the car. Assemble the $7/16$ " (11.11 mm.) hexagon head screw, belt bracket, anti-rattle washer (concave face to bracket), shouldered distance piece (large diameter next to tunnel) and secure the bracket with the nut and spring washer inside the tunnel.

③



continued

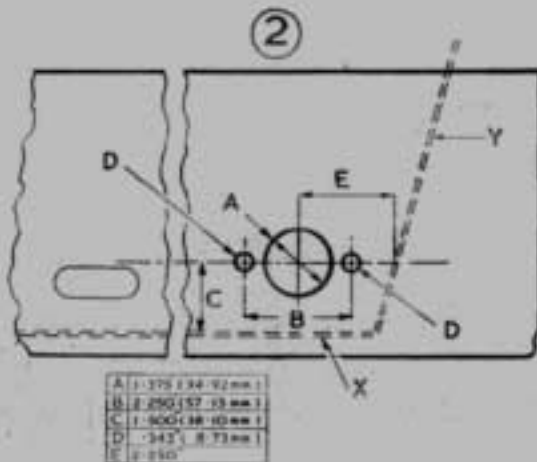
311 - Fig. 3

Cut a $1\frac{1}{8}$ " (34.92 mm.) diameter hole in the sill panel forward of the heelboard 'Y' and $1\frac{1}{8}$ " (39.1 mm.) from the floor 'X', also two $11/32$ " (8.73 mm.) as shown in illustration.

Insert the sill tapping plate through the $1\frac{1}{8}$ " (34.92 mm.) diameter hole using the $7/16$ " (11.11 mm.) diameter screw to lift the plate into position. Place a spring washer on a $5/16$ " (7.94 mm.) diameter hexagon head screw and pass it through the cover plate ABA6261, with register away from the head of the screw, and attach to sill and tapping plate. Remove the $7/16$ " (11.11 mm.) diameter screw and finally secure the cover plate with the second $5/16$ " (7.94 mm.) diameter hexagon head screw and spring washer.

Cut a 1 " (25.4 mm.) diameter hole in the sill board trim to coincide.

Place the screw through the belt bracket (facing towards centre line of car) and follow with the anti-rattle washer (concave face to bracket), shouldered distance piece (large diameter next to the sill) and plain washer and secure the bracket.





TECHNICAL TIPS

CALCULATION OF MPH PER 1000 RPM or

How fast are we really going?

On SCCA drives I have been noticing how ABP 102 seems to be undergeared compared to other Spridgets.

Is it my over-developed sense of mechanical sympathy that protracted travel along the expressway makes me shudder in the same way that scraping fingernails down a blackboard does?

Or is the tach wrong - apparently only possible by a large factor, and therefore obvious, if it's electric?

Just what speed would I be doing between 4000 and 6000 revs?

With a wavering speedo needle that requires the pilot to take an average of each arc to approximate the speed, it was time to see what impact tyre size has made to the engine speed/road speed equation. Was the 15.5 MPH per 1000 RPM quoted in the February 1968 Modern Motor MG Midget road test correct for ABP 102 with its wider, lower profile tyres?

Accuracy was the order of the day so I used the formula in Daniel Stapleton's book, "How to Power Tune your MG Midget and A-H Sprite" for calculating road speed based on final drive ratio and tyre size.

Formula

$$\frac{60,000}{RAR \times WPRM}$$

RAR = rear axle ratio

WPRM = wheel revolutions per mile

Calculations

The RAR is 4.222, this being the original differential fitted to ABP 102.

To calculate wheel revolutions per mile, first find the rolling circumference of the tyre - the distance travelled in one revolution of the wheel with the weight of the car on it.

To do this I drew a chalk mark across the tyre tread and while fitted to the car, rolled the wheel - and the car - along a piece of kitchen paper placed on the ground leaving two impressions of the chalk line. The distance between these was 67 1/2 inches or 1720mm on 165/70 x 13 Falken FK 07U tyres.

Then stick this into the formula -

$$\text{Therefore WPRM} = \frac{5280 \times 12}{67 1/2}$$

$$= \frac{63360}{67 1/2}$$

$$\text{Therefore WPRM} = 935.2$$

Compare this with the WPRM for different tyres from the Stapleton book - 145x13 = 936 and 155x13 = 914.

MPH per 1000 RPM using the Stapleton formula

$$= \frac{60,000}{4.222 \times 935.2}$$

$$= \frac{60,000}{3948.4}$$

$$= 15.196$$

Rounded to 15.2 MPH per 1000RPM

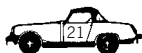
For the following tach readings, the road speeds should be as follows

RPM in 4th gear	MPH	KPH
2500	38	45.6
3000	45.6	73.4
3500	53.2	85.6
4000	60.8	97.9
4500	68.4	110.1
5000	76	122.3
5500	83.6	134.5
6000	91.2	146.8
6500	98.8	159

So, the conclusions are - fitting bigger tyres like 155x13 without a lower profile slightly increases road speed - at 5000 RPM it is 76 MPH or 126 KPH fitting a 3.9 rear axle ratio would increase road speed to 16.5 MPH per 1000 RPM and at 5000 RPM would equate to 83 MPH or 133 KPH without changing either, it could help not to have an operative tachol since all these speeds are illegal on NSW expressways, it's academic in any event!

Phil Cross

Many thanks to Eriks of the Sprite Club of Australia & Sprite Torque for this article. All rights acknowledged, printed for review purposes only.



The Coventry Run Experience



In September Clive Allen took part in the Coventry Run which, each year, sees a procession of historic vehicles pass through Knowle.

“Rain and high winds” was the forecast by *Midlands Today’s* Shefali Oza for Sunday 7th September, the date of the 19th Annual Coventry Run. This didn’t deter the 518 vehicles dating from a 1900 Benz (which can usually be seen at Thinktank in Birmingham) to a 2003 Rolls Royce which gathered in Memorial Park Coventry for the 68 mile circuit of the surrounding countryside through Knowle, Solihull, Stratford and Kenilworth.

The Coventry Run was the first real outing for my 1959 Austin Healey ‘Frogeye’ Sprite, which I have rebuilt over the last 11 years.

My daughter, Lucy, 7, came along for the ride. She thought it was great – “I did a lot of waving,” she said. Thousands of spectators lined the route, which made for a great atmosphere. Added to which, my car made it all the way round with only one stop to adjust the clutch! Amazingly, I also met someone who had owned my car in the 1970s. He was taking part in the Run in another car.

The Coventry Run is the brainchild of Martin Hone who was the person responsible for bringing the Super-Prix racing to the streets of

Birmingham in 1986. The cars were flagged off by the Lord Mayor of Coventry, following a prayer and blessing from the Coventry Run Chaplain Reverend Keith Sinclair of Holy Trinity Church, Coventry City Centre. The cars split into two groups and set off at 10.00 precisely round the circular route in two directions. Midlands Today’s Nick Owen was chauffeured in the real Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang but only after a promise that all four wheels would remain firmly on the tarmac! After the drive the entrants returned for a picnic in the park and the public were welcomed into the park at no charge to view the cars on display.

Shefali’s weather forecast was the subject of a few jokes during the drivers’ briefing – it was actually a glorious day! Martin Hone told how he and the Reverend Keith Sinclair had actually been to the park on the Thursday before the event to pray for God’s blessing on the whole weekend. Their prayer was truly answered in every respect.

Mike

Above is an article and a few photos which have appeared in the Knowle Parish Church Magazine this month. It is about the Coventry Car Run and my Frogeye.

Out of around 500 cars there were 6



frogeyes three or four sprites and a couple of Big Healeys. We had a great time – perhaps you could use this in MASCOT?
Regards, Clive Allen

Ed says: We did! Thanks Clive.

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Letters

Fried or Boiled?

Sometime in the far distant future, if you were to ask anyone what they remember best about 2003, they will probably recall a long hot summer with blue skies, endless sunshine, and warm sultry evenings. And they would be right! It all sounds perfect, or does it?

At the start of this year, I took my silver Frogeye up to the local garage for its MOT test, which it duly passed, and the certificate recorded a mileage of 04096. At the start of October '03, the reading is now 04205, which is a total of only 109 paltry miles covered during this "season." In 2002, the frog covered 1200 miles in just 4 days touring France!

So what went wrong? Well, as much as we humans may like the warm weather, I'm afraid that my frog has other ideas. We checked the timing, the fuel mixture, and for any signs of binding brakes or slipping clutch, all to no avail. The fan belt was correctly tensioned, the water pump is new and the radiator has been flushed out and does not leak with a 14lb rad cap. Also, the original two blade fan has been upgraded to a four blade.

A huge thermostatically controlled Kenlow fan has been installed shrouded in a cowling (see photo), and yes, I have checked to ensure that it is spinning the correct way. Yet every time I ventured out on a hot day, it was only a matter of time before the Kenlow fan kicked in, and the temperature gauge was pointing at 6 o'clock.

Yet on a cool day, no problems at all, which convinces me that the head gasket is OK, plus there is no milky gunge in the oil filler cap.

Although the engine is a tuned 1275cc from a later Midget, I am still using a frogeye (albeit reconditioned) radiator, with no header tank. Thus water top-ups are a daily routine, and as such, there is little point in using expensive radiator coolant additives. I hasten to add that the water is blowing out of the overflow pipe, and not into the engine; an oil change confirmed that the oil is not water contaminated.

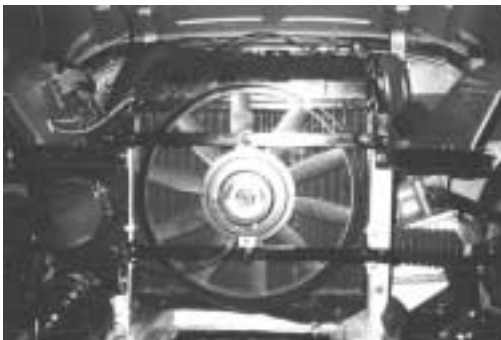
Clearly what we have here is 1950s cooling technology trying to support a 1970s power plant. Could this be the problem I ask?

A mate of mine, who teaches technology, is convinced that if we install a standard VW Polo radiator with a Volvo header tank, we can remove the four blade fan altogether, and gain a few bhp. That conversion, supported by the Kenlow fan will, in his view, be enough to cool a big 3000 Healey, let alone a 'farty frog' as he calls it!

Has anyone out there had a similar problem and found a solution? Do you think the Polo/Volvo mod will work, or is my mate barking mad?

If you can help, please e-mail me. Mike North may even wish to publish a response, if any are forthcoming.

John Hazzard, Shrewsbury
e-mail: Hazzard@dsl.pipex.com



New Product Bulletin – Moss Europe Ltd

New and Re-introduced parts for MGB and Sprite/Midget

Once again, Moss prove that they are at the forefront of supplying quality parts for British Classics. They have just informed us of a range of new and re-introduced products that will help you with that rebuild/restoration project.

Chrome Air Vents (AHH6190CP)

For MGB (1962 to 1972)

Standard screen air vent escutcheons for early MGB's have always been available, but now, if you want that individual feel to your interior, Moss can supply (from stock) Chrome air vent escutcheons.

Order these well finished air vent finishers under part number AHH6190CP.

The retail price is £8.95 each including VAT.

Expansion Tank (ARH250)

For MGB with Electric fan (1976 on) – 1275 and 1500 'Spridgets' (with Cross-Flow Radiators)

The original factory metal tanks have been unavailable for about 7 years, with a plastic replacement being the only alternative. Very soon Moss will have stocks of an exact copy of the original Tank. It is made in Brass and finished in Black powder coat.

Order under part number ARH250. They may seem quite expensive at £49.95 (including vat), but if you are planning to restore to original, they are a must.

Pedal Box Cover (AHA8074)

For 1275 and 1500 'Spridgets'

These have been unavailable for a long time, but they are now available ex-stock from all Moss branches. They are finished in black powder coat.

Order under part number AHA8074.

The retail price is £9.95 each including VAT.

Moss Europe offer a full mail-order parts service for; Triumph TR2/3/4, TR5/250/TR6, TR7, Spitfire MkIV/1500, Triumph 2000/2500, Sprite and Midgets from 1958 to 1966, and from 1967 to 1979, Pre War MG (MMM), MG-T Types, MG-A/B/C/V8, MG-F, Mini, and the modern classic, the Mazda MX-5.

They have 6 branches throughout the UK at Bradford, Bristol, Darlington, Derby, London and Manchester. For your free mail-order parts catalogue call the Moss Catalogue Line (UK) 0800 281182, or email 'catalogues@moss-europe.co.uk' with your name, full address (including post code) and Model type/year. (Small charge for overseas postage).

Debbie Wymark

Marketing Manager

Engine Fitted

Thought you would be interested to know that after problems with MED I have finally got my engine. I haven't finished fitting it yet but as you can see I am almost there.

Alan Anstead

Ed says: Bonnet still fitted, mind your head!!



Tonneau Letter, reply (October issue)

Ian,

It's not often that I get called to account in the letter section of *Mascot*, but here goes. Below are some pictures of my Rollbar, Tonneau, Tonneau Rail and of course in the background my Mk IV Sprite – Blue KOW. The tonneau used is the original one fitted to the car and is heavy duty PVC coated fabric. Any additional fabric required was as close to the original as the coach trimmer could match.

The tonneau rail has to be modified as the rollbar gets in the way of the mounts for it which are on top of the hood frame. The new rail is made up of some ½" OD steel tube from B&Q painted black with some turned aluminium end stoppers. The ends of which rest in a groove in two aluminium blocks attached to the inside of the rollbar. These blocks will be painted black too when I get round to it. The tonneau rail is needed to support the edge of the tonneau when it is folded down behind the seats.

The modifications to the tonneau are to cut a slit between the first and second stud so that the cover can be fed around the rollbar when putting the cover on or off. Two new press studs re-attach the two halves and some velcro makes it wind/watertight. An oval slot is also cut for the rollbar itself to pass through which is reinforced by some additional fabric to make an upstand of about 1.5" which also prevents water running down the rollbar hoops. The inside edge has a slightly longer tongue to tuck in between the two roll bars. It was originally intended to keep this in place with velcro, but it does not seem to need it in practice. If your rollbar is not faired in like mine, you could make this tongue feedback between the tubes and under the outboard part of the tonneau, in which case it probably will need an additional strip of velcro to keep it in place. You would then have individual collars around each tube perhaps fastened with velcro.

I made all the metal work myself rail and supports, attending night school to get my hands on the appropriate machine tools! The modifications to the tonneau were done by David Nightingale. His coach trimming works are near Corsham in Wiltshire, Tel 01-249-701271.

Best of luck,

Geri



Engine Plate, Oil Pump, Flywheel

Thought I'd send you some pics:

After seeing the racing light weight engine plates on the internet I decided I could do that! So a few mis-spent lunch times at work and I'm the owner of a new aluminium rear engine plate. As you can see from the picture it certainly looks good in its marine hard anodised finish. It only weighs 2lb compared to the steel original one at 8lb.

If there's enough interest I could put the plate into CAD and do a small production run, I'm sure I could fabricate them at a reasonable cost compared to a shop one, the anodising would of course be optional.

I've also fitted a new oil pump, however the 2 pump body screws were impossible to remove. As such the 2 curved bolt retaining plates were unable to be utilised, so a single plate was made up using a jubilee clip, this one happened to be stainless.

Lastly a picture of a standard flywheel and a lightened Peter May item, from the centre part of the flywheel you can see how much has been removed. The extra bolt holes are for a Ford 7.5 inch clutch.

Hope you enjoy reading this.

Brad



Bodger's Corner/Letter

I recently encountered problems fitting new steering column top and bottom felt bushes to my 1959 Frogeye.

Although the felts had been soaked in engine oil, for some time, they were awkward to fit and the inner column was too stiff once entered into the new bushes. The solution was to "shave" the bushes using a Stanley Knife blade. It takes some effort using the blade to scrape the felt and removing the fluff. Eventually a good fit was obtained and correct movement, with no vertical play at the steering wheel. Incidentally, some parts suppliers do not differentiate between early Mk I Sprites and later, top bushes – the later bush does not fit early, (pre AN5-48626), Mk I Sprites.

Hope this may be of some help.

Chris, Owen (Member No. 3098)

Ed says: Great Bodge! Beat the queue by sending a letter ☺

Perfect Nostalgia – Members' Announcement

Final Notice: Would the owner of the Cherry Red Frogeye who placed his car with me 9 years ago for a re-build please get in touch.

Dave @ Perfect Nostalgia 01256-768678

Ed says: Sounds like Dave will soon have a Frogeye for sale ☺. If it's yours better get in touch (nine Years!!)



Letter from Texas

Just a note to express my appreciation for a great magazine. I am especially fond of "Bodger". The club articles are a lot of fun and I really enjoy the photos of other member's automobiles. Here is a shot or two of the Sprite that I reclaimed using your feedback page and the magazine. This little car has become my daily driver due to its economy and ease of maintenance. Well, most of the time. Thank you and best regards,

Jack Reeves, Port Neches, Texas, USA

Ed says: Nice 'Automobile' Jack!



Dropping Hints about Car Books for Christmas?

Eds Note: So, you want to have a look at what motoring books you would like for Christmas ... and leave a few hints around for your other half??

The following list of web-sites with motoring themes was compiled by "Bookworm", our resident bibliophile. It is by no means exhaustive – do please feel free to suggest others...!

www.blackwell.co.uk/ Oxford's world-famous bookshop

<http://www.amazon.com> – needs no introduction!

<http://www.pearman-books.com/> – not actually cars as such – more buses, trams and trains. Provides "Wild Swan" books

<http://www.chaters.co.uk> – excellent searching-system – concentrates on motoring themes

<http://www.pitstop.net.au/prog/OpenDocument.cgi> – an Australian site, with a good selection.

www.kudoshops.com/books.html great meta-market of all shopping

www.az-books.co.uk

www.carpwaters.co.uk/shopping/books_and_magazines.html

http://www.abd.org.uk/shop/books_motorsport.htm good specialised site

http://www.book-bargains.co.uk/acatalog/Online_Catalogue_Motoring_books_5.html

www.dacorsa.net/portal/article.php?sid=39 – all about Ferrari's

www.shopsafe.co.uk/books.htm

www.100shops.co.uk/Web_Links-req-viewlink-cid-2.html

<http://www.alibris.com> – out of print books

<http://www.motorbooks.co.uk/> Nice online book shop with thousands of motoring books available, plus as many on railways, and on military, aviation and maritime themes.

Trurobookshop@eudoramail.com – not actually motoring stuff, mainly the history of Cornwall, but for anyone of a mechanical frame of mind, there is a lot of stuff on here about Cornish engineers, beam engines, mine-pumping engines etc.

<http://abebooks.com/> mainly collectibles, out of print books etc

Ed says: Compiled by a Mascot friend, with thanks.



Ashley Bonneville Midget

Part one of a three part history of a Peter Renn's Supercharged Midget with many special features and some excellent reference photos. A big thank you to Peter for sharing: Ed

You'd be forgiven for not recognising this particular variant on the Spridget theme as it is in fact unique, built in the last two years but with a development history going back much further.



The car started life as a 1972 MG Midget. I bought it while an impoverished student in 1985 and over the years I repaired or replaced most things, except the engine, which was always pretty strong. When it needed a rebuild I had the head reworked-ported, skimmed etc. by Oselli Engineering of Oxford. I also fitted a hotter cam, freer flowing exhaust system and manifold and modified the inlet manifold and carbs to help the airflow. I used it as my sole transport for about 15 years before I started buying and restoring motorbikes, a 1959 Frogeye and a couple of Jaguars. The longest it was off the road was about a month as I enjoyed driving it too much to lay it up for longer.

In 2001 I finally started the “proper” restoration, stripping every single nut and bolt off, getting the body blast stripped back to bare metal and welding in new floorpans, sills etc. etc. plus various modifications and improvements, some of which I've listed below. The car was back on the road in July 2002 (after an interminable time in the paint shop!) and was well worth the wait. I was grinning like an idiot on the first shakedown run. – God, I'd missed it!

However, it wasn't finished. Under the bonnet lay the same mucky old engine; put back into the pristine new bodywork so I could enjoy the summer before pulling it out again in November. Over the winter I rebuilt the engine again, this time to allow the fitting of a Shorrock supercharger – a sub-project which has taken four years of research, hunting for rare parts and considerable expense.

I've always been interested in supercharged engines. There's something exotic about them which turbos just don't have. Finding a cheap blower at Beaulieu was therefore the start of an inevitable quest to re-create the original 'sixties option for the Midget.

Modifications

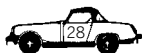
Almost nothing on the car is now original and/or standard. I have, however tried to keep the alterations 'in period' as much as possible. The basic idea was to make the car more powerful, lighter (by about 10%) and prettier, while enhancing the handling, all without losing the car's character.



I have made an approx. 2" deep trough in the driver's footwell about 13" square. My heels rest on this lowered floor which alters the angle of the legs and gives a couple more inches of effective legroom, stopping my knee from hitting the dash. The difference in comfort this makes for the long-legged is just fantastic (I am 6 foot 6). Picture above reproduced in the interests of reducing human suffering.

Peter Renn

Ed says: Look for part two next month.



■ The Triumph Spitfire Mk. 3 has a 1,296 cc. engine, independent suspension, all round and an impressive range of optional extra equipment available, including overdrive and a good-looking steel hardtop, both of which were fitted to the test car. In basic form the hardtop model costs £752 including tax. If you have the soft top version, it costs £717.

Until March this year, the Spitfire had a 1,147 cc. engine, and this was upgraded to 1,296 cc. shortly after the opposition announced the 1,275 cc. Sprite/Go. Based on the power unit used in the Triumph 1300, the latest Spitfire engine revs freely up to and beyond 5,000 r.p.m. (where the orange band starts on the rev-counter) and has a generous amount of torque in the middle ranges. It will, in fact, pull from 1,000 r.p.m. in intermediate gears.

Fitted with a pair of 1½ in. S.U. carburetors, the engine on the test car was a willing starter from cold, and warmed up quickly. The tick-over at 750 r.p.m. was terribly lumpy, but it picked up clearly as soon as the throttle was opened.

Our test figures were taken using a maximum of 6,000 r.p.m., and this gave speeds in first and second gears of 25 and 46 m.p.h. respectively—which for a sports car isn't much.

First gear doesn't have synchronism, and Standard-Triumph seem to regard it almost as an emergency gear, because second can be used for trickling along at walking pace. We would like to see a synchronised first gear with a maximum of, say, 35 m.p.h., with second gear correspondingly up-rated to give perhaps 60 m.p.h. at 6,000 r.p.m. The big engine has enough power to pull the higher gearing, which would make the car a bit less fussy when touring twisty streets and would also benefit the 0-60 m.p.h. time.

Our acceleration times are not quite as good as Standard-Triumph claim. But as the test car was returning 50 m.p.g. at 55 m.p.h. in overdrive top gear, it's possible that the carburetors were set up a little on the weak side. However, since the engine showed no sign of overheating, we didn't bother to alter things, and took comfort from an overall fuel consumption of between 35 and 40 m.p.g.

According to Standard-Triumph, the Mk. 3 should do 0-60 m.p.h. in 12.5 seconds. We made it in 13.4, which isn't hanging round, and could probably be bettered by twiddling with the carburetors. Unlike the Midget, we didn't return the Spitfire for being.

Handling on water Spitfires has been criticised because the

continued over



■ The latest Austin Healey Sports and MG Midget (shown under the test) are distinguished by different badges and grilles, but are fitted with a 1,275 cc. engine, not unlike that in the Cooper S. Differences occur in the cylinder head—the MG having smaller valves—and the pistons, which are cast with different crowns. The crankshaft, with two-inch diameter main bearing journals, is virtually the same as the S' but comes in two forms of hardware—namely 'ribbed' and 'Tribaloid'—which take the gas when ducting the car is purely a matter of fact!

On collecting the car we fitted the hood down. Our first try at the foot took about two minutes, but after some practice we were able to put the hood up in two minutes and down again in four. It is important to remember to undo the plyers at the back before releasing the hood from the windscreen; otherwise the material will tear. And a new hood costs £22.

Basically the Midget is the same as it has always been—safe, comfortable and fast. Now, of course, it's even faster. Despite the lesser degree of safety in the Midget in comparison with the Cooper S, it takes only half a second longer to reach 60 m.p.h. And with the hood up the top speed is as good.

Unfortunately, after picking the car up from B.M.C. we had to return it the following day as it was obviously out of tune. After an hour and a look on the roller brake the L.H.P. was spotted by the, and all but one of the test spots had gone.

The gearbox fitted to the 1,275 cc. Midget is new, and the ratios are well chosen. Maximum speeds in the intermediate gears were limited only by the number of r.p.m. used. By keeping in the recommended 5,150 r.p.m. these worked out at 30, 50 and 72 m.p.h. in first, second and third respectively. On the other hand, 7,000 r.p.m. could be reached with ease.

continued over



car tended to twitch its tail on tight corners. This did not happen on our Mk. 3, which had its rear wheels set up to give a small degree of negative camber with the driver only on board. Presumably this discourages any sudden change from negative to positive camber—and the resultant twitch—during hard cornering.

There is, in fact, a small amount of understeer as the car is swung into a corner, but once on to full roll (and it doesn't roll a lot) there is a feeling that the vehicle is leaning heavily on the outside rear wheel. If you push it hard enough, the tail will swing out, but this is easily sorted out by a small amount of steering correction.

Standard-Triumph appear to have stiffened up the back and a bit since we last drove a Mk. 1 Spitfire. As a result the car rides extremely well at high speeds, but between 20 and 40 m.p.h. on rough surfaces, it bounces quite a bit—although this does not seem to affect the roadholding overmuch.

One of the detail changes on the Mk. 3 was the use of a 15 in. steering wheel in place of the original 16 in. one. Allied with direct rack-and-pinion steering and an extremely tight lock of 24 ft. between limits, this allows the Spitfire to be weaved in and out of sharp corners with ease, and parked in very tight spaces.

Brakes were magnificent. The Mk. 3 has discs at the front (which squeak) and drums at the back, and a moderate pedal pressure gave reassuring retardation from high speeds. We managed to record 100 per cent braking at 100 ft. pedal pressure. The big master cylinder reservoir on a shelf under the bonnet is angled slightly forwards, so that if the cap is loosely fitted—as has happened on our car at some time—a good deal of the fluid splashes out during heavy braking. The cap must therefore be properly tightened. The fly-off handbrake just held the car on a 1-in-4 test hill but would not grip on a 1-in-3. The car restarted on both.

Insulation of the engine from the interior is good. A lot of sports cars suffer an overheated cockpit because of the closeness of the engine, but this didn't show up on the test car. Sound insulation—of engine and gearbox—was good too. We were a bit disappointed at the amount of wind noise which gradually grows in volume as the speed is pushed above 60 m.p.h.

Some of it is caused by the need for ventilation. The Spitfire windows have no quarter lights, and winding the driver's window down an inch produces gaps at the front and rear of the glass as

well as at the top. The wind roar from this alone at 65 m.p.h. is quite something, and we got the impression that the high-speed touring comfort of the Mk. 3 could be improved a lot by fitting fresh-air vents in the dashboard, with stale air ejection at the back of the handtop.

Another addition we would make would be the fitting of a courtesy light to the handtop. This could be linked via a plug-and-socket arrangement to the dashboard so that the handtop could still be easily detached. It is held by six bolts, incidentally.

If you got the opportunity to do a bit of high-speed touring, the overdrive Spitfire will hum along at 90 m.p.h. in overdrive top gear at a little over 4,500 r.p.m., and can keep this up all day if necessary. If you find you have to change down suddenly, there's the reassurance that overdrive third has a maximum of 92 m.p.h. so you won't over-rev the engine. The straight line running is excellent, and if you can disregard the wind noise the Spitfire is a very relaxing car indeed at high speeds.

comfortable seats

The interior is trimmed in functional black leathercloth, with black carpets on the floor. The seats are comfortable, with a generous amount of fore-and-aft adjustment, and are shaped to hold the occupants during hard cornering. Behind them is a space for luggage which can also accommodate a small child for short journeys. Getting in and out is typically "sports car" and calls for a bit of stooping, but there's not much that can be done on a car that is built so low. But we would have liked the doors to open a little wider.

Instrumentation is adequate, with rev-counter, speedometer, water temperature and fuel gauges. There's no oil pressure gauge—just a warning light. All instruments are grouped in the middle of the foot, which makes the speedometer difficult to read at a glance—we would have liked the dials ahead of the driver.

Like the Midget, the Spitfire Mk. 3 is tremendous fun to drive. It handles well, is a lively performer, and with the optional extra overdrive, it will travel for long distances at high speeds without putting undue strain on the engine—an advantage which improves the fuel consumption and presumably lengthens engine life. Altogether it is a likeable and sophisticated small sports car.

Midget Spitfire

Apart from the trouble described, the Midget could not really be faulted. The handling was good and one reverted the slightest bit simply about its ability to deal with any situation. On steep descents, entered at a slow speed and in a low gear, the back end would twitch slightly if the throttle was then pressed down too quickly. But this was easily corrected.

Fuel is probably the best one-word description we can make of the car. During the time we had it, the car shone continually, and the hand spent most of its time in observation. When the hood was up, though, some considerable "whee" from the gearbox made driving rather tiring—and conversation almost impossible.

fine finish

The heater was very good, in fact almost too good. On cold mornings when the hood was down and the heater on, the blast of hot air against one's legs was too much. Pulling the control up reduced the heat, but in this position the blower cannot be switched on. The alternative is either to freeze or burn!

Internally, the Midget is well finished. Carpets are fitted throughout, while the floor has a checkered black paint finish. The instrumentation is comprehensive, consisting of a 100 m.p.h. speedometer, with top-mileage recorder, rev counter reading up to 7000 r.p.m., temperature and oil pressure gauges. The two large dash air vents are angled inwardly for ease of reading. Main beam and ignition warning lights are, of course, incorporated, plus an additional lamp to show when the oil filter is blocked. We had the impression that this was fitted as an afterthought as it was placed

rather noisily in a hole drilled high on the dashboard.

Storage space in the car is very limited. There is one tray under the passenger's side of the dash, but no lockable glove box—surely an essential in an open car. Apart from this, there is space behind the seats and in the boot, neither large enough to hold much luggage. No ashtrays are fitted, providing the clearest practice of throwing lit cigarettes out of the window.

On acceleration the Midget was very lively, taking only 12 seconds to reach 60 m.p.h. This incidentally is quicker than the M.G.B. The torque-low down was reasonable, and the car would pull from 20 m.p.h. in top gear without protesting. However, until the 4,000 r.p.m. mark was reached the performance seemed rather flat. Once past this mark, however, there was no stopping it, and we had to be careful to keep to the recommended rev limit. Also, once over 5,000 r.p.m. there was a howl rather like a supercharger, which, coupled with a crop exhaust note, was not unpleasant. The handbrake held easily on the 1 in 3 test hill and the car took off and accelerated on the same slope.

The Midget scored highly on finish, which was excellent both inside and out. Where it fell down, though, was on general turn-off, which was poor. The rear-side floor spring squeaked throughout the test, a creak could be heard from the rear when cornering, the gear lever rattled at high r.p.m. and the driver's door hung badly—making it difficult to close.

Despite the troubles we experienced, however, the Midge can still be rated a good buy. Apart from the Sports which is £1,100, it is the cheapest production sports car on the market offering good performance, precise steering and good handling.



Specification and performance

ENGINE: 4-cylinder overhead valve, overhead-camshaft, 13.1 inch bore x 77 mm stroke = 1,298 cc.; compression ratio 9.1:1; 79 h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.; torque 80.5 lb.-ft. at 4,000 c.p.m.; cast iron block; cast iron head; 3-bearing carburettor; water cooling; twin 16G 5.11 carburetors, wide-angle flap; mechanical fuel pump; bearing from 8 1/2 gal. fuel tank; reserve capacity 1 gal.; adjustable air flow; full-flow filter.

TRANSMISSION: 13-tooth input gear wheels through hydraulically-actuated clutch; 4-speed gearbox with synchromesh on 2nd, 3rd and top gears; overall ratio, 1st 10.4:1, 2nd 6.8:1, 3rd 5.1:1, 4th 4.1:1; reverse 15.4:1; input shaft 6.0:1 and 3.2:1 intermediate gears; reverse ratio 6.1:1.

SUSPENSION: Front: Independent coil and springs and shock absorbers. Rear: Independent, transverse leaf spring, swing axle. Steering: Servo-assisted front rack drive.

STEERING: CP rack-and-pinion type with limited adjustment on column and 19-in. 3-spoke steering wheel; overall ratio 13.1:1; rack and pinion ball-bearing shaft; 24-in. ball-bearing steering knuckle; 2-in. front axle beam; 2-in. front axle beam; 2-in. front axle beam; 2-in. front axle beam.

BRAKES: Discs through hydraulic-mechanism; front 8 1/2-in. diameter discs; rear 7-in. diameter drums; handbrake operating on rear wheels through cable linkage; front brakes self-adjusting type; rear brakes leading and trailing shoe type.

ELECTRICS: 12-v. 40-a.h. battery; positive-earth system.

EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS: Overall length, 12 ft. 3 in.; overall width 4 ft. 9 in.; overall height 3 ft. 1 1/2 in.; ground clearance 8 in.

INTERNAL DIMENSIONS: Wheel-arches front seats 19 1/2 in.; wheel-arches rear seats 17 1/2 in.; distance between wheel-arches 27 in.; front seat backrest 35 in.; seat capacity 8.7 cu. ft.

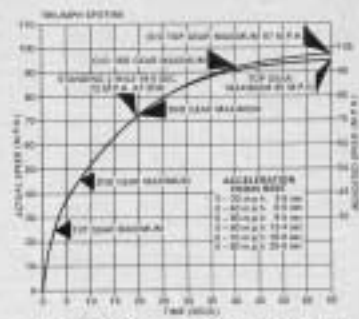
BODY: 2-door, 3-spoke steering wheel with remote controls; front windows of tinted-up type with remote light-tinting device; 112 1/2-in. 3-in. floor covering carpet.

SEATING: Front, individual seats with fore-and-aft adjustment by remote; seats upholstered in velveteen; no provision for side or headrest.

GENERAL: Test car finished in dark blue; equipment includes reversing lights, headlamps, flashers, horn, speedometer with rubber inserts.

EXTRAS: Laid out in Humberville options: £38 5s. 6d. wire wheels, £39 17s. 6d.; laminated windscreen, £12 12s. 10d.; 19 1/2-in. 3-in. wheel-arches, £12 12s. 10d.; 19 1/2-in. 3-in. wheel-arches, £12 12s. 10d.; 19 1/2-in. 3-in. wheel-arches, £12 12s. 10d.; 19 1/2-in. 3-in. wheel-arches, £12 12s. 10d.

PRICE: Full price, £777 14s. 11d. Handling, £75 15s. 3d. No tax; £852 14s. 8d. All prices include postage tax.



BRACING FROM 30 M.P.H.

Pressure	1/2	1 1/2	2 1/2	3 1/2	4 1/2
20	22	27	32	37	42
30	33	39	45	51	57
40	43	50	57	64	71
50	51	59	67	75	83
60	58	67	76	85	94
70	64	74	84	94	104
80	70	81	92	103	114
90	76	88	100	112	124
100	82	95	108	121	134
110	88	102	116	130	144
120	94	109	124	140	154
130	100	116	132	150	164
140	106	123	140	160	174
150	112	130	148	170	184
160	118	137	156	180	194
170	124	144	164	190	204
180	130	151	172	200	214
190	136	158	180	210	224
200	142	165	188	220	234
210	148	172	196	230	244
220	154	179	204	240	254
230	160	186	212	250	264
240	166	193	220	260	274
250	172	200	228	270	284
260	178	207	236	280	294
270	184	214	244	290	304
280	190	221	252	300	314
290	196	228	260	310	324
300	202	235	268	320	334
310	208	242	276	330	344
320	214	249	284	340	354
330	220	256	292	350	364
340	226	263	300	360	374
350	232	270	308	370	384
360	238	277	316	380	394
370	244	284	324	390	404
380	250	291	332	400	414
390	256	298	340	410	424
400	262	305	348	420	434
410	268	312	356	430	444
420	274	319	364	440	454
430	280	326	372	450	464
440	286	333	380	460	474
450	292	340	388	470	484
460	298	347	396	480	494
470	304	354	404	490	504
480	310	361	412	500	514
490	316	368	420	510	524
500	322	375	428	520	534
510	328	382	436	530	544
520	334	389	444	540	554
530	340	396	452	550	564
540	346	403	460	560	574
550	352	410	468	570	584
560	358	417	476	580	594
570	364	424	484	590	604
580	370	431	492	600	614
590	376	438	500	610	624
600	382	445	508	620	634
610	388	452	516	630	644
620	394	459	524	640	654
630	400	466	532	650	664
640	406	473	540	660	674
650	412	480	548	670	684
660	418	487	556	680	694
670	424	494	564	690	704
680	430	501	572	700	714
690	436	508	580	710	724
700	442	515	588	720	734
710	448	522	596	730	744
720	454	529	604	740	754
730	460	536	612	750	764
740	466	543	620	760	774
750	472	550	628	770	784
760	478	557	636	780	794
770	484	564	644	790	804
780	490	571	652	800	814
790	496	578	660	810	824
800	502	585	668	820	834
810	508	592	676	830	844
820	514	599	684	840	854
830	520	606	692	850	864
840	526	613	700	860	874
850	532	620	708	870	884
860	538	627	716	880	894
870	544	634	724	890	904
880	550	641	732	900	914
890	556	648	740	910	924
900	562	655	748	920	934
910	568	662	756	930	944
920	574	669	764	940	954
930	580	676	772	950	964
940	586	683	780	960	974
950	592	690	788	970	984
960	598	697	796	980	994
970	604	704	804	990	1004
980	610	711	812	1000	1014
990	616	718	820	1010	1024
1000	622	725	828	1020	1034
1010	628	732	836	1030	1044
1020	634	739	844	1040	1054
1030	640	746	852	1050	1064
1040	646	753	860	1060	1074
1050	652	760	868	1070	1084
1060	658	767	876	1080	1094
1070	664	774	884	1090	1104
1080	670	781	892	1100	1114
1090	676	788	900	1110	1124
1100	682	795	908	1120	1134
1110	688	802	916	1130	1144
1120	694	809	924	1140	1154
1130	700	816	932	1150	1164
1140	706	823	940	1160	1174
1150	712	830	948	1170	1184
1160	718	837	956	1180	1194
1170	724	844	964	1190	1204
1180	730	851	972	1200	1214
1190	736	858	980	1210	1224
1200	742	865	988	1220	1234
1210	748	872	996	1230	1244
1220	754	879	1004	1240	1254
1230	760	886	1012	1250	1264
1240	766	893	1020	1260	1274
1250	772	900	1028	1270	1284
1260	778	907	1036	1280	1294
1270	784	914	1044	1290	1304
1280	790	921	1052	1300	1314
1290	796	928	1060	1310	1324
1300	802	935	1068	1320	1334
1310	808	942	1076	1330	1344
1320	814	949	1084	1340	1354
1330	820	956	1092	1350	1364
1340	826	963	1100	1360	1374
1350	832	970	1108	1370	1384
1360	838	977	1116	1380	1394
1370	844	984	1124	1390	1404
1380	850	991	1132	1400	1414
1390	856	998	1140	1410	1424
1400	862	1005	1148	1420	1434
1410	868	1012	1156	1430	1444
1420	874	1019	1164	1440	1454
1430	880	1026	1172	1450	1464
1440	886	1033	1180	1460	1474
1450	892	1040	1188	1470	1484
1460	898	1047	1196	1480	1494
1470	904	1054	1204	1490	1504
1480	910	1061	1212	1500	1514
1490	916	1068	1220	1510	1524
1500	922	1075	1228	1520	1534
1510	928	1082	1236	1530	1544
1520	934	1089	1244	1540	1554
1530	940	1096	1252	1550	1564
1540	946	1103	1260	1560	1574
1550	952	1110	1268	1570	1584
1560	958	1117	1276	1580	1594
1570	964	1124	1284	1590	1604
1580	970	1131	1292	1600	1614
1590	976	1138	1300	1610	1624
1600	982	1145	1308	1620	1634
1610	988	1152	1316	1630	1644
1620	994	1159	1324	1640	1654
1630	1000	1166	1332	1650	1664
1640	1006	1173	1340	1660	1674
1650	1012	1180	1348	1670	1684
1660	1018	1187	1356	1680	1694
1670	1024	1194	1364	1690	1704
1680	1030	1201	1372	1700	1714
1690	1036	1208	1380	1710	1724

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