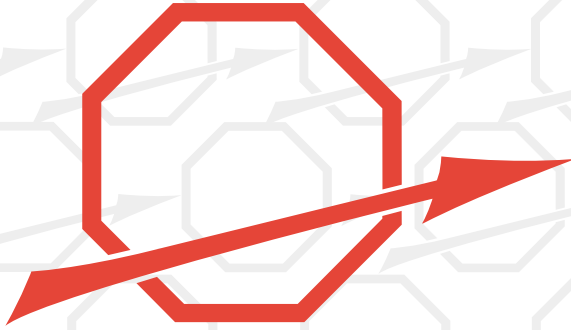


MASCOT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB



Argiris Visvardis's lovely Dragonfly in Athens, Greece (and in 'Letters'!)

ISSUE NO. 253

MARCH 2005

www.mgcars.org.uk/midgetspriteclub

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

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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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Email: dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk

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

Editorial

Hi guys. It's mid Feb, time is marching on and *Mascot* isn't finished yet. I am surrounded by tissues, Night Nurse, hot toddies and cough mixture as I write this. Yes! Ed has the flu... Elaine says it's nothing more than a runny nose, but the male membership knows better. It is medical and historic fact that women have massive defences against the common cold (something to do with the bio-chemical makeup) whereas us poor guys get pole-axed and land up with the flu every time. No sick leave at MASC Club so I struggle on but thought you lot should know of my stoic efforts as I'm getting no sympathy at home. Letters of support, food parcels and money all gratefully accepted.

But to business. Calling all Area Reps. Please have a look at the **Virtual Meeting letter**. Sound idea, impossible in practice? Maybe... the idea is to discuss a topic, the same topic, at the same time, across the country, every area meeting. The result would be a massive input into a particular issue/problem. A single month would see every possible solution to a problem discussed and offered to the membership. Trouble is it will never happen. It's hard enough to get a single area to focus on a single MASC topic or event instead of a local issue, so what chance the whole country following the Club lead? But what do I know? So let's ask the membership and get some feed back, over to you.

Neat link into area news (another smooth move) the Classic Car Show 18, 19 and 20 March 2005 at the Alexandria Palace (or Ally Pally) sees our new London congestion zone area led by Gary Lazarus taking their very own stand at the Show! Wow how's that for confidence in a new area. This and the newly reborn Bristol area (see comment from Terry Horler elsewhere) serve to remind us all what a lively grass roots movement we have. Lets keep it that way and SUPPORT the efforts of the area reps, GO TO the meetings, Ally Pally, the rallies and the BBQs this year...its YOUR club! Ref the Ally Pally, check out the Club members' discount in the advert.

Remember we talked about borrowed articles last month, well have a look at this month's great article featuring Rob Wilson's K powered Midget from another one of *Mascot's* friends *RETRO CARS*. See their advert elsewhere, the magazine is well worth a look as I have stated before.

As an old friend is used to saying as his round falls due, "Is that the time?" ☺

Regards to all, have a great month.

Mike 'Ed' North
Editor at Large



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.



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Club Nights

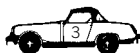
- 1st Monday **NEW! London Area** (Congestion Zone) – Meet at The Mulberry Bush Pub, Southwark (200 metres or so East of the London Eye) 7:30pm. Also generally meet at the Ace Café on 2nd Tuesday together with the *Classic Cars Magazine* night. Details: Gary Lazarus on 020 7700 5696 garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk
- 1st Wednesday **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Forresters**, Leigh, near Cricklade. NOTE CHANGE OF NIGHT
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at the **The Green Man**, Middleton Village, 8.30-8.45pm
- 1st Thursday **Lincolnshire Area** – Meet at **Heneage Arms**, Hainton, nr. Wragby. 8pm. Contact Brian Sumner on 01507 328128
- 1st Thursday **Notts/Derby border Area** (note change of day) at the **Sitwell Arms** near Horsley Woodhouse from approx. 8.30. Just a mile north-west of the A608/A609 crossroads. Ian Cooke 0115 938 3838 ilc@bgs.ac.uk
- 1st Thursday **Yorkshire Area** – 3rd March meeting – **The Travellers Rest**, Crimple Lane, Follifoot, Harrogate HG3 1DF from 7.30pm in the conservatory. Details, call Anita on 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
- 2nd Tuesday **Surrey** – Meet at **The Blue Ball**, Walton-on-the-Hill, 7.45pm. Details: David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- 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 Wednesday **NEW! Bristol Area** will meet at **The Star**, Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact John Ruderman 0117 9678351, johnruderman@blueyonder.co.uk
- 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 Thursday **NEW! Northern Ireland** – Venue to be decided. Please contact Barry Stange on 02890 401726 or mobile 07769 705497 or email barrystange@aol.com
- 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 March,

User name: bodgers

Password: corner



Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Chris Nevard

Events organised so far for 2005

March

- Sunday 6th Dorset Area are entering the **Cobweb Spin** to IBM Sportsclub, Hursley. Regional Gathering and an ideal season-starter to give the old girl a bit of a run (your car will enjoy it too!) Meet at Mounbatten Arms (Home of MGOC 1020) at 10.00am for coffee. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Tuesday 8th Dorset Area v Dorset Historic Motor Club at Skittles, Hamworthy Sports and Social Club, Canford Magna. Food available all evening. Let's see a good showing from Dorset MASC after recent lack lustre support. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Thursday 10th Dorset Area Inter Club Quiz Night – The Final! Hosted by MGOC 1020 at The Mountbatten Arms. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Friday 18th to Sunday 20th Classic Cars Live at Alexandra Palace. London Area has a stand at this show. Details from Gary Lazarus, 020 7700 5696 or garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk

April

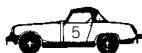
- Sunday 10th MG Day at Brooklands
- Sunday 17th Dorset Area are attending the Regional MG Gathering at Arundel Castle. This is one of the biggest gatherings of MGs in the south and the castle is pretty impressive too! Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th Yorkshire Area's Yorkshire Moors Daffodil Scenic Tour Weekend. Overnight stop at The Lion Inn, Blakey Ridge. Almost full! Details from Anita, Tel: 01423 862738 or mobile 07720 725429 email: spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
- Sunday 24th Warwickshire Area's "Not the Cotswolds Tour". Details from Chris Yates, Tel: 01608 665066

May

- Sunday 8th Warwickshire Area are attending the Sandwell Rally. Details from John Platt, 01789 488321
- Sunday 8th NW Area are going to the Cholmondley Castle Classic Car Show. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Tuesday 10th Surrey Area local Run. About 10 miles evening run. Start 8pm from The Blue Ball. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- Friday 27th Warwickshire's Trip to Holland, staying in Vollandam, just north of Amsterdam. Details from Alan Couch, Tel: 01564 773302
- Sunday 29th & Monday 30th Classic Car Show at Capesthorn Hall, Macclesfield. NW Area will be there! Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk



- Sunday 29th Dorset Area are supporting **MGs At Kingston Lacy**. Yes, the date is set already! We are back for our 4th year, and hopefully it will be bigger and better than ever. This is a Charity Event; the more the merrier and the more money we raise for Julia Perks. More discussion at the AGM. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Saturday 28th to Tuesday 31st Surrey Area Tour of Kent. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- June**
- Sunday 5th Harewood Hill Climb, Leeds. NW Area are going. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Sunday 12th Dorset Area are supporting the Windwhistle Motor Club Classic Run. Our friends and members, Peter and Valerie Young have once again invited us to take part in this scenic run through parts of Devon and Somerset. Details: Valerie or Peter Young (01460 62182) Peteryoung81@aol.com
- Tuesday 14th Surrey Area are the guests of Brooklands Museum. 7pm onwards so no meeting at The Blue Ball. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- Sunday 19th Classics at the Castle, Show and Run. Dorset Area will be there. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Sunday 19th Warwickshire Area are going to the Vulcan Fast Taxi and Car Show. Details from Maureen Sawyer, 01527 579511
- Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th Wincanton Classic Vehicle Show. Dorset Area will be there. Auto Jumble, Crafts, Trade Stalls etc. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Sunday 26th Surrey Area Victory Run part 2. Run to Portsmouth leaving Dorking 11am. Details: David Southcott email: dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk
- Sunday 26th Warwickshire's "Worcestershire/Shropshire Drive". Organisers, Roy Cole, 01562 885776 and Stuart Watson, 01562 883076.
- Sunday 26th NW Area's Lancashire Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Thursday 30th to Monday July 3rd River Dart Weekend. Dorset Area are joining this popular event organised by the Exeter Area MGOC. This is the 10th anniversary. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: Eswinden@aol.com
- July**
- Saturday 2nd NW Area are going to Oulton Park for the MGOC Midget Challenge. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Saturday 9th Symphony at the Tower. Evening event and NW Area are going to be there. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th Surrey Area are going to the Ardingly County and Classic Car Show. Club stand. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- Saturday 9th Warwickshire Area's "A weekend in the Peak District" and Sunday 10th Organiser: Dave Parker, 01564 784766
- Sunday 17th Dorset Area are attending the Motoring Extravaganza at Breamore House, nr Fordingbridge presented by Poole Bay Classics. 5th amazing year of one of the best events of the year featuring a huge cross section of marques. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com.



- Sunday 17th Surrey Area BBQ Chez Laura and Chris. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- Sunday 17th Hoghton Tower Classic Car Show. NW Area are attending. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Sunday 24th Warwickshire Area's "Mystery Tour". Organiser: John Platt, 01789 488321
- Sunday 31st Warwickshire Area are going to the Austin Healey Prescott Hill Climb. Organiser, Dave Parker 01564 784766

August

- Sunday 7th Dorset Area are joining the MGOc Picnic at Atherlhampton House. Nigel's big fund raiser for Dorset Scope. Having the date this early, there is no excuse for not attending! Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com. See www.1020mg.org.uk
- Sunday 7th NW Area are going to the Ripley Castle Classic Car Show., Harrogate. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Sunday 14th Surrey Area are attending the Annual Furzewood Auto Jumble and Frolic. Chez Jacqui and Chris Harding. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk
- Friday 19th to Sunday 21st Dorset Area are attending the Purbeck Rally and Auto Jumble near Wareham. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com
- Sunday 21st Surrey Area Cliveden Run. Details: dsouthcott@ukonline.co.uk
- Wednesday 24th Ace Café, London. MG and Rover Day. Meet from 12:00. Details from Ace Café, www.ace-café-london.com
- Saturday 27th to Monday 29th Hampshire Pageant of Motoring at Broadlands, near Romsey. Dorset Area are planning to be there. Details from Ian Swinden Tel. 01202 623002 or email: ESwinden@aol.com

September

- Saturday 3rd NW Area are joining with the MG Club for their West Lancs Club Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Sunday 11th Warwickshire Area's "Shelsey Walsh". Organiser: Stuart Watson, 01562 883076
- Sunday 11th NW Area are going to the Hoghton Tower Classic Car Show. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
- Sunday 18th The Club have been invited to The Annual Vintage and Classic show at Turweston Airfield. This is an informal day giving each owner a chance to look at the other vehicles present and for a good natter about things mechanical! Event covers cars, bikes, tractors, military vehicles, commercial vehicles and aircraft. Parade of vehicles at 13:00. Gates open at 09:30. Turweston is near 3 miles east of Brackley, off the A43.
- Friday 16th & Saturday 17th Warwickshire Area are going to the "Goodwood Revival" meeting. Organiser: Chris Yates, 01608 665066
- Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th NW Area Weekend Run to Hadrian's Wall. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk



December

Sunday 4th

NW Area are joining the MG Club for their Christmas Cracker Run. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk

Sunday 11th

NW Area Christmas Dinner. Details from Les or Diane Robinson, Tel. 01772 432138 or email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk

Tuesday 13th

Surrey Area Christmas Dinner. Details: David or Chris, 0208 42 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk

Wednesday 14th

Warwickshire Area's Christmas Dinner. Organiser: Chris Yates, 01608 665066

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

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

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

Webmonster

Auto site of the month

Latest in the 2005 series of featured sites that help members link to the world of motorcars, motorsport and motor enjoyment! This month is...



<http://www.frogeyesprite.org/>

Hot on the heels of last month's Arkley dedicated website, we find another one! Just for Frogeyes and with a great little forum. Remember forums are all about input, so log on and get chatting...☺) Ed



Mutual Assistance Directory

Well, the events calendar is filling up and there are loads of events to choose from. Why not consider attending an event out of your home area even if it does mean a few hours on the road? If you are a bit nervous of a possible breakdown – don't be. We have lots of members all over the country ready, willing and able to give you a friendly hand. So don't forget your MAD.

If you don't carry your copy of the Mutual Assistance Directory and you would like a copy you can download it from the members only section of our website. However, 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. Please remember that it is constantly updated so to be up to date, download it at least every month.

Spring is coming...

David Hill

Caption Competition

Mike

I thought this photo might be of interest to you, for publication as a caption competition perhaps.

The real story is:

I'm taking my newly repaired all steel bonnet, (all steel with no nasty filler, unlike the one on the car at the moment) to the spray shop which is fortunately within walking distance of home, to be top coated properly, the finish shown in the picture is just a 'dusting' to prevent the dreaded rust.

It is sitting on a purpose built 'Transit frame' which is made up from the garden wheel barrow and my youngest son Andy's skateboarding 'box'. The whole 'outfit' handles like a dream but is a little susceptible to cross winds, and doesn't corner too well, a bit like the real thing.

The neighbours now know that I'm insane, a fact they have been suspecting for a while now. During its brief outing the UNI-FROG did stop the traffic, the locals wondering what the hell I was up to this time.

Pete Downton

Ed says: Great idea. Entries to 'Ed', meanwhile, first stab. "Sold as seen, some minor finishing required"☺)





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Yorkshire Report



Winter Activities

This last month or two has been quiet for Spridget motoring activities, but the enthusiasm in the garage continues.

Simon has been repairing damage to his Sprite after a very successful entry into Historic Rallying. Development to the car's suspension and exhaust system could mean even more Silverware in the Parson household this coming season.

Nick and Jo are busy restoring their newly acquired hardtop for their Mk1 Midget. At last Jo will be able to travel in relative comfort and sort the maps without the wind taking them out of her hands. They even ventured into doing things like kitchen rebuild. Who ever heard of a kitchen in a Midget?

Shawn has been busy developing the rear suspension on his Midget and I think there are plans for even more improvements to the front sometime in the future.

Ian seems to have spent a great deal of time under the bonnet too. His 1500's engine bay looks a treat; attention to detail really pays off.

A combined effort by Matt and Alex (you no doubt will have been following their exploits on the message board) to design an

independent rear suspension set up for the Spridget, using mainly 'off the shelf' components, has kept them busy over the winter and I think will do long into the summer too. The result will be interesting to see.

Not a lot has been heard of Barry and Jill. I know they are still pursuing their next project, and I'm sure if successful, you'll hear about it first in these pages!

Mark and I had a fantastic ride out on Boxing Day to plan for the April Daffodil run. Future meetings and

events have been thought about and preparation for the February meeting has occupied much of my available spare time.

February Meeting

Instead of our usual pub meeting on the first Thursday of the month we had booked a Sunday Lunch at Walton Hall near Wakefield. Walton Hall is a Georgian Mansion on an island surrounded by a 26-acre lake accessible only by a picturesque iron bridge. We booked a private room with a great view of the lake and surrounding parkland that was the world's first wild fowl reserve and sanctuary. The bad weather, originally forecast for the weekend, didn't arrive and my Midget started first go.

Delighted that Les and Diane Robinson from the NW Area were able to come. They liked the look of the hotel on the website and decided to stop overnight and take in some of the local (Harrogate) shopping attractions. Peter and Dorothy (also NW) looked in on a new autojumble on route but didn't buy much.

Ian and Lynne arrived in their Midget and had the opportunity to catch up with the NW members whom, like us, they'd met on the



Dales Weekend. From conversation over lunch, it's apparent that Lynne has caught the 'ebay bug' and has been tempted to buy anything with 'Midget' in the title. I think Ian has diagnosed her in good time and she is responding to treatment.

Chris and Lin were there fresh from their holiday in Egypt. They had desperately wanted to bring the Frogeye, Chris spending most of Saturday checking it over for the trip despite a dreadful cold. Sunday's weather forecast and the threat of salt combined with the long journey persuaded them that it was better for them to come in a modern car.

Shawn and Dawn arrived 'test driving' a new Audi. Good job this was just a lunch, as Mark remembers in the good old days, cars were 'borrowed' for a test drive and... "never been raced or rallied sir". Shawn is keen for us to attend a show at Harewood House on Father's Day in June. I'm hoping he'll organize it. He's promised to bring details to the next meeting

We met Mick's wife, Mandy, for the first time. She can't make our meetings due to choir commitments. Her choir has performed at many prestigious places including The Albert Hall. She wasn't sure what to expect but found out we don't talk about cars all the time! Arthur came with his wife too. This was Pat's first meeting with us all and I hope that, like Mandy, it wasn't too daunting for her. Mark and I had met Pat a couple of weeks before when we were over their way, calling I think at a most inconvenient time, but made most welcome with tea and home made scones. We look forward to seeing Pat and Mandy again at some of the events throughout the year.

New faces Tim and Sarah bravely joined us. They came in Holly –a Porsche Guards Red Midget with a fastback top in black. Holly comes from Bath and was used competitively in the past so is modified. Tim told us of his bad experiences with a local specialist.

repairer. Happily he has now found someone who is doing a good job and is looking forward to trouble free motoring.

Matt and Lizzie arrived last, probably as Lizzie lives just up the road. This was the fourth and final Spridget to drive to the event. Lizzie was 'allowed' to drive Matt's Midget home... A trend for the future Matt?

Nick and Jo, Barry and Jill, and Phil couldn't come due to other commitments. Andrew is still away near Barbados. Alex, who lives almost next door, was away working in the Midlands, but did send his apologies. Simon decided that his masochistic bent would be better served sailing....!



Other news

We have decided to offer occasional in-between meetings to cater for those living further afield like Darlington, Selby and York. Please contact me if this means you may be interested in joining us.

Looks like we have lots of opportunities to meet up with the NW Area this year. Next one is Thursday 7th April when they plan to visit our club night.

Next meetings

Thursday 3rd March – The Travellers Rest, Crimple Lane, Follifoot, Harrogate HG3 1DF

Thursday 7th April – Dog and Gun Inn, Colne Road, Glusburn, Keighley BD20 8DS

Anita



Scotland Report

'Midgets and Elves? Darling? Is that *really* what you said?' Captain Bill the airline pilot and 2CV driver asked his wife. 'No. I told you Bill. It's Midgets and Sprites!' Bill laughed. And when I met him, as part of my infiltration of the 2CV headbangers Club, he was still laughing – laughing at what was to him the seemingly absurd nomenclature of our little Midget and Sprite cars: which obviously isn't funny at all when you are over 6 feet like me and not at all spritely. It's interesting though, the name familiarity we have with our wee world; which got me thinking about where we are in time: for could there now ever be another car called a Midget? Would it not ignite a small army of protesters? I really do enjoy laughing at my own stupidity; especially here, being the guy who came up with a slogan for a new, hoped for Midget [vol 231].

I'm writing about all this because we are going to have a joint meeting with 2CV GB. Ah! Just to partake once again in the glory of headbanging! Headbanging, which you might not know about, is an exclusively Glasgow pursuit, undertaken only for those beyond, wherever found, like me once in another life, lurched into a disco, only to be frisked on entry [quality!] and inside, to be surrounded by boisterous elves wearing YMCA leather caps, dancing to head bangingly loud music, dancing with toweringly tall slim women, too scary and bizarre for even my musically brain cell damaged headbanged self; yet made afraid to leave for fear the frisking policy applied, even on exit!

That experience left me fascinated by how minorities protect themselves, in constructed

certainties of conceit, in imagined superiorities; like me with our little cars. I suppose having to consider the word Midget as a possible absurdity, as Captain Bill finds it to be, is only a confusion of thought. But, here's the bombshell. I now don't believe that there will ever be a new car called a Midget and that makes me enjoy even more our sense of belonging out of time. Try not to laugh when I say that I'm really looking forward to our joint run with the 2CVs; to be with other motorists not in time, clock stopped, airbagless, ABS-less and without whatever other cocoons to immortality we should have prescribed to numb us from ourselves and life. In the absence of such falderals, I look forward to our run, out of step compadres.

This one-off joint meeting with 2CV Ecosse will be in June. Please contact me early if you want to come with us because I have the definite shakes about the absence of MASC insurance when more than 12 cars go on a run together; a subject about which I have returned to Mike. Jeez! Whenever did you get headbanged once too often and finally lose it, kid?

Carson and Chums
HEE ME OORHSHT

Ps. Please phone or toy carsonthomson5@hotmail.com for details of the Aileen /John run in April and why we might be on a fast one-day road run in May to Stranraer.

Ed says: 'Toy' is Carsonese for e-mail!

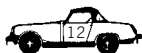
NW Area

The February club night was our 'bring your piccies' night. We had a slight hitch for those who brought CDs as Andrew was delayed so couldn't bring his laptop until late on. Overall not a bad night and a good turn out as well with 10 of us in total. For March we are having a spares night. The idea is to bring along a list of what you have and what you want. With a bit of luck, our events should be listed in the diary section so please

have a look. As always these are subject to change depending on what interest there is and what mood we're in. There has been a conscious decision to move some events further north so hope to attract some new faces.

See you on 9 March.

Les



London Area

This month is about apprehension and satisfaction, as our Spritely hobby seems to be full of it.

One day you see a Spridget, possibly fall in love and whether you save up to buy one, build one or repair one, along the way there is apprehension and satisfaction.

First there is apprehension: Will it be as good as I'd hoped? Can I afford it (no)? Will my wife allow it (not if I tell her)? Will I ever finish building it? Even when it's finished, there is apprehension. Will it start? Will it break down? Will members of the public laugh at me? And will everyone else's be better than mine?

Then comes satisfaction: Yes, it was better than I'd ever hoped it would be. It's still more than I can afford but on a £ to pleasure ratio, it's absolutely worth the expense. My wife actually loves it/likes it/happy it gets me out from under her feet (delete where appropriate) and who cares if you never actually finish it, that's part of the fun.

Then more satisfaction: Yes, it starts most of the time. Breaking down adds to the sense of adventure (yeah right). Complete strangers stop to wave, point, smile and chat. And you realise that even if other owner's cars are in better or worse condition than yours, it actually doesn't matter to them or you as you're all having so much fun.

So it is with this London Area Midget and Sprite thing. The apprehension of starting something which was up until then, just a couple of people chatting on the internet. Would anyone turn up? Would we get on? Would they come next time? And would they tell others?

At this Monday's monthly meeting, there was always going to be a low turnout, only Toby, Sam Raouf and myself at the Mulberry Bush for a chat and a drink. The reason being Nick and Steve again on transatlantic duties plus the anomaly of the first Monday and the second Tuesday of February falling on consecutive days. Still a good evening with people who have, in a short time, become friends.

The following evening was our second monthly meeting at the Ace Café.



Again apprehension at the thought of sitting in the café as the sole owner of anything Spridgety followed by the satisfaction of meeting Darryl J again, in his red Sprite MK3 (I think) who I haven't seen for two years; Stephen and Brian both new to the London Area meetings who arrived in formation each with their own Midgets (solely thanks to reading about it in *Mascot*); Stuart who is ever nearer to the completion of his V8-engined beast and

Rich, thankfully recovering from a sudden and very severe illness. Bob T joined us in his beautifully engineered fuel-injected Rubber



bumper 1500 Midget which had only passed its MOT that afternoon. Paul H was already there on my arrival driving his "Modern" Volvo Amazon estate and finally Matt in his university's 1926 Morris T Type truck, a monster of a thing, his two Sprites languishing in bits in a barn somewhere in Hampshire. A satisfying turnout especially as we met three new Midgets and their respective owners.

Finally some more Apprehension. As you may well have read within this month's hallowed pages, the London Area has been invited to display at "Classic Cars Live" 2005, at Alexandra Palace.

So with the aforementioned apprehension and with some help from the Surrey area, we are looking forward to meeting as many of you as can make it during the weekend of 18, 19, and 20 March.

You are assured of an enthusiastic welcome and I hope it is something we will be able to look back on with satisfaction.

Gary L
London, Congestion Zone





Contact: Gary Lazarus
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COME AND MEET THE MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB AT CLASSIC CARS LIVE

18, 19 & 20 March 2005

The Midget and Sprite Club (London Area) will be at this year's Classic Cars Live show. The Midget & Sprite Club will have it's own stand. The venue is London's Alexandra Palace. It is with great excitement that the newly formed London Area of the Midget & Sprite Club announces their presence at this year's Classic Cars Live Show.

The three-day opening: Friday, Saturday and Sunday will see many fabulous classic cars and stunning displays.

Concourse d'Elegance. Automobilia Auction. Saturday and Sunday Drive-ins from London's Ace Café. Clubs and Club Cars. Autojumble and Automobilia. James Bond Cars collection. Live and interactive restoration projects. Come and join us on the stand at this year's show where you will be assured of an enthusiastic welcome.

**Visit the website www.classiccarslive.com or
www.mgcars.org.uk/midgetspriteclub**

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rebuids, original
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South Staffs and Birmingham Area

Much ado, about everything

Don't believe all you hear about winter months giving us nowt to do!

Geoff, Bill2, John, Malc and Alan were sitting at the table near the bar (where else?) when I arrived shortly followed by Gavin. Since I am in the throes of putting the Ford 5 speeder into Lara I had to come in my civvy car, as had some of the others. Geoff was in his Midget and John came in the BGT.

We had the usual topics of conversation plus our first event of the year to discuss.

Building on a chance posting that John made on the Midget/Sprite BBS, we have been organising an event to rival Gary's group's **Sprites and Midges across the Bridges** affair.

We are organising a Sunday morning **Run Through the Tunnels** that litter the Birmingham City Centre. We are expecting many visitors from afar to join us and I will be reporting it in next month's magazine. This will be an article, Mike, in addition to the usual report.

We have arranged for a contingent to gather for a photo shoot in front of Birmingham Town Hall, in the closed pedestrian area at around 9 o'clock and then away to a meeting place on the A38 to pick up latecomers and then off, away into the city centre tunnels via the A38M.

We have arranged this almost entirely via the "Virtual Area" and are hoping for visitors from Dahn Sarf including Gary himself, Toby, Paul and many more from London, Essex and Surrey and from the North we expect Matt and Guy and others.

We have advised and invited Warwickshire to join us too and are hoping that Ian and some friends from Notts/Derbyshire will also be there.

My five-speeder project is going well but with my bad knees is taking longer than I would wish. The box and engine are in the engine/transmission tunnel area but at present only the front is connected to its mounts. I've been welding and Hammeriting as I go and still have a week and a half to finish it before we need motion power to drive through the tunnels. No problem.

John Collins has put his reclaimed Midget from Scotland through its MOT and is now officially a Midgeteer again. This is the car he towed home from its old owner's home in Scotland behind his Mazda MX5 after advertising to see if it was still in existence. He built a great house for the car in his garden and showed us pictures on the 'net day after day. A super project and a very nice warm home for his Midget.

Bill Mohan

Surrey Area Report

February was a low point in numbers for the monthly meet, but that was probably because all were mortified that Alan had put his back out and couldn't escort us to the Warren! So, let's hope Alan's back in the driving seat very soon.

As it was billed as collectables evening, Chris brought his two Brooklands racer models of a Sunbeam and Aston Martin, Mike brought a bag full of miscellaneous die-cast toys from his childhood, out of which we were able to assemble a James Bond classic, and yours truly brought some rarities from the model

world. Just to give the answers to the identify the models quiz – Chris H's were Sunbeam and Aston Martin, both of Brooklands era, and mine were Riley 9, BSA Scout, Swallow Doretti, MG TB, and a little Dellow.

Whilst we're on models, I've produced my first custom-finished and sprayed Frogeye, from the Revell $\frac{1}{16}$ th scale model reviewed in December and February. Minus front bumper, and luggage rack, with racing mirrors, and in Austin Healey red, this was for fellow member of Surrey Area Nic who was well pleased! I'm open to further commissions! Terry's critique



of this model in February was very in depth, and the inaccuracies, from a concours judge point of view were obvious. However, he is right in concluding that it is indeed the best and most detailed model yet and at £20.00, well worth the investment. (Yes I do have a few left!)

Really pleased to hear that Gary and the London CZ Area has got off to a flying start, and will be mounting a stand at the Ally Pally show in March – hope to see some of you there. Hopefully Alan's Sebring will be there, and I hope to assist with a stint on the stand, so look forward to seeing any visitors between 12.00 and 1.00pm on Friday 18th March.

Chris and I are looking forward to seeing some of the Surrey gang at our "at home" later in February, and we'll be checking out the area for our Rye, Kent trip later in February too.

In the meantime, forthcoming events known so far are – 19th/20th March – Alexandra Palace Classic Car Show

Keep in touch regarding other local runs, and eventually a plan for 2005 might emerge. In the meantime, you can catch me on – dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk

All for now

David

Cambridgeshire Report

I can't believe it is that time again and the MASC report is due already. The March report, three months into the year, 25%, and Christmas seems like yesterday. It will be summer before we know it and with that in mind the main item on the agenda at the monthly meeting was this year's events. We had a good turn out of regulars at the Mad Cat and having rearranged the furniture a bit we got down to hammering out the programme of events. The first event will be a run to Stondon Transport Museum in May and this we hope will tempt a number of non-Cambridgeshire Spridgets out of hibernation since this venue, being just a few miles north of London, is within reasonable Spridgetting distance of many MASC members as well as being a great attraction in it's own right. The event will take place on the 22nd of May and feature a dedicated MASC area (so our cars become part of the attraction) and maybe gain a bit of free publicity from the venue organisers. We plan to open up the event to all Spridget owners (Club members and non-members alike) and maybe even do a bit of recruiting. This will be the second East Anglian MASC mass gathering and we need to beat last year's turn out of 16 cars so come and join us.

The second event will be Nigel's Magical mystery tour run on the 26th of June (sorry guys I'm on holiday on the 19th hence it's slipped a week because I don't want to miss it). The run is still in the planning stages but

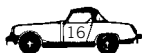
Nigel has a bit of a talent for this sort of thing and always goes to a lot of trouble to get things right so I can guarantee it will be great (no pressure Nigel!).

Event three is the treasure hunt to be held on the 3rd of July, this is also in the planning stage at the moment (in fact it may not even have got that far yet) however I think I will be in danger of getting lynched if I don't come up with the goods this year.

Event four will be the brilliant Charity Classic at Kimbolton Castle on the 17th of July. This is a wonderful event organised by the sporting bears, set in the grounds of the castle filled with all kinds of stalls and family entertainment and featuring a wonderful array of exotic and classic cars (not to be missed). We will once again have a designated MASC area so if you are not a Cambridgeshire member you will still be able to find us.

Event five is the annual BMC Rally at Ferry meadows near Peterborough on the 7th of August. This is a large event set in a pleasant area of meadows and lakes and attracting a full range of BMC cars (more than 300 last year including the 10 on our stand) and lots of auto jumble and stalls to look at (best of all the sun always shines on this one).

Event 6 is the Gransden flying day which takes place at the end of August or early September (date to be confirmed) and is a stunning day out on a grass airstrip with 300ish classic cars (Rollers, Bentleys, Jags,



Citroens, Morgans, Deloreans, Triumphs, Spridgets and you name it) and wonderful aircraft including biplanes in action, a truly brilliant display not to mention the steam engines and numerous stalls (even a flight simulator last year) all great fun, and free if you come in a classic car but limited numbers (air safety reasons) so advance tickets only and it is always a sell out.

Apart from the events other topics were discussed at the meeting ranging from trading ethics, holidays, B&Bs and Sprite models through to woodworking machines. I even produced a particularly devilish fumble bag and I thought for a few glorious moments that I had everyone stumped (even Nigel only managed to identify 2 of the 7 items) but then Dave, who has at least 3 of every Spridget part ever made in his garage, came to the rescue (although it did take him a couple of attempts) and identified the rest. Dave has promised to supply next month's fumble bag (no escape now Dave it's in print for all of MASC to see) I am expecting a bag full of the Spridget and Frogeye equivalent of hens teeth. I did suggest we could go to Dave's garage, don blindfolds and just rummage about a bit but maybe that's going a bit too far.

On a personal note I gave the Sprite a topless (of course) blast down to Baldock the afternoon after the pub meeting, to change a passenger side inner wheel arch panel I had bought three months back for the project car, for a driver's side one (in the end I managed to repair the original in situ so the new panel was no longer needed). Now the 100-mile round trip may seem a little excessive for one panel and there are suppliers nearer to me

but the guys at Brown and Gammons changed that panel without the slightest quibble, no questions asked. The trip down was interesting since I spied a broken down E-type being recovered by the AA on the roundabout just north of Baldock (not a common sight). There was also a very nice E-type at B&Gs on sale for 27K (not a bad price comparatively speaking for such a nice car, but not worth 5 Spridgets). I must confess that my other reason for the trip was to have a good drool over the very nice things in the showroom.



And finally I have included a photo of John Davies and family's (our most recent new members) wonderfully restored MK I Midget (I love the earliest Spridgets). The photo missed the deadline last month but better late than never. Those of you who are into fumble bags will note the bumper support bar chrome finisher behind the left hand side overrider.

See you all at the Mad Cat.

Dave Dixon

Warwickshire Report

This is a quiet time of year for the cars, if being serviced, repaired and generally spruced up for the coming season can be called quiet. It is a time of planning and preparation, rather than actually taking the cars out. However, some regularly bring their cars to the meeting, whatever the weather.

This month, we were pleased to welcome Andy Bourne who turned up in his Midget

and to see Allan Moore and his family. Allan bought Roy's Midget from him and has restored it to its former glory in just over a year.

We are now planning to have a stand at the MG Show at Stoneleigh. Barrie, Roger, and John will have their cars there, so do come along, and say hello. The Holland Trip is booked, although there will be fewer of us



than originally planned, because, as the ferry was fully booked for our original dates, we have had to start and finish a day later. We are intending to stay in Colchester on Saturday Night, so that we can be sure of arriving at the port in good time.

Roy and Stuart pointed out that the run they are planning is in Worcestershire and Shropshire, not Staffordshire as in my previous report. Dave has found a 17th century inn for the Derby run, but as it only has 11 double rooms and we have 14 cars and their owners hoping to take part, this may not be suitable, so he is returning to the "drawing board" to work on a new plan.

New items include the Prescott Hill Climb organised by the Austin Healey Club on the 31st July and we will meet up to give us enough time for a drive and 10.30am arrival. Maureen also brought details of the Vulcan Run and Car Show, which is on 19th June at Wellesbourne Airfield and is to include a fly-over of other historic aircraft. John also gave us early details of the Sandwell Rally on 8th May and as there were a number of interested parties, he will bring more details to the next meeting. Roger has set the date for his drive for the 6th or 7th of August, more details will be available later.

Chris and Sheila Yates

Wiltshire gets in Gear

Well, at last the errant gearbox has returned. It looked splendid as it sat on the garage floor glowing to itself. It seemed a shame to have to put it back where it belongs, out of sight, but at last Malcolm said we had to stop admiring it and put it back to work.

Malcolm and Barry had got on with installing the clutch and with bated breath we offered the two into partnership and, Shock and Amazement, they went together perfectly. (This never happens to me, I always spend ages shaking, wiggling, heaving and cursing the bits before they finally surrender and fit together.) It must be Malcolm's influence that makes it work!!

Now the assembly starts and I fit on the starter and a few other bits that we think won't get in the way when swinging the unit into place. Now, which way up do the gearbox mounts go?

At last it's time to sling it from the engine hoist and lower into the engine bay. With three of us to guide the knobbly bits into place it's a doddle, and in no time it seems we're getting the engine mounts on and lining up the gearbox mounts. Wait a minute! The starter cable won't reach the terminal. Oh dear, Ian put it on the wrong way round. Now, can we turn it round without taking the whole lot out again?

Twenty minutes and twenty skinned knuckles later, we win. Now to connect up the clutch

slave cylinder. More skinned knuckles and a few insults and it's ready for bleeding. Ha-Ha. It says in the book that this may be difficult!! After trying for about 2 hours we can't get the fluid to go through so we decide to leave it for tomorrow and Ian will bring his Eezybleed kit! Let's try and fire it up anyway. Guess what?? No action, no sparks. We check and check everything we can think of and don't work it out, but the battery's flat by now so we'll leave that till tomorrow too.

Next day, continue checking and finally get the clutch bled (eventually). A mechanic friend of Barry's appears and says 'have you cleaned the points', I say 'they're sparking O.K.'

He says 'give me some emery', and five minutes later she's running like a dream. Moral – just because it looks O.K. doesn't mean it is O.K.



Now for a quick prayer before going for a blast down the road and wonder of wonders it sounds great, even without the the gearlever grommet and the insulation.

Now, time to put it away, because Barry and Annette are off to Cuba for a break tomorrow and packing has become urgent, so completion of the job has to wait till their return.

At time of writing, no more news, so bye bye from Wiltshire for this month.

Ian Rider



Northern Ireland Report

Did you hear the one about the chap from Ireland who (very proudly) went to show off his 1972 M.G. Midget to a friend who was sales manager of one of the largest new and used car dealerships in Northern Ireland? I am that chap. The car was more shiny than usual and after negotiating the first two sets of car ramps, speed retardants (or whatever you want to call them) arrived at set number three. This "sleeping policeman" obviously had had too much lunch and promptly separated most of the exhaust pipe with the resultant noises coming from both the inside and outside of the car. I rather briskly entered his office and demanded to know what he was going to do about what had recently happened. He apologised and instructed me to take the car around to the workshop where the problem would be rectified at no cost to myself. Then there was the difficulty about the width between the car ramps and the width between the wheels on a Midget. After the exhaust had been repaired, I asked how I would leave their premises without the same thing happening again. A boiler-suited engineer armed with a couple of wooden planks accompanied me on my departure and made wooden ramps over the tarmac ones and thus I made my (not so hasty) exit.

On a more serious note, M.G. Ireland's annual event is being based in Sligo this year (time to consult the school atlas!) It begins on Thursday April 28 and will run until May 2. The M.G. Travel Club based in Cambridge have arranged a package which includes return ferry crossings, bed and breakfast accommodation and dinner on the Sunday evening in the Sligo Park Hotel. Local maps, rally plaques and other relevant details are also provided. Further details are obtainable from the M.G. Owners Club U.K. who can be contacted on 01954 231125. At this stage there is an expected attendance of over 40 cars.

I have postponed the inaugural meeting of the Northern Ireland Region until 17th February in order that I can contact more potential members. Which reminds me that I must phone the chap who was before me at my last M.O.T. and commented that he had an old Midget at home. Isn't it surprising just how they appear?

As I write this, there could be any number present between one and twenty but, as the Olympic Committee say, it's not the winning that matters, it's the taking part.

Barry

Ed says: Nice to have an 'overseas' correspondent again Barry.

Power Shootout (and it's free!)

Shaun Rainsford the owner of Classic Cars of Kent has made the offer of a power shootout combined with a visit to his Tonbridge Garage where every aspect of automobile repair and restoration is carried out except trimming. Shaun is a Halfords Midget Racing Championship Champion and Top Hat classic saloon (Austin A40 Farina) competitor and also an MG/AH parts supplier (see www.classiccarsofkent.co.uk)

The power shootout involves running cars on his rolling road to find which car is the most powerful and what BHP (brake horse power) the engine is putting out. Engine faults can be diagnosed and suggestions made as to how to increase power. A member of staff can be on hand to give a talk on tuning. Tea and coffee are available.

A minimum of 10 cars are required (at a cost of £25 per car tested) and up to a maximum of 20 cars. I envisage a Saturday sometime in April 2005 for this event, which would take all day, if enough interest is shown. I therefore need to contact a large audience and would welcome anyone from any section not just Surrey Centre. Whilst preferring Sprites/Frogeyes and Midgets any car can be tested.

Anyone interested can contact me with their availability during April 2005 and details on alan.instead@btopenworld.com

Ed says: looks like fun! But be quick, first ten e-mails get the places!! But then you can pump it up to 20 (or even get another session going just for you and your mates) ☺



A Response from One of the Few

Terry Horler does read *Mascot*

It was most heartening to read the comments from members in the February edition sparing some thoughts for the poor overworked committee. At just 6 in number, the committee is at the minimum number as set out in the Constitution and at the least number since the Club was formally set up in October 1983. As worrying as this may seem, it should not be forgotten that the committee is supported by a hard working team of Club officers. These are appointed by the committee to perform specific tasks. Check out the inside front cover to see who they are and what they do. I will take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for the work that they do for the Club. Without this support, we would really have something to worry about. I must make mention that we are about to lose the services of our long standing Regalia Officer, Chris Barton. At the time of writing, we have yet to have anyone in the frame to replace Chris – which is a worry. Hopefully, this important role will be filled by someone reading this. In the meantime, it is with thanks from all of us to Chris for all her hard work over the years in this capacity.

Also on the inside front cover, an ever-growing number of Area Organisers representing the Club. To many, these are the most important people they see and speak to. This is the strength of the Club and along with the all-important *Mascot*, keep members involved and informed with what is going on. These are the tangible assets of the Club, the bits that members see and have a direct benefit from on a regular basis. I am certain that most of our Area Organisers can, in turn, call upon local support to make their jobs easier. Indeed, our Dorset branch has its own elected committee, funds and excellent monthly newsletter, not only this, they raise funds for charity. Along with monthly meetings and a very full calendar of events, they run their own show without causing the national committee any increase in their day to day workload. In fact, demands from our various branches are not at all a problem as they know their territory and simply get on with the job in response to local demands. The committee has resisted in interfering with well-run branches of the Club; this is a policy

which seems to work well. I must stress that there are a few basic rules to understand and these are important, but we try to keep it simple and are always available to advise and help out when required.

As suggested in the February edition, many Spridgely thing owners now find the information they need very easy to come by without having to join the Club or renewing their membership after their first year. This is having an impact on our numbers and most definitely of concern to the committee. I fully endorse that the best support that anyone can give the Club is to renew their membership each year. As so rightly pointed out last month, we are the only club in the UK to support solely the interests of Midget and Sprite owners, and if we don't do it, who else will?

Our reduced committee is sufficient to keep the ball rolling but not enough to pick up much speed. Hence, we cannot promise any great changes in the foreseeable future. But, thanks to our front line of Area Organisers, the Club in your area could move on to greater things with your continued support. Whether you can offer support either at local or national level, or maybe both, now is the time to make yourself known. Let 2005 be a good year for MASC and may we continue to be THE club for Spridgely thing owners.

Again, my thanks to the understanding comments from members in the February edition.

P.S. I will take this opportunity to give my local branch a plug. The Bristol area has reformed and meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the STAR, Pucklechurch. Gatherings from 8.00pm. We plan to be an active group that will be out and about doing things rather than just talking about them. (But no doubt there will be plenty of talking too). If you are in the region and interested in what we are up to, pay us a visit or contact any of the Bristol-based members listed on the Contacts page.

Terry Horler

ED says: Thanks Terry. Always knew you read Mascot !!





retro cars

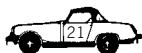
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Short Change

Words Phil White
Photos Dave Woodall



Ever tried getting 190 bhp from an A-Series? Then you'll know why Rob Wilson decided to jam a 16-valver into his Midget.

London's a funny old place, as usual with extreme behaviour. What seems normal within the confines of the M25 provides those looking in from outside with almost endless amusement. Personal transport, for instance, gives outsiders plenty to smile about.

It seems sensible for those travelling alone to use something small, nimble and fuel-efficient — so the huge popularity of the scooter in the capital seems

like common sense. On the other hand, the minute a Londoner has to carry a second person, it seems that they go stark staring mad and rush out to buy a huge and agricultural SUV.

Rob Wilson's a long-term resident of North London and adheres to the minimalist school of transport policy: "I used to have a scooter," he reports, "but as they all do it got nicked. Mind you, by then I'd gone self-employed and

could just walk to work anyway. I had a lump of money from the insurance on the scooter and my dad said 'I don't want my old MG Midget any more, do you fancy it?' So I bought him a belly and took the car."

The Midget was an MG staple from the '20s, when it was a no-frills, low-cost, sporting-looking two-seater derived from the Morris Minor. The concept was developed progressively. **D**





You'd be guessing too if you had this Midget and a two-wide runway to play with.



He's managed to find room for 100 bhp in the Midget—surely a couple of baby seats couldn't be that tricky?

reaching its apogee in the legendary TT. The programme finished in 1955, to be taken back up a few years later.

The first modern Midget turned up in 1959, badged Austin Healey Sprite. Famous for its 'frog-eye' raised headlamps, the Sprite continued its evolution all the way through to 1978, by which time it had given way entirely to the MG Midget name.

The little shape had been bulked up by the rubber bumper required by US safety laws. The early square-topped wheelarches had been rounded off too, to be filled with the now-legendary Royle pressed steel wheels.

Initially, the Sprite was powered by a tiny 548cc Austin A-Series, which developed just 42 bhp, and by the end the Midget boasted the 1493cc OHV motor

developed by Triumph for the Spitfire. It produced 68 bhp and gave the car 100 mph capability. But Rob found fairly early into his tenure of his Midget that its top-topping capacity simply wasn't enough to thrill him. "I just got bored," he says, "but I thought I'd stick with it and look around for ways to improve it."

His research took him to Bath, home of Frontline Spridget. Frontline has been restoring and improving Midget and Sprites since 1991. It knows an awful lot about making British Leyland's tiny terror go faster, and Rob was impressed by boss Tim Fenna: "I did the brakes first," he says, "then the suspension, then the engine. Then the suspension again," he grins, "because the engine conversion knocked the weight distribution."

Both being rather a long way from London, Rob elected to source the hardware he required for this convoluted development process at Frontline and then give it to local firm Picton Sports Cars, at Witham Cross.

Picton has, over the last couple of decades, established quite a reputation for servicing, tuning and modifying Triumphs and Sunbeam Alpines. Rob, however, feels in retrospect that he would have done things differently: "Both Frontline and Picton are really good at what they do," he says, "but if I do this again I will use just one place to supply and fit. The main problem with this project was that time was lost in translation between one firm and another."

It looks likely he'll be doing this all again because the Midge's up for sale. "While I've had it I've also had two children," he says, "and I've also bought a Scimitar GTE." Offer Rob £15,995 on 07938 379041 and it could be yours.

Frontline and Picton's efforts have created an absolute monster: fitting the standard 1500cc engine in favour of a 1.8-litre Rover K-Series unit has put 190 lbhp at Rob's disposal. A standard Midge 1500 weighs just 740 kg and this car's even lighter than that — in fact, it looks too tiny to pack this sort of power.

However, thanks mainly to fat and sticky Advan tyres Rob says that it grips incredibly well: "I've tried pretty hard," he says, "but in the dry it's practically impossible to unset. Although," and he laughs, "the tyres need warming. If you forget this or it's wet you've no more grip than on a motorcycle." **3**



MCF-ported E-Series is a neat fit in the Midge — even the standard bonnet remains.



"The tyres need warming. If it's wet you've no more grip than a bike"





Modified MGF-spec VVC motor breathes through Jersey throttle bodies.

So much power being laid down in a tiny car designed in the 70s is also due to chassis development. It now boasts AVO adjustable dampers and springs and an anti-roll bar at the front. The conversion to telescopic damper involves a replacement upper arm, and built into its geometry is two degrees of negative camber. The system is more rigid than the standard suspension, and the revised camber dial understeer out of the car's handling.

There are leaf springs at the rear, but with AVO dampers and Frontline's special invention, the RTL, or rear traction-control link. A peek underneath reveals this rather complex item, which works rather like a pair of linked Panhard rods. Its basic function is to pretty much remove the lateral movement of leaf springs in cornering, but it also seems to combat wheel tramp on hard takeoffs.

With this, and polyurethane bushes all round, Bob's car reaps admirably with its threefold power increase. Due to a distinct improvement in braking the Midget can be brought to a standstill too. The standard rear drums remain, but at the business end are 241 mm ventilated and cross-drilled discs.

Of course, as standard a 1.8-litre K-Series doesn't produce 190 bhp. Frontline uses the 143 bhp VVC variable valve timing engine used in the current MGF because it has bigger valves than its 118 bhp brother. The VVC gear does unfortunately rather hamper going, so Tim ditches it in favour of 285-profile Piper cams and venturi pulleys. The standard induction is also ousted by Jersey



throttle bodies fed by a Ramair cone filter, a high-pressure fuel pump and an alloy fuel tank. An Emerald ECU is also employed, which when correctly mapped creates a tractable engine with bags of mid-range torque and 187 bhp.

The K-Series has a way of looking at home almost anywhere, with its demure black can cover, and it doesn't look outrageously imported under the bonnet of the Midget — it fits into the engine bay without any modification of the bonnet becoming necessary.

In fact, until you look closely there's very little evidence of body mods anywhere on this car. Originally a rubber-humper model, its looks have been



MG Midget Tech Spec

BODY

1977 MG Midget, rubber bumpers removed, nose and tail smoothed, Austin Healey Sprite front grille, chrome mesh lower grille.

ENGINE

1.8-litre K-Series VVC unit, Ramair cone air filter, Jersey throttle bodies, 285-profile Piper cams, high-flow fuel pump, alloy fuel tank, Frontline exhaust manifold and system, Emerald ECU.

TRANSMISSION

Four-Overdrive 2.8i close-ratio five-speed gearbox, limited-slip differential, five-spoke halfshafts.

SUSPENSION

Frontline telescopic front damper conversion, AVO adjustable dampers and springs, anti-roll bar, Frontline RTL, rear traction-control link, AVO dampers, polyurethane dampers of round.

BRAKES

241 mm ventilated, cross-drilled discs, standard rear drums.

WHEELS AND TYRES

3x14 Monitor Mille alloy, 185/60 Yokohama Advan rubber.

INTERIOR

Half roll cage, blue vinyl seats, Moto Lite steering wheel, Momo alloy gearshift.



"That was an expensive time, munching differentials"

Moto-Lite steering wheel often a nice period touch.



"In the dry it's practically impossible to unscrew," reckons Rob.

improved inaccessibility by the use of no bumpers at all. This conversion is relatively easy at the front, as it requires the wings and front panel from an early chrome-bumper car; the bumper mounting hubs being placed over. But at the back quite a large-scale plating job is required to build up the area below the lights. "If I was being totally anal I'd change the lamp clusters for the earlier type," Rob says, "they're a bit rounder."

He's treated the nose to a thin-slatted Sprite grille, and filled the small vents below it with chromed mesh that looks vaguely familiar. "I got it from Frontline," he says. "Tim sources it from a company that supplies Bentley."

Complementing the smooth, pared-down look are six 14-inch Minilites shod in 185/90 rubber, suggesting a period style that has carried through to the

interior. Here you will find Moss seats, described by Rob as, "the best thing I've ever bought for this car. They're incredibly comfortable." The dash is simplicity itself, featuring a couple of Smith's instruments on black. The steering wheel is a suitable Moto-Lite item and the gearknob a Moss alloy version.

It operates a Ford gearbox, a close-ratio unit originally from a Granada 2.8i. "The transmission progressively fell apart on me," Rob says, "so it was gradually upgraded until it was strong enough. That was an expensive time, munching differentials. The propshaft is standard-issue, but the current differential is a limited-slip version and the halfshafts are high-strength, fine-spline units."

The Midget was originally conceived as a fun car, and this particular version just takes the theme further. We photographed

it at the legendary Bevington Proving Ground and Rob set off to enjoy himself with a few fast laps, his mate David strapped into the passenger seat.

It's a blindingly rapid machine, a far cry from the scooter whose disappearance started all this madness in the first place. If it stays in London the new owner will have to keep a sharp lookout to avoid being trampled underfoot by SUVs. They'll have a cracking good time as they do it, though.

Contact

Frontline Spidgels

208 Lancelot Road
East Bathampton
Bath BA1 7RL
01225 862777
frontline@mgcars.org.uk
www.mgcars.org.uk/frontline

Picton Sportscars

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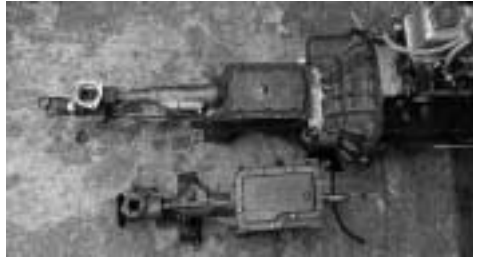
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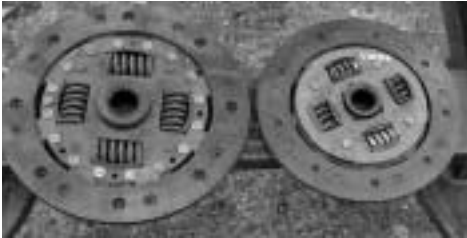
DIY 5-Speed conversion information website
<http://www.the-wizardsden.com/index.html>



1500 block fitted with Ford G-Box



Ford box with 1500 below



Ford and 1500 clutch plates



Nothing lines up!



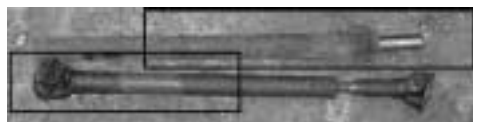
Home made adaptor plate!



Adaptor fitted to block



Slave cylinder adaptor



Cortina top, MG bottom, cut and shut

Ed says: See letters.



Man urinates himself out of an Avalanche

Extracted from: <http://www.mysterymag.com/>

Hot on the heels of the tremendous news that beer can help fight cancer, we are delighted to report that a Slovak man trapped in his car by an avalanche urinated his way to freedom after working his way through 60 half-litre bottles of beer.

According to Ananova, Richard Kral was off on holiday when the snow swallowed his Audi in the Tatra mountains. Initially, he tried to dig his way out via the car's window, but soon realised that the snow would fill the vehicle long before he could break free.

Mercifully, he had stocked up on essential supplies of alcohol and quickly formulated a cunning plan: I was scooping the snow from above me and packing it down below the

window, and then I peed on it to melt it. It was hard and now my kidneys and liver hurt. But I'm glad the beer I took on holiday turned out to be useful and I managed to get out of there.

Rescuers eventually found Kral staggering drunk on a mountain path four days after his ordeal began.

Forwarded to *Mascot's* offices by **Chris Nevard** (Webmaster) *Something for Mascot? Sort of car related! Scotland Area might be able to help with this one, does it really work?*

Ed says: ...over to Carson for expert comment.

Letters

5-Speed Gearboxes

5-speed gearboxes seem to be the current trend at present. As you are aware, I have a type 9 Ford Sierra 5-speed in the Sebring rep. and Mike Gorman, John Larrington, Chris Banton and Sam Rouf, of Surrey Centre, are waiting fitment of Datsun units to their Sprites.

An old acquaintance of mine who owns a Triumph Spitfire has shown interest in having a Sierra 5-speed fitted (probably by me) to his car. Looking for a few tips on the WWW I came upon:

<http://www.the-wizardsden.com/index.html>

whereby James Mather, for less than £100, has fitted a Sierra Five Speed type 9 gearbox to his 1500 Triumph engine/gearboxed M.G. Midget. Before anyone gets too excited, the vast savings are not possible with an A-series engine Midget which needs a new, expensive, bellhousing for the conversion although my acquaintance, as with James Mather, has sourced a secondhand gearbox for £40 (recon boxes are about £300). A few pounds may, also, be saved with the A series conversion by constructing a propshaft as James Mather has done from a transit unit. I have contacted James Mather with a couple of queries which he kindly, and promptly, answered. I asked also if he would allow his article to be serialised in *Mascot* with suitable credits to which he has replied: "Please feel free to publicise or use the info from the site as you wish". So if you are short of copy its over to you. James Mather can be contacted at mailto: a@the-wizardsden.com. He lives in Wales and is not a MASC member. See you at the Warren?

Alan

alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

Ed says: Visit the site, there is LOADS of good stuff on the site, too much to reproduce here. However there is a photo teaser elsewhere in this issue. GO SEE THE SITE FOR YOUR SELF. Thanks Alan, excellent referral.



Virtual Meetings

It's that time of year when you wander into the garage and try to make the beast a little more useful or pretty or just start and be reliable. It was just such a moment that set me thinking. Living where I do and working the hours I have to means I can't make any of the monthly meetings, but why shouldn't those of us that don't attend have an input anyway? I wondered if you couldn't set those that attend a question for the month which they could discuss and then give an answer to in their monthly news report. For example, I would like to know their thoughts on fitting an electric fan. Is it easy to fit? How much does it cost? Who is the best supplier? Is it possible to fit one from a modern car that could be sourced from a breakers? Is it worth it? I thought it would be good to cover one mechanical and one aesthetic item each month. Here are a few I thought of:

Mechanical

Elec Fan New Head (unleaded-staged)
Exhaust (standard-stainless-Peco-other-manifold)
Brakes (fit servo-change to different pads)
Gearbox (with 5th gear)
Positive to Negative (Dyno to Alto)
Larger engine transplant
Electronic ignition (which type)
Tyres and pressures

Aesthetic

Wire wheels (fitting and keeping clean)
Boot rack (looks and usefulness)
Radio (How about pos earth. Surrounds are still available, where to fit the aerial)
Hardtops (worth having?)
Hood (keeping clean, fitting a new one)
Best polish for ease of use, protection and looks.
The one annual show not to miss if you need spares?

Hopefully next month if all the different meetings discuss one topic, i.e. Electric Fan, we will come away with a consensus of opinion and advice on the best way to improve our cars. I think it would be good if you set the question each month in the *Mascot*, one month in advance, and then we could email or write to you with our own experience or opinion even though we can't make a meeting. What do you think?

Terry Ward

Ed says: Also see Editorial.

Vintage Aircraft Club

The Vintage Aircraft Club invite your members to the annual Vintage and Classic Day at Turweston Airfield on Sunday 18th September 2005. The event is an informal gathering of owners and enthusiasts for all things mechanical and will include vintage and classic motor cycles, cars, military vehicles, tractors, commercial vehicles and if the weather permits, a good selection of aircraft. The gates open about 09.30 with a parade of vehicles around 13.00 the rest of the time is free for you to wander round the other vehicles attending the event or to browse through the stalls or to get some sustenance from the airfield cafe. The airfield is situated 2.5 miles east of Brackley and can be accessed from the A43 just north of the first Brackley exit and is clearly signposted to Turweston Airfield and Whitfield village. Can you please publicise this event to your membership and look forward to seeing you there.

Dr Alan Buckley

VAC Press and PR Officer

Ed says: Members service, sent to the Club's website and forwarded to Mascot by Webmaster Nevard. Thanks Chris.



Another Dragonfly

... and out of the blue I received an Email from Argiris Visvardis, Athens, Greece!!! owner of a beautiful Dragonfly!!!

I thought that my Dragonfly was the only one on the continent but now there are at least TWO in perfect shape...

Time for a come-together??? Where are all the other Dragonflies???

Dear Dragonfly-owners, please come out of the dark and respond.

Paul van Meerwijk

Holland, Email paul@meerwijk.nl.

Ed says: Nice car, nice enough to make our front cover (I really like these) so, any more? Contact Paul.



Market Place – March

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SALES

Midget parts – Ashley Fastback hardtop, all glass inc. opening side windows and boot lid – needs work £75. Honeybourne Mouldings (wrap around) hardtop £60. 2 good doors (bare) £20 each. Good bootlid £20. Fibreglass bonnet (shell) £10. National roll bar, as new £75. New rear springs x 2 standard £20. each Stainless L.C.B. new £75. Steel L.C.B. – used but good £40. A.P. competition pressure plate new £45. Pair 1 S.U. carbs on manifold £40. New 3 piece clutch assembly £35. 4 x 6 x 13 Weller wheels £40. All open to offers everything must go, as space needed.

Les 01752 771484 (Devon)

1970 Midget, complete car with V5 for restoration/parts. Currently on SORN. Taken off road approx 18 months ago due to misfire and no chance of passing MOT without annual visit to welders! £250 or offers. White hardtop for above £50.

Chris 07717 436975 (Northants)

1973 MG Midget, 88,000 miles, two owners from new. Excellent runner t.l.c. needed £1150 o.n.o.

Steve 01495 247570 (Newport, S. Wales)

B.M.C. "A" 3.7 diff £100. 948 crank std. Journals £60. Lightened flywheel £30. 4 con rods c/w pistons £10.

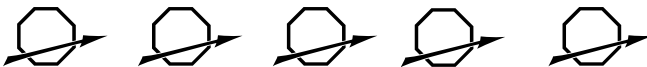
Reg 01889 271037 (Staffs)

Frogeye Sprite finished in Old English White with red trim. 1098cc engine and gearbox, disc brakes etc. Complete renovation, far too much to list, comprehensive history file. Includes NX (Warwick) registration number. £7995.

John 01548 531206 (Devon)

1972 Midget for restoration, Teal blue, R.W.A. dry stored 10+ years, works hardtop, not a basket case, new sills fitted, good floors, rear spring hangers repaired, some history. Sensible offers please.

Mark 01825 840333 (East Sussex)
or markgcarless@hotmail.com



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Tel 0121 3512513

THANK YOU

After many years of loyal service to the Club, Christine Barton stands down this month as Club Regalia Officer. On behalf of the committee and the Club, I would like to express our thanks for a good job well done. Thank you Christine.

Moving forward, I understand that the Club Chairman, John Ruderman is in the final stages of appointing a successor and we hope to be able to confirm this next month.

The committee

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