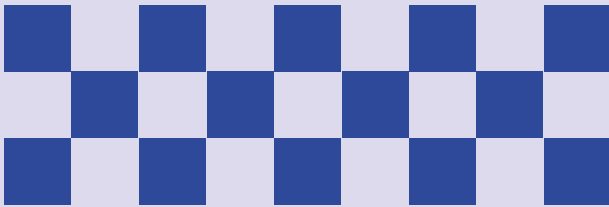


Mascot



The Magazine
of the
Midget & Sprite
Club



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

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Also see the Club Nights section on page 3 for new areas and contacts.

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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Wheelnut

First of all I would like to say just a few words about the sad loss of Ian Rider. Unfortunately I never had a chance to meet Ian personally, as in these first three months of my Editorial job our contact had been limited to just email and phone. He was always very supportive and we got on very well. I know he will be greatly missed. Our sincere condolences go to his family. My colleagues, Bill and Terry, have also written a few words about Ian in this issue.

Well, this is my Third edition of MASCOT, and judging from all the extremely positive and kind words of support, I must be doing something right! I was particularly pleased to receive the many positive comments about the November issue, especially highlighting the stunning article on the Ecurie Ecosse Sprite. Even in B & W the photographs came out superbly and it is very gratifying that a magazine of the magnitude of Classic & Sports Car, recognises the influence of MASC by allowing us to re-print the article in full. (If you come across any more Spridgety articles in your other monthly reads, please let me know and I'll contact the publication concerned). Glad you all enjoyed the November issue. I do realise it's somewhat impossible to satisfy everyone all of the time, but to at least satisfy most people most of the time is.

By the time you read this it will be December, and Christmas will be just around the corner. In this month's bumper edition you'll find the very interesting article on Bob Tooke's EFI system on his 1500; a special report on the MASC involvement at the Classic Car Show at the NEC in October and a record number of Area Reports (13). There's a break in the tradition of recent years, as the colour content (for the December issue) has been dropped (boo-hoo) in favour of producing a JANUARY edition (hurrah!). Yes, you'll now be getting 12 issues instead of the usual 11 ... bonus time! Who knows, maybe this time next year, we'll be able to offer 12 issues AND some colour ... who knows? A January issue does have its implications of course.

Schedules are very tight because of the holiday period and as a result, for the January edition only, the deadline does have to be even earlier ... but only by a couple of days. I'm sure you'll understand why this has to be so and will really appreciate a MASCOT dropping on your mat in early January. So PLEASE can you

ensure that all contributions are with me before MIDDAY 10th DECEMBER. Let's be hearing about all those restoration projects/upgrades/repairs which you're embarking upon – we'd all like to read about them.

Have a safe and Happy Christmas!

Barry



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.

Front cover picture: Jeremy Cogman's snowy Sprite MkII

Club Nights

- 1st Monday **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.
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at the **The Green Man**, Middleton Village, 8.30-8.45pm
- 1st Thursday **Lincolnshire Area** – Meet at **The White Hart**, Lissington, nr. Wragby. 8pm. Contact Brian Sumner on 01507 328128 brians@redimps.com
- 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** – Special Meeting December 2nd, Meet in car park of The Gait Inn, Millington, Nr. Pocklington, YO42 1TX, Tel: 01759 302045 at 11am. Short drive through Yorks Wolds and returning to The Gait Inn for lunch at 1:30pm. Call Anita on 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
- 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 Kilton**, turn off M6 at Jct 20 onto A50 towards Macclesfield. Pub 4 miles on left. Please note new venue.
- 2nd Wednesday **Bristol Area** will meet at **The Star**, Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact Alan Lo on 01179 572617 email: alan@mobuzzing.net
- 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 Garfield Hotel**, Stepps, East Dunbartonshire. 7:30pm in the Lounge. Check first with Carson on 0141-245-6327 day or 013606-22334 evening.
- 3rd Tuesday **Surrey** – Meet at **The Blue Ball**, Walton-on-the-Hill, 7.45pm onwards. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- 3rd Thursday **Northern Ireland** – Venue to be decided. Please contact Barry Stanage on 02890 401726 or mobile 07769 705497 or email barrystanage@aol.com
- 4th Thursday **Hampshire** – Meet at **The Poacher**, South Warnborough. Note Change of Venue. Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.
- Last Thursday **Somerset** – Meet at **The Lord Nelson**, Norton-sub- Hamdon. 8.00pm
- Occasional Meetings **Home Counties North West** for members in Herts, Bucks, Berks, N. London or anyone interested! Please contact Chris Jackson Tel: 01707 261567 or Mark Hall, Tel: 01296 660103
- Occasional **Kent Area** – Please contact Alan for the next meeting details. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050.

Club Website

Members Only pages for December
User name: spridget Password: heaven

Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

Events organised for 2006

December

- Saturday 2nd Yorkshire Area Run and lunch. Meet at 11am at The Gait Inn, Millington, Nr. Pocklington, YO42 1TX. Short run through the Yorks Wolds then lunch back at The Gait Inn. More details contact Anita on 01423 862738
- Sunday 10th Cambridgeshire Area Christmas Lunch will be held at the George & Dragon at Elsworth, 12:30pm Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810
- Wednesday 13th Warwickshire Area's Christmas Dinner at The Green Dragon. details from Chris and Sheila Yates, Tel: 01608 665066.
- Monday 18th Dorset Area's Christmas Dinner at St. Peter's Finger, Lytchett Minster, Poole at 7.30pm. Contact Bryan Fox, Tel: 01202 683842 or Email: sueandbry@x877.wanadoo.co.uk
- Tuesday 19th Surrey Area's Christmas Dinner. Details from David Wright, Tel: 0208 642 4789 or email: dandcwright@ukonline.co.uk

Events organised so far for 2007

May

- Sunday 27th Dorset Area are going to MGs at Kingston Lacey, near Wimborne. Details from Bryan Fox, 01202 683842 or email: sueandbry@x877.wanadoo.co.uk

Area Reps please let David Hill (email: david@hillnet.clara.net) have confirmed dates for new events asap.

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

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

Mutual Assistance Directory

Well, the only good thing about December for me is Christmas. Otherwise it is usually a dreary month with short days and usually miserable weather. The problem for me is that even if the day is nice I don't like to take the Midget out as there is probably salt on the roads and that is the last thing I want getting into the nooks and crannies under the car. Still, Christmas is good and just think of all the lovely Spridgety pressies you will get! I am looking forward to the spring and summer and to getting out and about again in the Midget.

Don't forget, 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.

David Hill

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Rambling to the AGM

Before I mention the AGM, it is a sad and painful task to report that Ian Rider has passed away. Ian made me feel very welcome at the visit to the Heritage factory this summer and was a fine, friendly man. His passing is a great shock to me. Bless you Ian.

I want to thank all who made the trek to Gee and Co for the AGM. A very interesting meeting in a different room from the one we used for the last three years. Much more space, we could have made room for many more of you!

Whilst I await the written minutes I would like to announce that at the committee meeting which preceded the AGM we were proud to award an annually recurring lifetime Honorary Membership to Nigel Williams, in recognition of the 23 years of dedicated service he has put in to the club since it was started. In addition to his familiar role as Membership Secretary Nigel also performed miracles operating the club's stand at many shows over the years and also undertook many other tasks. This club owes him so much and more

that the committee was wholehearted in supporting my motion.

We were invited to participate in the Birthday celebrations for the 50th birthday of the Austin-Healey Sprite (and also in time, the MG Midget) by Steve Clark. After Steve's thorough explanation of the hard work already undertaken the AGM voted unanimously to support the affair and Steve was asked to stay at the helm of the steering committee, which he has agreed to do. The Heritage Museum at Gaydon will focus our efforts and during the festivities on the Saturday all the cars on a concurrent event, a John o'Groats to Lands End run, will join us at Gaydon en route.

The new committee were introduced to the membership and we set out to make 2006/7 a momentous year.

So, less Rambling than usual but far more focussed. Please keep advising us with what you want from the club, our job is to provide all we can for you.

Chairman Bill

Secretarial Scribblings

Firstly, my apologies for not attending the AGM or pre-meeting committee meeting. I am now up to speed thanks to the prompt production of the minutes by Rosemary Couch. Should any members require a copy of the AGM minutes, either contact Chairperson Bill for an electronic transfer, or yours truly with an A5 SAE if you are still firmly ensconced in the period of time that our favourite cars come from!

I am very pleased to see Nigel Williams being awarded a Lifelong Honorary Membership of the club. Nigel was a co-founder of the club and Membership Secretary for the first 23 years. Without Nigel, we would never have the club we enjoy today. It is the very least we can do for Nigel. Also, outgoing editor, Mike North is awarded Honorary Membership for his 6 years at the helm of MASCOT. Mike saw some difficult times in this role and it is thanks to his professionalism and dedication

that most members were unaware that things sometimes fell apart in the engine room.

Mike handed over the good ship MASCOT in fine fettle but now new icebergs need to be negotiated around. Editors of yore were often faced with a lack of material to work from, frequent phone calls to the Secretarial abode "Help, send some padding" became the way of life for TH. Eventually, we built up a stock of 'padding' that editors could draw from when there were areas of white to fill. Now, the tide has changed, we have a wealth of material coming in each month (Good news). Trouble is, MASCOT does not have the space at present to use it all (Bad news). True, some articles can be held over, but topical material most certainly cannot (Dilemma). Hence our new editor, Barry Lowe, is having to live up to his title – and Edit. Dangerous waters as of course, all contributions to MASCOT are very welcome and valued. The obvious answer is

to make MASCOT bigger (Good news) but we don't have the budget to do this at present (Bad news). The option of going to smaller print is not favoured by us older members with failing eyesight. MASCOT has two sources of income, Trade Advertising and a large slice of our subscription rates. Already, we are amending our Trade Advertising rates to be more in keeping with our current needs and worth of MASCOT. The other bit we need to consider very carefully. So for now, the good ship MASCOT is limited to its present Tonnage. My view is that we are going to weather the storms when the new season kicks off. We have more areas doing more things (Very good news), all of which deserve their fair berthing space in MASCOT's limited holds (Is this getting just a bit too nautical?) So, are we going to have a bit of a problem you may be thinking – well, yes. It's a good problem, we are having too much of a good thing to deal with rather than too little. The crux is that until we have fully considered all the options, our editor is having some difficult

decisions to make in order to keep MASCOT on course. We all know that we cannot please all of the people all of the time, trying to produce MASCOT with the right balance of news and articles, on time, within budget and trying not to upset anyone, is a very difficult task. We need to find solutions to accommodate a growingly active club, your committee are on the case to do the right thing and of course, welcome your input.

And finally, we wish a very happy retirement to our long standing Surrey area organiser, David Wright. David has represented the Surrey area for more years than within this Millennium, certainly dating way back into the last century, and can be very proud of his long and successful service to his area. Rumour has it; he needs the time to count his collection of model vehicles. Thanks for all that you have done David, have a very happy retirement – sorry, no club clock though!

Terry Horler

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Letters to the Editor

What Do You Want For Christmas?



Dear Editor

Hi, I have only been a member for a few months; my membership number is 3752. So far I have not managed to get to any local meetings but I met the crew who manned the recent Classic Motor Show at Birmingham. They of course had the best stand in my opinion. I thought the following may be of interest and possibly worthy of your excellent magazine.

Please find attached a piccie of my 1966 Sprite outside our local Marks and Spencer in Perth on a Saturday afternoon with balloons attached. How did it get there? Well my daughter works for M&S and she was organising a special Christmas theme entitled "What do you want for Christmas" and had been promised by the local Audi dealership a brand new Audi TT to be displayed outside the store with helium filled balloons with this theme printed thereon. They also had James Bond themed events in-store.

I was at home thinking about checking the anti-freeze in my Sprite's engine when my daughter phoned me to tell me the Audi dealership had let them down at last minute and wondered if I could give them a loan of my Sprite for the afternoon. Of course I obliged and when I picked my car up later in the afternoon, I was told that lots of people had been very interested in the car and thought it looked great. I think so too and was well chuffed to think that one of the most successful companies in the UK decided to dump Audi and James Bond's Aston Martin for an Austin Healey Sprite. Incidentally a woman from the Audi dealership called at the store that afternoon and when she saw my Sprite appeared very interested and asked my daughter what the mileage on it was. Obviously she must have thought it was a new model from one their competitors BMW, Ferrari, Jaguar etc. All the best for the New Year,

Donald Campbell

(yes it is my real name and no I am not related to a certain record breaking chappie!) KGO 181D

Frogeye Hardtop Conundrum

Dear Barry

Does anyone recognise this hardtop?

Having finally restored my Frogeye, renovation work has now started on the hardtop I bought for £10, 25 years ago.

Although it is similar to the BMC works version, the shape of the back window, which is plastic not glass, is different. Also, unlike the original, this roof is not secured to the windscreen frame with chromed over centre catches, but with a pair of hooked brackets made from 2cm wide aluminium, which fit in moulded recesses at the front of the hardtop. Each of these is secured by a coarse threaded bolt – on the outside this has a knurled edge brass disc, about the diameter of a one pence piece, stamped “2D30”. Inside there is a wing nut; adjustment is by a 2cm slot in the bracket.



Are these fixings original or has someone made them up to replace some that were lost? In addition, there are aluminium moulding drip rails (gutters) around each side screen aperture.

If anyone out there can identify the manufacturer or knows the original colours it would have been inside and out, please give me a call on 01892 862656. Many thanks

John Baggott

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CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS



MASC at the Classic Motor Show 2006

The Warwickshire group organised the MASC stand at the NEC for this year's Classic Motor Show. This year we agonised about how many cars to show but finally decided upon 3 as we know that most people appreciate space to look around and also as we do not have walls or chain link fences unlike other clubs, we feel it creates an inviting and more friendly atmosphere.

This year by popular demand we again showed Stuart Gunn's fabulous V8 FWD Midget. This car really excites everyone and Stuart finds himself talking about it throughout the show. On one occasion we actually sent him away to have a look round and found people waiting for him to return.

Also on show was the Sebring Sprite Replica of Martin Ingall who generously brought it all the way up from Kent. Martin had recently competed in the car at "The Circuit des Remparts" street race in France during September and it really looked the part still in its racing regalia. The third car creating lots of interest was the sectioned Midget originally prepared by BMC in the 60's for dealer display and came on loan from The Patrick Foundation.

As usual it was an absolute pleasure for us to meet so many members and talk about our favourite cars for 3 days. We sold lots of regalia and gave out plenty of membership forms. Chairperson Bill was on hand during Saturday to host his traditional Bulletin Board invasion and also Alan



V8 engine bay



Martin Ingall's Sebring

Jones giving out details of his "Le Jogle" in 2008. Sounds quite a trip in prospect. Much interest in the flyers for the Spridget 50th Birthday Party 2008, with many restoration projects promised for completion for this event.

Clubman of the year award must go to Alan Anstead who finding himself double booked on holiday in Bude made the 4 hour drive each way to be with us, after much persuasion following a lengthy thread on the Bulletin Board.

Thanks go to Chris Yates and Alan Couch for support setting up, Dave Parker for gazebo, Roy Cole and Andy Smith for transporting the sectioned car. The display car owners Martin Ingall and Stuart Gunn. Gary Lazarus for badges and all the Guys and Gals from Warwickshire who give up

their time to man the stand – Thank you all very much.

We are already planning next years show. Which cars to display? – answers on a postcard.

John Platt



Fast and Furious Street Racing at Angouleme

Sebring (JJO) comes 8th in GT Tourisme Speciale

Twenty three years since I last competed in an actual race, I took to the track once more at the Circuit des Remparts, Angouleme in France in September, driving my Sebring Sprite coupe, 946 JJO. It was with some trepidation that we trailed the car down to stay with friends in Champniers, having seen only a sketch map of the circuit and a few photographs on the 'net'. I did not know what race I was entered in and found I was among mainly saloon cars which included 2 Mini-Cooper S's, 2 Lotus Cortinas, a quick-looking Mk1 Escort, a 2.6 Capri, several Alfa Guilias, and a Volvo Amazon. The only other sports car was an Alpine-Renault A101 which hit a kerb on the second lap of practice bending the chassis beyond immediate repair.



Courtesy of Phil Messelet, la Charente-Libre



Courtesy of Phil Messelet, la Charente-Libre

Practice went well with me delighting in the adhesion of my new Yokohama AO48Rs on wide wire wheels, and the brakes proved up to it as well. I had put my 4.55 diff in hoping that I might get around each of the 3 hairpin bends in 2nd, but this was not to be. So it was a question of double de-clutching into 1st, three times on every lap! I managed to come 12th out of 14 in the 14 lap practice session. The track is some 0.8 mile long, has several 90 degree bends, a sort-of straight plus the 3 hairpins.

The race didn't take place until 5 in the afternoon by which time a few drops of rain were threatening, which fortunately held off for our race. After an initial lap on to the grid, there followed another behind the pace car before forming up again. I couldn't see the starting flag or light so had to rely on everyone else to know when to hit the loud pedal. Into the first corner was a flurry of metal and then a struggle to get in line for the 90° right, shortly followed by another, then full throttle through a blind curve and down the straight to the 1st hairpin. Here someone got it sideways and everyone stopped in a traffic jam. We soon got going again, only for this to happen again on the 2nd lap. I managed to slip inside some of the quicker cars between hairpins but was not always able to fend them off on the straight. One of the Lotus-Cortinas then dropped oil on the entry to hairpin 1 so marshals were trying to put down cement between the traffic. A bit later they decided to slow us down with waved yellow flags all round the circuit for 2 laps, followed by a green and we were off again. The car was getting pretty hot, the oil pressure dropping a bit, and rather than take top gear for a few seconds on the straight I was pushing the revs over 8000!



Courtesy of Phil Messelet, la Charente-Libre

As the race went on I was having a great dice with Michel Deldon in his Alfa Guilia, at one

point getting in front of him for nearly a lap before he passed me again accelerating away over the start line. All came to an end about a lap early when the red flag was displayed, one of the Minis having hit the tyres going into the first hairpin (presumably on the oil), the driver unfortunately suffering a broken ankle and the car severely damaged. We trickled round the final lap to the chequered flag. So ended a great day's racing for me, coming in 8th position. Michel came over and shook my hand – he was delighted to have had such a good dice and promptly invited me to a hill-climb in Normandy for next year.

Martin Ingall

MASC Battlefield Trip 2007

Thursday 7th June till Sunday 10th June

For the Midget and Sprite Club will this trip also be 'A bridge too far'.

The 'Battlefields' trip for 2007 will take us to Arnhem.

Thursday we meet at Dover to board SpeedFerries Catamaran, from Dover to Boulogne, for a 50 minute Channel Crossing. www.speedferries.com We shall then drive in convoy to Arnhem. We shall stay in a Campanile Motel at Zevenaar (www.hotel-traveling.com/hotels/nl/10202/campanile-hotel-4c2-restaurant-zevenaar.html) for three nights. (€205 for two people sharing room for the three nights – breakfast excluded).

Friday will be spent visiting a War Graves Cemetery, Oosterbeek Military Airborne Museum, and Netherlands Open Air Museum. There will be no professional tour guide this year so there will have to be a certain amount of improvisation.

Saturday can be free to roam either exploring the town of Arnhem or exploring the roads and scenery lining the dykes.

This will be an easy run for those amongst us unused to Continental travel. I shall have tools, and overalls, and be on hand to cope with any minor breakdowns. Check with your insurer or breakdown provider for breakdown/rescue/ recovery details.

Sunday we return to England via SpeedFerries.

Alan. Mail to: alan.anstead@bopenworld.com Tel: 01 322-384050

For info on Arnhem and the area in general see: www.holland.com/uk



*ARNHEM TRIP
JUNE 2007*



*Coming? Give Me! Must Trip To ARNHEM
JUNE JUST THE TRAIL AND SPARE.*

Converting an old engine, or at least one of an old design, to run fuel injection can be quite complex. But the SU carbs on MG Midgets are robust but unsophisticated things and don't give much in terms of performance. So PPC reader Bob Tooke started looking for something that would give more power.

He followed the traditional route to a pair of Weber carbs but they weren't altogether satisfactory. 'I got a good jump in bhp but the low end torque was awful,' says Bob. Undeterred he started to think about alternatives. 'I toyed with the idea of engine swaps and the K-series seemed like the best but it was too costly for me.'

So having decided to stick with the Midget's venerable old Triumph 1300 and having had enough of messing about with carbs and their needles, fuel injection was the obvious alternative. Keen to save money and learn something new, Bob opted for a DIY system from Megasquirt. The ECU comes in kit form and you build up the circuit board bit by bit.

Bob has a lot of experience with electronics so putting it all together only took him a couple of evenings. But he reckons there's no need for the novice to be daunted. 'It's a quality kit so providing you have a steady hand, a good soldering iron and a bit of aptitude, anyone could

Bob Tooke wanted the power of Webers but the flexibility of a standard engine. So he built his own EFI system, says Graham Flemington

Megasquirt MG Midget

Words & photography Graham Flemington

Below: MG Midget is Bob's everyday transport.

Below: Triumph 1300cc ported engine.



build one.' Once the ECU was built Bob started sourcing scrap parts for all the hardware that he'd need.

'I got loads of advice from the forum on the Megasquirt website for the parts that I'd need. It saved

me a lot of time searching,' says Bob.

The Fuel pump and filter were taken as a complete assembly from a Volvo 740 – they're just right for the job and will happily run at 3 bar. Bob bolted them to a square plate and then mounted that onto the rear half of the Midget so it's out of the way of any debris or possible damage as the car sits quite low.

So the pump's vibration isn't transmitted through the floor of the car. Bob installed the mounting plate on four rubber exhaust mounts and now everything runs nice and smoothly. Back at the business end of the car Bob had some designing to do – not all of the parts came from a breaker's yard.

He needed to buy or make a suitable inlet. Bob knows his Midgets and he knew that the rubber bumper version was sold on the American market with a single Stromberg as opposed to the twin SU's that we had on this side of the pond. Once he'd got a merrit through the owners club he had it machined to accept the pockets for



the late model Fiesta XR2 injectors that he intended to use. With the manifold back from the machine shop Bob needed a throttle body to bolt on in place of the carb.

From the combined area of the four ports on the manifold Bob calculated that he needed a 35mm throttle body. It took a bit of patience to find the right one – it was just a case of trial and error and I ended up wandering around the breaker's yard with a tape measure until I found one the right size.

The single inlet on the manifold was rather small at 38mm but was machined out to suit the throttle body, which was liberated from a VW Mondeo. Bob slotted the injector pockets into the freshly machined manifold, using some old injectors for testing so he could get an sharp an angle as possible without finding any of the connections.

Once it was all stacked up the manifold was handed over to a professional to be welded up. My attempts ended in blood, sweat and tears but no weld, says Bob. The bottom ends of the injector pockets were then machined back so that they didn't find the inlet ports. 'I wanted to have the injectors injecting directly into the ports which I haven't quite managed, but with the injectors almost at 45° to the gasket face, it's about as good as it's going to get.'

The fuel rail design is Bob's own and it's brilliantly simple. 'The tops of the injectors are 13mm,' Bob explains. 'And the internal diameter of 15mm copper water pipe is about 13mm – in fact it's a perfect fit.' So



Above: MG's Volvo 240 fuel pump and filter.

Right: Mondeo V6 throttle body on LG spec single carb manifold.



with a length of tube and four T-pieces on the bench, Bob set about cutting it all up and bending it together to form a perfect fuel rail. Time for a test.

With the rail connected to the injectors Bob pressured it up to 3bar with compressed air. 'It blew straight off and hit the ceiling,' he smiles. 'For the next test I secured it down to the manifold with wire, the

brackets came later.' Bob then used the fuel pump to pressure it up to 3bar again, using water from a bucket. Then he left it to re-circulate over night and it behaved perfectly.

The copper tube and fittings were a fraction of the cost of a custom made fuel rail and after a quick lick of silver paint it looks the part too. Bob on the pressure regulator and brackets from a Volvo and it's job done. There's also another advantage to the homemade rail. It does away with the need for a swirl pot.

Bob admits that it is more by luck than design but it works, so who cares? According to Bob, because of the diameter of the fuel rail there is considerably more fuel in it than the injectors need. If any air's picked up from the tank it will go through the pressure regulator and into the fuel rail. Obviously, air's lighter than petrol so the air bubbles travel along the top of the fuel rail above the injectors and return to the tank.

Once the fuel was sorted Bob turned his attention to the electronic side of things. The Midget has an Alfin distributor with a mechanical advance to which Bob has connected an optical pick up so

Below: VW Golf GTI idle control valve works well.

Below: MG engine has Fiesta XR2 injectors.

Below right: Relay box keeps things tidy.





the ECU can keep the injectors fired. The whole lot runs through a loom from a Volvo 240 turbo.

It was when the inlet manifold was assembled and ready to fit that Bob came across his first real problem. It was designed to fit with the original British Leyland exhaust manifold and as Bob says, they were crap. So some time ago Bob replaced it with a speed exhaust manifold, which extends further from the head than the standard part.

The old 1500 Midget has a non-crossflow head and the inlet manifold that Bob had spent so many hours developing wouldn't fit because its water jacket was leaking the exhaust. Bob machined it back a

Bob's Midget now has more torque than when it had two Weber and more power than the original SU carb set up.

bit and bypassed it with an extra bit of pipe. "If I was in traffic for more than a few minutes the inlet manifold and injectors were getting too hot and the fuel was vaporising in the ports." Bob lives in Gordon so avoiding traffic isn't really an option. COF came the manifold again.

Bob welded up the bit of the water jacket that he'd cut back and then reconnected the two sections with a piece of copper tube. Now each end of the manifold is kept cool around the ports and the car runs properly in traffic.

One of the advantages of the Megasquirt system is that it can be set up at home on a laptop using the software provided. "To try and get it

spot on I took the car out for a run and I logged the whole trip on the laptop. Then I ran the log through a programme called MS tweak. That works out when it wasn't running quite right and tells you how much you need to adjust the mixture to get it spot on," explains a very satisfied Bob.

Since the Midget's been on the road Bob's made a couple of improvements. "The inlet air temperature was far too high so I got a plastic elbow from a Peugeot 406 to fit the throttle body. I fitted the air temperature sensor in it and ran some ducting down to the radiator grille so it would pick up air at ambient temperature.

"To improve the Midget's cold running I've now fitted a fast idle valve from a VW Golf GTI – it replaces the solenoid valve that I was using," says Bob.

The Megasquirt electronic fuel-injection has transformed the car and it now produces 110bhp of torque as opposed to the 75bhp that the original SU carbs were giving. "It's now absolutely fantastic to drive," Bob enthuses.

"I've got so much torque that it will pull clearly from 1000rpm. In fact it's got so much torque that I've snapped three half shafts so far."

Below: Megasquirt ECU lives inside the radio, away from heat and wet.

Below left: Broken half shafts are common thanks to engine's torque.



Obituary

Ian Rider

It is with great sadness that I have to report the loss of Ian Rider on Wednesday the 25th of October.

Ian has been our Wiltshire Area Organiser for many years and also our Trade Advertising Contact. As well as being a very active Club member, Ian also had a passion for Classic Motorcycles, was a local councillor and a youth worker. Never stuck for something to do, Ian also had an Austin pickup truck to fill in those odd moments of spare time.

I very clearly remember meeting Ian for the first time; this was a spur of the moment decision to drop in on a Wiltshire area meeting at the Foresters, Cricklade one Wednesday evening. It was a fine summer's evening, so I just headed off in my Sprite Mk1V for the 30 mile journey to Cricklade. Pulling into the car

park, a number of other Spridgley things proved that I had found the right place at the right time. Ian must have seen the arrival of an unfamiliar Sprite and immediately left the group to welcome the "stranger". My first priority was the loo (sorry but true) very shortly, a voice from around the door "Anyone in here looking for the Midget and Sprite Club?". Ian escorted me to the gathering and introduced me to the members. Quite simply, Ian was somebody who genuinely cared about people. It showed to all who knew him, am I glad that I am one of them.

On behalf of the club, I extend our sincere condolences to Ian's family and friends for their sad loss.

Terry Horler

Bristol Area Report

Things seem to be picking up; we had a well attended October meeting at the Star at Pucklechurch. I was just at the point of suggesting we change the venue/date (or both) when suddenly things look up. However, the idea is still there to try another venue/date to see if we can do better. Please, we need your opinions Bristol based members in order to do the right thing. Please contact either Alan Lo or me if a change would suit you better.

We had one impromptu run in November, although it was not one that we would have wished under the circumstances. Throughout

the summer months, we meet up with our Wiltshire friends at the Vine Tree at Norton – a very pleasant evening run where the Bristol and Wiltshire groups can combine with Spridgley topics. A regular at these evenings was Ian Rider, who was sadly lost to us on the 25th of October.

As a mark of respect and pleasant memories of Ian, the Bristol branch made a run out to the Vine Tree on the morning of Sunday the 5th of November to raise a glass to Ian and to remember our gatherings there. As sunshine becomes a rare commodity at this time of year, and the morning provided one of those





Mildred's day out

Terry and Alan



Castle Combe



“Are you famous” and “Oi, you can’t park that old heap there mate”, we did manage a few clear shots of the cars between the crowds. By contrast, our November meeting was a quieter affair, just four of us. So back to my comments at the start of this report please.

Terry Horler



South Staffs and North Brum in Deepest Darkness

I had a cold drive down to Middleton for the club meeting and when I arrived I put up the hood in case it “precipitated”. Having had the tonneau allow me a dose of “wet-b*m” at the AGM I didn’t want any more.

We had a lively chat about the AGM and the new MASCOT.

All there like the new look which reinforced their comments from last month too. Message to Barry, keep up the good work.

We have arranged for us to have a Christmas meal as usual, in the front snug area at the Green Man. Meeting slightly earlier at eight o’clock, but non-diners are still very welcome. We haven’t organised a separate Christmas Menu so it will be order if you wish as you arrive. We always do informal at the December meeting so no-one is tied down for ETAs etc.

Bob Clarkson will be organising/ suggesting area runs for next year and has started already with suggestions for The Staffordshire Moorlands and The Long Mynd and Church Stretton area, amongst others. Hitting all my bells Bob, I like it so far.

Dates will be announced soon as we have ‘em. We are hoping for a Brum Tunnels run

again next year combined with a run out to RAF Cosford for a peek around the RAF Museum. Keep a look out for that, always a fun occasion and now with a new destination, can’t be bad.

And when I came out the night was fine and dry so it was, quickly hood down and off home in convoy. It was hood down again on the following Wednesday when Geoff and I set off for our moonlit dash to Sambourne to visit Warwickshire “at home”. I thanked Rosemary with a bunch of flowers for helping me at the AGM, with her secretarial duties of writing the minutes. We had another fine moonlit run home too, the sort of nights that Spridgets must have been made for.

This morning as I write this I am off to the Spridget Auction at Nether Whitacre, we shall see what the morning brings. I have a couple of items for disposal myself. (ps, a good day of chatting with Spridgeteers from the “other club”. Very useful.)

Barry, too dark for pictures at both meetings, sorry mate.

Bill

NW Area Report

At the October club night we had a surprise visit from Geoff Mears, Bill Mohan and John Collins from the South Staffs/North Birmingham centre. It was nice to see them and to meet Bill for the first time. Good job they came as we only had a small turn out for our photo night. Obviously a popular event!

November club meeting was our quiz night. This was organised and hosted by Ian and a very good quiz it was too. An excellent mix of questions to suit everyone, not just car related. It was good fun and everyone seemed to enjoy it, we will definitely do it again. The winning prize went to Rob – well done.

Christmas lunch – we discussed this and have decided to move it to January. The period following Christmas tends to be quiet so it will give us something to look forward to. The plan is to have a meal on the January club night (10th January). The venue is yet to be confirmed although we do have somewhere in mind. Details will be in January MASCOT, however I do need some idea of numbers so please ring me on 01772 432138 if interested.

Les

Home Counties North West Report

Rain stops play! Well this month we learned how to read a weather forecast. Our monthly gathering was due to be a road run out to Cambridge culminating at the rather nice looking Wimpole Hall (you can see a picture of Wimpole Hall in the Cambs report in last month's MASCOT as they beat us there!). However, as the weather forecast said rain followed by rain with a little rain between the showers Chris, this month's organiser, sensibly decided that canceling before Sunday would avoid those early morning calls and the disappointment of not getting to take the car out for the day. The route and arrangements have been stored away with the sun cream ready for next year.

As the weather seems to have turned against us (apart from the last week of lovely cold autumnal sunshine) and Christmas has well and truly hit the shops we have started to review the year and plan next year's events. The Home Counties North West area's first full year has been an active one. We started off joining the CCZ group on their Bridges 2006 trip only two days into the year and we haven't stopped since then! We have been on a number of road runs throughout Beds, Bucks and Herts. We have made trips out to Cambridgeshire and met up with our neighbours there, to Wiltshire with the Bristol boys and been on our first weekender driving around the Cotswolds. We have visited tea shops, airfields, race circuits (Silverstone and Castle Combe), car shows and quite a few pubs. Some of us have made most second Tuesday nights at the Ace where we have met lots of you; Chairman Bill, the CCZ chaps plus long distance drivers from Warwickshire. One of us even managed to make the Classic Le Mans.

It hasn't been plain sailing all year. We have suffered a number of petrol leaks, a broken drive shaft, flat tyres, leaking brake fluid, loose wire wheels, but nothing that I am sure you won't all be familiar with. Throughout the year



other members in our area have joined us and very quickly they have felt like old friends. If we ever manage to all be free on the same day we will make a fine procession of Spridgets.

So enough of this year, what about next year's events? Chris and I have had our first meeting to discuss the diary of events and we will be circulating our thoughts to others for their input and any ideas (a very democratic area we are!). Hopefully we will be able to publish the full calendar of our events in the first edition of MASCOT in 2007. As ever if you live in the Herts, Beds, Bucks or North London and you fancy joining us in 2007 you'll be most welcome.

Happy Christmas to you all from the Home Counties!

Mark

Surrey Area Report

This is a special report for me, as after 14 years, Chris and I will be stepping out of the limelight in Surrey and making way for Alan Anstead, who as well as running the Kent Area, has been a longstanding member of Surrey, and has offered to take on the running of everyday activities, and be the Surrey Area contact.



Chris and David Wright

Since first funding my Sprite, restoring it with friend John, then sitting in the Blue Ball pub and hoping some brave hearts would respond to my invitation on MASCOT, things have moved on apace. John Page, Jonathan Webb, Ashley Hinton, Jim Nelson, Mike Gorman and Mark Foreman were the founder members of the Surrey Area, and although Mark is sadly no longer with us, John, Ashley and Mike are all very much in evidence. Every time we all blast on our exhausts under a bridge, we remember Mark's Big Bore exhaust! In those early days, we used Jonathan Bowles' Continental Tours to travel to France, Belgium and Holland. These trips then became mostly in the UK, with Surrey members becoming keen to plan and organise our own home spun trips. Many other activities have been tried and enjoyed, including some really good scenic runs. Interesting how our group went through a cycle of lots of restorations, then sitting in fields on club stands, to now enjoying the driving mostly, and the Blue Ball monthly oasis has become a real key social event, with regular visits from our friends in both Kent and London CZ Areas. Highlights of the 14 years have to be the tradition of the

May weekends away, when as a whole group we really enjoy each other's company. After all, for me, our cars are simply vehicles to wonderful and lasting friendships, with people we may not have otherwise met. I'm really pleased that Alan will now take the helm, and supporting him are Chris Harding who will provide the technical adviser role, and David Southcott his experienced route planning skills. I'm sure everyone will continue to support these noble members in the same way that you have all supported Chris and I. Surrey will continue to enjoy the pleasures of the Outwood Barbeque, thanks to Laura and Chris, winter evening at the Warren thanks to Alan, a renewed Furzewood Frolic thanks to Jacqui and Chris Harding, and that marvellous May weekend trip, thanks to David and Linda, Elaine and Mike for 2007. Chris and I will continue to enjoy our Sprite, and more importantly, our friends in Surrey, whilst facing the challenge of a move into deepest Sussex.



Keep on Spridgeting. All for now, but do keep in touch with Alan if you're in Surrey, and just two important dates – 19th December – don't go to the blue Ball, as we're booked for dinner at the Kingswood Arms! 16th January 07 – Don't go to the Blue Ball as we're all off to the Warren, West Wickham for a videos and Healey models social evening!

David

Kent Area Report

Why couldn't Sunday (22nd October) have been Monday? Well Monday morning was fine with some sunshine even if it did rain later in the afternoon. Sunday was not so good. As soon as I drove my Sebring Sprite rep. out of the garage it started to rain getting progressively worse. Ralph Whitmarsh was the only soul brave enough to challenge the elements and to attend the Kent meeting in a soft top – his Frogeye arriving without side screens affixed.

Martin Ingall completed a Sprite hat trick with his Sebring Sprite rep. Peter Seaman, John Baggott, Melvyn and Barbara Collins came in tin tops although Melvyn did bring a photographic update of his ongoing Midget restoration. Paul Coveney and Jane Pierce attempting to impress with the diversity of their motoring collection, and interest, came in a ... a Ford Transit van! Our meeting broke up after about three hours. The rain, unabated,



Kent October meeting

had caused flooding of the lanes through Fawkham on my way home.

Next Kent meet at the Moat will be on 26th November 2006.

Alan Anstead

Mail to alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
Tel: 01322-384050 (answer phone)

Somerset Area Report

So what's been happening in the land of the Summer Dwellers? And boy wasn't '06 a good un, super weather for getting out and about with the top down.

Since our last report in April when Dave Bearne, recalling our run to The North Somerset Coast at Brean Sands, reported on the bitterly cold weather conditions and road subsidence problems, (all cosy that day, in his Honda S2000 with all the bells and whistles) things have improved dramatically and we have enjoyed several warm and smooth runs out and supported various shows and rallies, both within our own area and in the nearby Counties of Devon and Dorset. The 23rd April and BHVR Day gave us an excuse to get out and about, as if we needed one. After a hearty breakfast at Horton Village Hall's Sunday Brunch fundraiser we set off to meet The Cape to Cape Rally entrants at Langport. Alas due to road works they were diverted and most of us by leaving a little early missed them completely! Though the summer months we supported the MASC Dorset areas' MGS at Kingston Lacey and Bournemouth MGO –

1020's Picnic at Athelhampton both in good causes and excellent days out. Classics at the Castle (Sherborne, that is), Branscombe Air Day and Classic Car Show in Devon and a first time Festival of Transport show at Taunton Racecourse as well as the ever popular Thornfalcon Meeting in Hatch Beauchamp at the end of September, when some 700 vehicles of all descriptions turned up.

Our Autumn Sunday Lunch run in October saw us braving the wilds of South Somerset and West Dorset when we travelled to Bridport and the coast, via some very minor roads (grass central reservations – Dorset Motorways to the uninitiated) which took us well off the beaten track to once again test suspensions and collect some mud and manure Well most



Bridport lunch

of us did!! Someone must have been aware of the conditions to be faced as a stop for petrol excuse was used go on ahead, we'll catch up – a likely story on reflection! This run shook up my old Sprite as on the way home it suffered from The Embarrassing Horn Fault as amusingly described in the Moss International parts catalogue on page 42. Thanks for whipping off the wires Malcolm – Hope to fix it soon

We continue to meet in the Lord Nelson on the last Thursday of every month and normally most of our area stalwarts/regulars turn up for a jar and a natter. We even had a visitor from

the depths of rural Devon back in the summer, so if you fancy joining us you will be very welcome. But best 'phone Dave first to check. As, for example, our June meeting was a BBQ on the Three Counties Borders and again visitors came from afar, well Minehead anyway, when John and Chris Rathbone turned up in a newly restored TD on a shake down run we were told. Our next run out will be for the Xmas Lunch on 10th December at The Rose and Crown, East Lambrook. Meeting and starting point still being considered but the Yeovil area anticipated.

QED

Dutch Report

First I'd like to thank ex-editor Mike on behalf of the Dutch contingent for doing a great job on MASCOT for over six years. Well done Mike and we will be praying every night for you that you will see the light and realise there is no such a thing as a replacement for a Spridget! But as they say with the monarchs: the old king is dead, long live the new king! Thank you Barry the Italian Job for taking upon the grateful task of keeping MASCOT alive. This magazine connects us all with each other and makes it possible to enjoy each others adventures which makes us a worldwide club of friends.

So what adventures were there during the last few months in Holland? There was a meeting of the Dutch Spridget BBs-ers on the classic racetrack of Assen in the east of the Netherlands but sadly my car was broken down again (clutch cable) so I couldnt make it.... The guys (where are the female owners?) had a great time at the meeting and will be there again next year and hopefully I will. Then finally the weekend arived of the annual Dutch Spridgetrun, which was the third time it was organized by a group of three amigos in the east of Holland. Looks like the east of holland is THE place to be for a Spritgeteer. Sadly the right clutch cable didn't arrive on time so I was without my kamaradsky again, now what? I have been looking forward to this great event whole year so I didn't give up and went anyway in an ...Opel Corsa!!! I know, burn me for this, but the alternative was a Opel Vivaro (van) so I didn't really have a

choice now did I? This year the weather was great again (third year in a row!) with 29 Dutch and German Spridgets attending.



The run took us through a beautiful area of forest, open fields, many rivers and even had some good-to-drive dirt roads for the boys to play on. Although the boys? There were several women teams who were driving their own spridgets! Funny thing I noticed is that when a woman drives a Spridget she doesnt drive like a girly anymore but like a man: good speed, one hand on the steering wheel and the other on the gearstick ready to shift power. And don't you agree with me a woman looks even more attractive when she drives a Spridget?

At the bbq after the run I met Stephanie Schipper who owns a **red-flared-arches-4-spoke-wheeled** Frogeye with a white stripe running over the car. She was doing the run with a friend of hers and they were having lots of fun blasting their Sprite over these nice

Stephanie Schipper



roads. Girlpower! When she asked me if I was interested to look under her bonnet I was shocked, no woman had ever asked me that before! Of course I didn't refuse her offer and she showed me a perfectly nice well maintained engine bay. Well done Stephanie and hope to see you and the others again next year. At the end of the night a Midget was having troubles so we helped the poor owner ... 4 men with beer in their hands giving instructions while 2 men actually doing work in the engine bay...that's what friends are for. Because the route directions on the Dutch run are in English I expect to see some of you English there too next year.

In the report where I told you about my summer cruising through Wales I forgot to tell you about the Midget I met. It was at in the small town on the Welsh coast, Saundersfoot or Ddiwrnod. We wanted to see the nice beach there and when we drove into the beach-parking area, there it was: The first



Midget in the wild since I arrived in the UK 4 days before. It was a yellow rubber bumper (rhd of course) with the remarkable reg number FFR IS or FFR 15. I did not meet the owner so I am still wondering if it could have been a fellow Masc-eteer? Anybody from the Midget and Sprite Club then please let me know.

Moving on... Now what do you do if your engine isn't running well? You start setting/timing the ignition and get your

screwdriver and adjust your carburettors and do what ever makes the car sound happy. However, if you want your car to run super then go visit a rolling road. It's amazing what these people can do with your (what you thought was nicely tuned) engine. I've visited the Speedcentre in Geldermalsen Holland. Professional and very friendly people. That is until they are in your car on the rolling road because then you somehow feel sorry for the car being pushed to the rev.limiter many times. What a incredible noise and somewhat scary to see, are those straps going to hold??? On the K-series they simply plug in a laptop and manage the system while sitting in the car – no more screwdrivers. As far as I knew, my second-hand K-Series engine was a standard 1800 which should deliver around 120–130 bhp, but it doesn't... It has 146 BHP (on the flywheel) instead!! Special cams from the previous owner? I dont know but I like it. With a topspeed (on the rollingroad that is) of 225 km/hr which is 140 mph I think the midget is capable enough to keep up with modern traffic. Of course real road speed will be slower because of lack of air resistance on the rollingroad. And after driving home again it felt as if it was jet powered or something, what a great improvement compared to the engine before. It really is worth it to occasionally treat your car to a rollingroad, your car will love it and so will you! At the end of September we had our first BBS-Spridget meeting here in Holland. Four of the most frequent Dutch visitors of the Midget & Sprite bulletin board, Bas, Rolf, Olaf and me, met at Bas's garage in Groningen and had a great time talking about Spridgets (what else?) while enjoying fresh herring, beer and cigars. Needless to say there will be more of these educational meetings. As im writing this report its only 2 days until I do the anual MG nightrun in my area. We start Saturday evening at Midnight, have a break with soup at 3 o'clock and then finish at 6.00am and have a full english cooked breakfast. I'll tell you all about it in the next Dutch report. Cheers,



Arie

Lincolnshire Area Report

Here is another exciting tome from the Lincolnshire lot. We met on 2 November at the White Hart at Lissington, to enjoy a sociable evening with a pint or two. Tim and Jill resurfaced, they had been very busy for the last few months; plus Pete and Mary and ourselves. Pete and Mary turned up looking blue, with furry hats pulled down to their noses, as they are exceptionally hardy and had come in their Midget TOPLESS!!!! Tim and Jill roared to the meeting in their lovely little Austin A35, and us in our stately Sierra (our Midget is still in bits in the garage).

A convivial evening followed with talk of LPG conversions (our Sierra is already running on gas) and Petes new boat – a Trimaran to add to the other two boats he already has in his garden.

Our Christmas lunch was booked for Sunday 17 December at the White Hart and off we went into the dark and chilly night to a nice cup of tea when we arrived home.

Hope everyone has a lovely Christmas etc. – talk again next year...

Sue and Brian Jeffery

Yorkshire Report

November Meeting

What a great venue Matt chose for us. It was like going back in time as we stepped into a gas-lit labyrinth of rooms making up The King's Arms, Heath, Wakefield. It was lovely to be welcomed by a roaring fire in the snug reserved for us.

Matt and Lizzie had already arrived in their new acquisition. Claire had other commitments but Ian was there. Andrew and Jennifer McG came for the first time since February. Andrew has recently been to an MGCC race meeting on Phillip Island in Australia and showed us pictures of a K-Series Midget and a 6 litre MGB. Martin and Gail explored the whole pub before they found us. Martin is considering a change of career. Hope it gives him more time to work on the Frogeye restoration. Mick is getting fired up about progress on his Midget and brought along his newly made and painted mounting for a 5-speed gearbox. Tim L has been helping and encouraging him and they are talking of working on a joint Spridget project. Arthur arrived late as he'd driven top down all the way from his daughter's at Gainsborough. He was soon peeling off layers in the heat of the snug. Ann and Pete were running a bit late so left the Midget at home but wished they hadn't as the roads were salt-free. Andy B came in his beautiful Innocenti Mini. He has been experiencing difficulty with bonnet

fitting on his Frogeye. Tim and Sarah made the long trip from Thirsk in their MKII Midget Sebrina, looking very smart in her Williams and Pritchard outfit. Nigel and Sue had brought their black 1500 Midget along. Nigel's last event was the Hexham rally. He is hoping to do the Johnston rally with daughter Jenny in January. George arrived and was soon deep in conversation with Arthur. Mark and I came in KCY having managed to solve the recent charging problem by repairing the dynamo harness.

Our winter meetings are moving to a lunchtime on the first weekend of each month to make use of daylight. Please check the meetings schedule or contact me for details.

Other matters

Mark and I went north to collect a Spridget spit from Nick V. He is using his Dad's garage to restore his Midget so I had to take a picture. Lisa popped over to see us and told us of the plans she has for her 1500 this winter. Hopefully we have persuaded her to organise an event next year in the Newcastle area. On the way home we met up with new member Jordan and his Isle of Wight Frogeye and Mark went for a quick spin. Nick C and Josie came 1st in class in the Regis Rally.

I received some good and bad news. Good news – a previous owner of my 'Mexican Midget' saw the article in MGE and got in

contact. Bad news – it is not an Atlantis as he did the conversion himself. It is however a faithful reproduction of the original Atlantis conversions as he received advice on the modifications from David Martell, who designed and built them. I now have some very interesting history on the car as Robbie used to autotest the Midget very successfully.

Anita



Nick's Midget

*Jordan's IOW
Frogeye*

Cambridgeshire Report

After a busy year we seem to have arrived at the off season, the time for projects and improvements the type of thing we all promised we would do last winter and just didn't get around to. I have noticed however that increasing numbers of Spridgeteers are extending the season (maybe a side effect of global warming) and even braving the cold short days, I normally reckon on giving the Sprite a run every couple of weeks or so, just to keep the battery charged up and everything working and always enjoy those crisp sunny winter days. It's great to bowl across the fens on the lesser used droves (often with grass growing down the middle) blowing the leaves around heading for an endless horizon under a dramatic winter sky.

Getting back to the plot, we had a good turn out for Mad Cat night (mostly in Spridgets and topless too, well done guys), I was excused

Sprites on technical grounds since I had not got the Sprite back on the road after popping the head gasket on the way back from France. The main items on the agenda were the menu and final arrangements for the Festive lunch, sorting out a non Spridget ten pin bowling event for mid November (sadly once again no time to advertise this) and the editing of last month's Cambridgeshire report. Nigel produced a fumble bag and maybe he is mellowing a bit since it wasn't as devilishly difficult as usual (I even managed to identify 3 of the six items). Graham had visited the classic car show and gave us the low down on that, a great show by all accounts and an impressive number of Spridgets on display, plus the chance to meet up with some prominent MASC members.

Regarding my Gaskectomy, as I write this I have just returned from a 15 mile test drive

after getting everything back together, no big deal for a lot of you but this was my first ever head Gaskectomy (lucky or what). I did have a few issues and did find a few parts I wanted to clean up or replace altogether, and having dislodged a few of the tappets when I removed the push rods, I needed to replace the tappet chest seals. A trip to see those nice guys at Brown and Gammons soon sorted that out though. I had to endure a few moments of agony when the time finally came to start her up, first the battery needed charging up then at first she would not fire up, but after a while the tappets started tapping, the push rods started pushing, the rockers started rocking and the pistons did what pistons do and she burbled into life. I quickly checked for visible leaks and then set off on a few circuits of the village (look at that poser in the sports car, that's the third time he's driven up the high street in as many minutes) so as not to get too

far from home (just in case). But then all seemed well and she ran quite smoothly so I started my ever increasing circles until she was thoroughly warm and I thought it was time to go and check for leaks again. The verdict, no leaks so far but the idling was a bit low so next weekend top up all the levels (to help check for leaks) get her hot and make a few fine adjustments and a Sprite trip to the beehive for a new heater hose (the one I put back has seen better days).

I think I will need a few more short local trips and to re-torque the head before we venture out on the 50 mile round trip to the Mad Cat again, but with a bit of luck we should make it to the Christmas lunch in the Sprite (what about the rest of you). Please note that (the same as last year) the Christmas lunch is in place of the December Mad Cat night.

Dave Dixon

Scotland Report

Crank up the Spaceheater!

Poor David held the ring on his lonesome at the last natter until John and Doug came to the ball late on...oh how quickly those high summer, high water marks of attendance melt away under the harsh blasts of early winter storms, agues and the lure of a warm homesome fire! Carson's black bonneted machine was hors de combat needing its second new windscreen in 6 months – he thinks it was stones, but I think snipers employed by the British tailoring association...did they ever do a bullet proof windscreen for Midgets??

There are some celebs who may benefit from them. I saw a picture last week of Kate Moss picking up her louche boyfriend Pete Docherty in a nice blue Mk3 Midget. Good to see we are driving such fashion icons – and it might put the prices up a bit too!

I was on hols in Engerland this month and was amazed not to see a single old MG on the road in 10 days of travel. I did however spot an odd little green MG Midget derivative poking its nose out of a side ally in Looe – cute number plate too – NOD 18P! What a fab place Cornwall is for MGs, loadsa

rollercoaster wee roads swooping along fantastic coast roads and verdant green lanes. It reminds me of Scotland ... except of course in summer those same roads will be more bunged up than a sink in a communal student kitchen, whereas en Ecosse only the occasional sheep and those pesky Dutch driving clubs obscure our roads!!

And so we begin the winter workshop routine, I have an engine rebuild and 4 square feet of welding to do, Carson is putting in his Federation hyperdrive, John trying to find some super strength springs, David is reducing the number of shades of red on his motor from 17 to one and the MGOC are laughing all the way to the bank!! First run next year is our target and it looks like being an early link up with Les and Diane of the illustrious NW MASC posse at the end of April. My only regret as we enter this year's ice age is that we do not have a fabulous Carsoni calendar to look forward to. My dad is going to really teed off at only get socks for Xmas!!

Bob Miller

Warwickshire Report

We made an early start at this month's meeting to have a meal and celebrate Mo Wood's birthday, one of those significant ones, but as protocol suggests you should never mention a lady's age, and she would be in yifty fears of us doing so. Her Christmas parties always have fun and games, so, of course, she had a game for us. This resulted in a wide variety of suggestions for the use of MASCOT, which included hamster homes, peashooters, umbrellas and someone even proposed reading it!

However, despite Roy being distracted by the attentions of our landlady, we did find time to discuss club matters and having reflected on last month's activities, we looked towards future events. Alan is looking forward to organising another successful trip to foreign fields that we would like to visit next year, with France looking the most likely. A tie up with our fellow frog and spridget owners will be considered, along with a two-centre trip extending it to a week in length. We have also made note of next year's Classic event at Silverstone, and Chris Jackson can bank on us for support again next year. Apart from Christmas Dinner, our calendar is a little sparse after this month, so at our next meeting we will be discussing future plans.

Our congratulations go to John Platt, the new membership secretary, who is already showing enthusiasm for increasing the club's membership. This has not distracted him from planning the club stand at the Classic Car Show at the NEC and he took the opportunity



The club stand at the Classic Car Show

to select helpers from the vast number of volunteers. This year we had Martin Ingall's Sebring Sprite. It is a 1960 Austin Healey Sprite which he restored in 1992 and fitted with a Sprinzel Sebring Coupe top and bonnet. It has been actively used in historic rallies and hill climbs, coming 8th out of 14 in the GT Tourisme Speciale race at Circuit des Remparts, Angouleme in France. There was the sectioned Midget from the Patrick Collection, auctioned by the Heritage Motor Centre some time ago, which received a lot of attention and Stuart's 4-wheel drive, V8 engined Midget, which stole the show as usual. Even Margot Healey found it fascinating and Gary Lazarus was caught on camera talking to her.



Gary meets Margot Healey

There were some comments about there not being any Frogeye's, but perhaps 2008 should be their show entirely. Our thanks go to John for his careful organisation and to all those who helped him, especially Roy Cole, who transported the Midget, Dave Parker for the loan of his gazebo, Alan Couch and Chris Yates for helping to erect the stand and to Martin Ingall and Stuart Gunn for putting their cars in the limelight. It was great to have Bill there on Saturday, along with his South Staffs colleagues, plus Toby, and Gary from London. Our thanks also go to the Warwickshire crowd, including Roger Orgill, Andy Bourne, Andy Smith who were there on the stand to welcome people and describe how wonderful it is to be a member of MASC.

Chris and Sheila

Spridgets: How We Got Involved



When I was about 11 (late '70s) my Mum passed her driving test and Dad started looking round for a car for her. Fancying something a bit different they went to see an MG Midget advertised locally and we ended up with FPX 436C a black 1965 Mk2 Midget. I struggle to believe it now but for the first few years I would ride on the 'back seat' while Mum gave my friends lifts home from school. Madness! Back then it was just a used car although the enthusiast scene was just getting going and Graham Paddy in Richmond was very helpful. It was he who told Dad that the factory did produce a few Mk2 Midgets in black with red trim so we believe the colour combination to be original. The car was soon burning oil (we think the seller had filled it with gear oil) and before long Dad changed the engine for a good second hand one. Although we now regret our ignorance in letting the car's original engine go, it still makes us smile that Dad sold the old one for more than he'd paid for the new one. Somehow, keeping Mum's car going gave Dad and I the old car bug, despite memories like the lengthy removal of a lower inner fulcrum pin with a grinding stone in an electric drill. So, a few years later, I arrived home from my university vacation job for

Mum to tell me that Dad was 'looking at a car for you'. He arrived home having bought it (for £180) and a few days later a companion for Mum's car, in the form of 1781 PG, a 1963 Mk2 Sprite, arrived at our house on a trailer. It was rotten from the doors down, purple and had a Morris Minor engine fitted. It took the rest of my time at university and my first year of work before we had the car on the road. Dad did the welding, I refurbished all the bits and we fitted the 'rebuilt' 1275 that came with the car. It passed it's MoT first time and became my daily driver, painted in Colorado Red.



In the intervening 17 years I've done somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 miles. These days I have another car but the Sprite is still used whenever I can and only rests while there is salt on the roads. We've had many adventures in between but I'll save those for another time. Likewise Mum's car is no longer her daily driver but still gets used when the weather is nice. We like to reunite the cars when we can and the photographs show them at this year's Goodwood Revival.

Jeremy Cogman



My Elvington Experience

The day dawned wet at a little after 7am and I found myself out in the rain doing the last minute preparations – wheel nuts tight, belts and hoses OK, boot rack off and levels check before departing for Elvington Airfield (the site of Richard Hammond's 300mph crash). I was a little unnerved as I arrived in Midge for my Drive your own car on Track Day in the mist and rain, pulling up behind an M3 and a VX220T, my nerves further shaken by the arrival of a Carrera 4S behind me. I had visions of a real hare and tortoise day, Midge after all is only 1972 Midget with a 1380 engine and a lowly 80hp at the wheels. Anyway it turned out after the briefing that there were only 2 of us doing my course in the morning and the other chap was using their Focus so a sigh of relief was breathed.

The rain came down steadily in the morning session inducing a great pirouette on my first

run much to my instructor's dismay as his agenda was to have me driving fast to the correct lines and all I wanted to do was showboat with the tail out round the track. We had great banter as we did our laps with him trying to reduce my inputs into the wheel to allow a quicker but less fun line to be taken.

When I jumped in Midge for my second 15-minute session of the morning, I got a big shock at the first chicane (luckily only plastic cones) as the brake pedal went straight to the floor and Midge went straight on. Pumping the pedal I managed to get some brakes but by the next corner they had gone again and the rest of the day was hamstrung by the fact I had to pump the pedal several times before corner entry! A few more spins were had needless to say, some induced by the instructor to demonstrate the horrible and violent effects of lift-off oversteer (not recommended).

Before lunch, with the track drying and my brakes dying I decided to have my last session in the Focus (1.8 petrol) to see how it compared to Midge. It was about as fast, much easier to drive but just plain boring with very controllable understeer. Needless to say after lunch it was Midge brakes or no brakes!

We returned from lunch in the RAF museum café with 2 new chaps in tow, one with a VR6 golf the other with the Carrera 4S I mentioned earlier and had a great afternoon albeit not quite as much fun now the track had dried and the relatively new tyres (mistake) reluctant to give up their grip but not their shoulders! I accused the guy in the Porsche of



short shifting down the straight and I think he took it to heart as the very next session I heard it hit the rev limiter and when questioned later he admitted it was a first. The Porsche pulled 97mph down the short straight, the VR6 about 90 and Midge a distant but not unrespectable 80 with dodgy brakes.

By the end of the session we were allowed two final laps on our own, the Porsche went first and, with a huge screech did it go, a 720 coming out of the hairpin to the cheers of all watching, the chap pulling up later somewhat shocked and perplexed but grinning from ear to ear all the same. I just managed to keep Midge from doing the same and as for the guy in the VR6 he simply wasn't trying.

All in all then a great day out, Midge won the hearts of the others, the loud pipe contest and by far and away had the most fun, the chap with the Porsche even suggesting it had rekindled his days with a TR6 and that something similar could well be on the agenda again. Midge's appetite for fuel mind was healthy at sub 20mpg after 75miles on track!!

A big thanks to all of you that encouraged me and I will be at the next track day for sure but you all best give me a wide birth as Midge just loves to drift, this aspect is not something shared by the tyres and as for the brakes they simply must try harder!! Mark can you help?

Mike N

News Release

Want to Beat the Car Insurance Price Rises? Talk to a Broker

The direct insurers use standard computer data to base their car insurance quotes on. Their staff can't usually move from the 'screen rate', however happy they'd like to quote you. The problem can be exacerbated by overseas call centres, where staff may have even less leeway. On the other hand, these same big companies sometimes offer loss-leaders to get business. Eventually, though, they have to put prices back up – just like Norwich Union did recently.

So where do you go to get a better deal, if you can't find anyone offering loss-leader premiums? Ideally you need to talk to someone who can give you cheaper insurance if you can persuade them you deserve it. In other words, talk to a broker.

Gerry Bucke works for car specialist Adrian Flux Insurance. "If a broker thinks you're a lower-than-standard risk, they can quote a lower-than-standard rate – so they can get you a cheaper deal than the direct insurers," he says.

It's all down to the broker and their relationship with their underwriters, who actually provide your insurance cover. If the underwriters trust the broker, they may offer them a 'delegated- authority' scheme. Basically it means the underwriter is happy for the broker to use their knowledge and

judgement to offer a lower premium, provided the broker thinks you deserve it.

"This is especially true for specialist brokers, since they will know their particular market very well," says Gerry Bucke.

"There are brokers who specialise in various vehicle types, such as 4x4s or performance cars, and those who look after types of people – women, over 50s, convicted drivers and so on. In these cases, a broker can get you a better deal than the direct insurer."

There are all sorts of ways to prove you are a lower-than-standard risk, from parking in a garage every night to belonging to a car owner's club. Showing you're a dependable citizen can help – for example, Flux offers discounts to motor bikers who take an 'emergency aid for bikers' course.

"Any broker will try to beat whatever quotes you've already been given," says Gerry Bucke. "All you have to do is give them the ammunition to cut the premium down."

Adrian Flux has a huge range of policies for the motoring enthusiast.

For details contact the Adrian Flux quote line on 0800 505 3000, email the company at quotes@adrianflux.co.uk, or see the Flux homepage on www.adrianflux.co.uk



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*BMC Accessories sales leaflet for Sprite MkIII
AKD 3067 November 1965*

From the Editor's Library

How I got into Midgets

After a lovely weekend spent in the beautiful town of Edinburgh, I finally found some time (on the train, using my smart phone and sitting opposite to the travel direction - which means it will only take ten minutes before I start vomiting) to write about how I purchased my car, Eglentine, and happened to meet many great and helpful people.

Around a month ago, while keeping an eye on the Internet for a car after I saw a Midget parked near my house and fancied the idea of owning one, I contacted Anita and Mark of the Yorkshire Area of MASC to receive some advice on a couple of examples of which I found promising adverts. One was a Tartan Red 1969 Midget (with, as I found out at a second stage, a dubious 1964 identity), while the other one was a green 1963 Mark 1, which was quite more pricey but definitely more appealing. After the red Midget's proprietor sold it to another gentleman probably just after half a day after we agreed that I would view the car within a couple of days, I felt that my choice was narrowed to the more expensive and gracious green Mark 1 (despite being Italian, I was trying to avoid red cars as much as possible). The car was in Blackpool (I live in North Yorkshire), so it was quite far from my house; moreover, due to some insurance-related bureaucracies, I



couldn't drive the car home even after deciding that I was buying it.

That was when Anita and Mark stepped in and offered the first of many generous and helpful hands: to inspect the car with me and drive it back together to our home county. Well, thank you very much guys, for without your help I wouldn't be here now writing this report with already some sweet memories about Eglentine (and some minor headaches, as by now I am well aware it's what is involved with owning a classic car). And thanks for your presence too, I really feel part of a nice family of car owners and friends.

After just a bit more than a month then, I can already recall a wonderful run through the Yorkshire Dales, a nice BBQ where I met many other car enthusiasts and members of MASC, and other nice evenings and occasions to talk about my car and have a pint in glad company.

While I regret I couldn't make it to the latest group meeting due to a minor ailment, I smile because I am sure there will be other runs, pints and tours waiting for me, all with Eglentine and with the bunch of people I've joined.

The future's bright, and it's on four wheels. Plus, when Eglentine's engine's not on strike, it sounds damn good.



Carlo and Eglentine

Carlo La Duca

What's in your Garage?

I have owned my red 1972 Round Arch Midget for 25 years and the 1960 OEW Frogeye even longer. This is only just back



on the road after a 19-year detailed restoration. Is this a record? It is to original spec, even down to those terrible gear ratios, save for carpets and air horns, which were on her when she was my everyday car. The battle-scarred 1967 Midget was my original Modsports car which Steve

Gardiner, My long-suffering race mechanic, and I put back on the road as an Historic Rally car in 1992. This example has been rolled at Castle Combe, up the Armco at Brands and ended up in the middle of a Norfolk ploughed field on the Britvic Rally. If I ever sell it I suppose I could truthfully advertise it as only used for pleasure at weekends!

John Baggott

Market Place

Adverts to Alan Lo

23 Charnell Road, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS16 5NE

email: alan@mobuzzing.net Tel: 0117 9572617

For Sale

1959 Frogeye. Part completed restoration with all parts from original steel bonnet 948cc car plus several new panels including sills, rear shroud and wings, boot floor. Relocation forces sale. Offers.

Roger 01276 22166 / 07768 418419 (Surrey)

Wheels. Set of 5 Spridget standard steel non-vented wheels. Good condition, blasted and painted. These are getting more difficult to find. Not to be mistaken for the more common Austin A30/35/40 wheel which is different. Front Panel Assembly. In good solid used condition. Includes bonnet catch assembly. Removed from early '70s Spridget. MG Metro parts. HIF44 carb, inlet manifold, cylinder head. 4 pot brakes and much more. Can email pictures

**spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
Tel: 01423 862738**

New R.W.A. Midget parts; 7 gallon fuel tank with sender unit / locking ring / seal £70. Copper fuel line £9. Copper brake pipe kit £22. Grille and Badge £75. Cross flow

radiator with plug and seal £55. Front sidelights/indicators £45 pair. Rear cockpit moulding (black) £5. Door seals (black) £10 pair. N/side door shell £90. O/side door shell £90. Door hinges £65 set of 4.

Tel: George 01457 864536 (Home) 07913 341926 (Mobile) Derbyshire

Parts from a 1500 Midget, Engine, Transmission, Bumpers, Trim and other parts – **Kevin Jarvis 01654 711400 mob 07831 131274 Towyn Mid Wales (non member)**

Frogeye Steering Wheel incl Shroud and Horn Push in excellent condition £300.00 Very rare Frogeye Radiator Blind in original packing with instructions Offers – **John Detheridge 01244 813814 Chester (non member)**

Wanted

Shorrock Supercharger Parts: CNM014 induction manifold, CPP017 relief valve pipe, pulleys and mounting plate.
Tel: 01892 862656 (John)

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