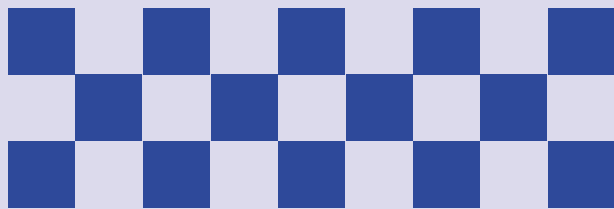


April 2007

£2 No. 277

Mascot



The Magazine
of the
Midget & Sprite
Club

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

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	Vacant
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YORKSHIRE	

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 – April '07

April's here! Spring is here! What an opportunity to get out on those roads if you haven't already! It's a really great time of year, when all those hours spent in the garage over the Winter months are now well and truly put to the test.

Thanks again for all your positive comments about the development of this fine publication – we really are working flat out at Mascot Towers to provide you all with some excellent reading material. The majority of the content, of course, comes from YOU, and I must congratulate all our regular (and not so regular!) contributors – the standard and quality of your submissions provides me some excellent material to work with. So a BIG THANK-YOU from your Editor.

On that theme, I'm always looking out for particularly interesting photographs to appear on the Front Cover – so next time you're taking photos of your pride & joy, please do remember to think about the possibility of YOUR car appearing on the cover. This is my 7th issue of Mascot – and by now you should be able to get a feel for what is required ... high quality shots, preferably of the car itself and please think about how it would appear in black and white. Again a big thanks in advance. I know you'll come up with the goods! Many of you said you liked the March front cover shot of John Sprinzel and as promised, Friends Reunited, the first of two articles from Octane, written by Tom Coulthard, is featured in this issue. Next month this will be followed up by Return to the mews (John Sprinzel's return to Lancaster Mews with PMO 200). Thanks to David Lillywhite at Octane for his continued support of Mascot and Midget & Sprite Club.

Loads of other interesting and informative stuff inside again this month – particularly a detailed explanation of Rear Cushions by regular contributor John Davies, and a follow-up piece on YRX 727 by Mike Sutton. There's also the latest update on the preparation for the exciting SPRIDGET 50 celebration and yet another bumper crop of Area Reports.

By the time you read this we will have made our first trip of the year to Italy to one of their major autojumbles, on the look-out again for all-things-Innocenti and throughout April there are at least four Spridgety/MASC events closer to home listed at the front of this issue. So let's get out and about!

Thanks once more to all contributors this month – please keep it coming. **Deadline for May issue is Midday Thursday 12 April.**

Take care – drive safely!

**Barry
Editor**

Membership No: 1150
editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk



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: John Sprinzel rallying in the new MkII Midget registered PMO 200 c. '65. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Whitehouse Bird.

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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 Jeffrey, Tel: 01522 531425 or mobile, 07952 969514
- 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** – April Meeting on Good Friday, 6th April at **The Golden Lion Inn**, Great Barugh, Malton, North Yorks, YO17 6UZ. Meeting at 10am for a hearty breakfast then a 1-2 hour drive. Contact Anita 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 Rose & Crown**, 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.
- 4th Sunday **Kent Area** – Meet at **The Moat**, Wrotham Heath at 12:00 for lunch. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050.
- 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

Club Website

Members Only pages for April, User name: spridget Password: heaven

Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

Events organised so far for 2007

April

- Saturday 14th Warwickshire Area will be at the Droitwich Motor Festival. Details from Roy Cole, Tel: 01562 885766
- Sunday 15th Come and meet the Hampshire Chapter. Hampshire Area are having an open day at The Poacher, South Warnborough. Come along and meet the local group who will be at The Poacher from 12 pm onwards. Details on www.midgetandsprite-hampshire.info
- Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd The 4 Cs Run (Classic Car Cider Cruise). Warwickshire Area are taking part. Details from Chris and Sheila Yates Tel: 01608 665066
- Sunday 22nd Cambridgeshire Area are taking part in the Cottenham Run. This is a procession of classic vehicles through streets lined with cheering classic fans. Not to be missed! Contact Dave Dixon Tel: 01733 222810 or email: e-dave@ntlworld.com

May

- Saturday 5th to Tuesday 8th Surrey Area Tour of Shropshire. Sorry but fully booked. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050
- Saturday 12th Yorkshire Area Track Day at Croft Circuit with MGs on track. Limited places for MASC group. Contact Anita for details, tel: 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email: spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
- Sunday 13th Warwickshire Area will be at the Ludlow Motor Festival. Details from Roy Cole, Tel: 01562 885766
- Sunday 13th The Sandwell Rally. Warwickshire Area are taking part. Details from John Platt, Tel: 01789 488321
- Sunday 13th Essex Area will be at the Battlesbridge Classic Car Day. It is a large show with a very good auto jumble plus loads of things to do for all the family. Contact Lee Reed on 07980 896872 or 01255 424112 email: lnreed@aol.com
- Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th The Rutland Raiders. Everyone is invited to a weekend in Lincolnshire, courtesy of Yorkshire and Home Counties North West Areas. Meet at Burghley House on Saturday, overnight stay at a local hostelry, then a road run on Sunday. Details from Anita, Tel: 01423 862738 or Chris Jackson, Tel: 01707 261567.
- 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
- Sunday 27th to June 9th The Warwickshire Area French Trip to Vannes. Organiser is Alan Couch, Tel: 01564 773302

June

- Sunday 3rd The Austin Healey Club will be at the 100 yrs Brooklands celebration. Details from David Tofts email: davidtofts@hotmail.com



- Thursday 7th to Sunday 10th Surrey Area Arnhem Tour. Book early to secure cheaper ferry fares. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050
- Saturday 9th Classic Car Action Day at Castle Coombe. Terry Horler is organising the MASC presence. Details see MASCOT.
- Saturday 9th Cambridgeshire Area will be at Comberton Country Fayre. All Sprites and Midgets welcome. Details contact Dave Dixon, Tel: 01733 222810.
- Saturday 9th Classic and Sportscar Action Day at Castle Coombe circuit in Wiltshire. Club display and chance to drive on the circuit. Details from Terry Horler, Tel: 01454 881770.
- Friday 15th to Sunday 17th 2nd International Spridget Meeting, Rellingen, near Hamburg, Germany. Details from www.spridgets.de and Marcus Pieper, Marcus.pieper@t-online.de If anyone is interested, please contact David Hill as he has a .pdf flyer he can send you.
- Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th The 15th Goodwood Festival of Speed.
- Saturday 23rd M&SC has been invited to provide a classic car display at the 100 year celebration of the King Edward VI Combined Cadet Force Corps of Drums. This will be in Chelmsford and is open to all makes of classic cars. Details from Lee Reed on 07980 896872 or 01255 424112 Email: lnreed@aol.com
- Saturday 23rd Cambridgeshire Treasure Hunt. Great fun and a trophy for the winner! Only a quid to enter. Contact Dave Dixon Tel: 01733 222810 or email; e-dave@ntlworld.com
- Sunday 24th Jolly Roger II (at sea again). Warwickshire Area organiser is Roger Orgill, Tel: 01684 833379
- Saturday 30th Warwickshire Area's Worcester/Shropshire Run. Details from Roy Cole, Tel: 01562 885766

July

- Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th Surrey Area will be at the Ardingly Show (provisional) with the Club stand. Volunteers needed to man the stand. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050
- Tuesday 10th Ace Café Night for Cambridgeshire Area. Why not join in for a pint, a chat, a bite to eat and a great atmosphere. Contact Dave Dixon Tel: 01733 222810 or email; e- dave@ntlworld.com
- Saturday 14th Great Western Rally and Road Run, Wiltshire. Details from Terry Horler, Tel: 01454 881770.
- Sunday 15th Kimbolton Charity Classic. Cambridgeshire Area will be hosting a stand at this stunning event. For advanced tickets and details contact Dave Dixon, Tel: 01733 222810
- Friday 27th to Sunday 29th Silverstone Classic Meeting. See special entry in this month's MASCOT.

August

- Sunday 5th Cambridgeshire Area will be at the BMC Rally at Ferry Meadows, near Peterborough with the Club Stand. Details contact Dave Dixon, Tel: 01733 222810
- Friday 31st to Sunday 2nd The Goodwood Revival.

Saturday 11th Warwickshire's Mike and Benitas' Fun Day. Details from Michael Vann, Tel: 01455 292440

September

Sunday 2nd Coventry Motor Festival.

Sunday 9th Warwickshire's Shelsley Walsh! Details Stuart Watson, Tel: 01562 883076

October

Sunday 14th Severn Valley Railway Classic Bike and Car Day. Warwickshire Area are going. Details from John Platt, Tel: 01789 488321

November

Friday 9th Classic Motor Show 2007 at the NEC, Birmingham. Club to Sunday 11th stand care of Warwicks Area. Details from John Platt, Tel: 01789 488321

December

Wednesday 12th Warwickshire Area Christmas Dinner at The Green Dragon. Details from Sheila Yates, Tel: 01608 665066

Tuesday 18th Surrey Area Christmas Meal. Venue to be decided.

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.

Secretarial Scribblings

How can I admit to this? March already and I have yet to shake a spanner at either of my Sprites. The MkIV I haven't even gone to visit this year and the pedal rubbers for the Frogeye still lay on the bench. Despite my failings, I did get along to the MG Show at Stoneleigh thanks to Andy Cross who kindly offered me a lift. It's been a few years since I last visited this show, then; I gave a talk in the main foyer on buying Spridgley things using my MkIV as a demonstration piece. No shortage of things to point out on that particular example!

The show has moved from the old sheds to a new exhibition hall and gone are the memories of shivering – or could that be down to Global warming instead! The MASC stand was once again personed by the very capable Warwickshire Empire of the club. Good to meet you all and at long last, to meet John Platt and Mike Grout for the first time. Mike, our purveyor of all things regalia, sold around

£200 worth which seemed pretty good to me. £25 worth of it to me even!

At long last, I have seen it. The 4 x 4 V8 Midget of Stuart Gunn. I remember several years ago of hearing of Stuart's plan to create this Spridgley monster only to think I will believe it when I see it. So now I've seen it – I still can't believe it. It's just incredible, the club is honoured to have such a creation appearing on its stand at this and other shows.

Despite the many and varied goodies on offer, I was surprised that the stalls were devoid of fuel filler caps. Apparently, some Chinese gentleman had been around some 10 minutes before me and bought the lot. A look on eBay may reveal who the mad capper is; a fellow Masc-Bristol member is a likely contender.

Lots of good things in MASCOT this month, this wasn't one of them so I will shut up here and now.

Terry Horler

Mutual Assistance Directory

Well, as I write this it is becoming a bit more Spring like in West Wales – we haven't had rain and gale force winds for 10 days now! Makes one think of getting the Midget out at last. We are looking forward to making lots of trips out this summer. Where we live the scenery is fantastic so it really is great to get out. Even the tourists in the summer are not a problem and we don't get the traffic jams like they do in Devon and Cornwall. I know a lot of MASC Areas organise long weekend away and if any Areas would like to organise one to West Wales (Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion) I would be only too willing to help with local organisation. I can guarantee a fun filled weekend. We even

have the world class Internal Fire Museum for the diehard petrolheads (dieselheads?). So, here, it is not all farms and cliffs and beaches and fishing villages and mountains and forests and ...

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

Club Change Details

During his time on the committee, Tim Saunders brought to our attention an issue that requires an EGM to be called.

In his capacity as a lawyer, he suggested that the club change from being just a club to becoming a limited company in order to protect the club from possible liability issues in any future legal cases. Having researched this issue it would appear that most car clubs these days have this legal protection. It is a suggestion that the committee have taken very seriously and fully endorse.

In effect, the current format of the club would mean that if a legal claim were to be made against MASC, all members of the club are jointly and severally liable for the claim. This means that any member of the club could be responsible for the clubs debts and liabilities, either in part or in their entirety.

Whilst this is perhaps only a small risk (and one that we are sure none of us want to put to the test!), one solution to the issue of personal liability is to incorporate the club as a not for profit company limited by guarantee. This would mean that all club members would guarantee the liabilities of the club up to £1 each (this means the most any member can ever be chased for by someone suing the club is £1). We propose an Emergency General

Meeting be held in order to put the matter to the club as a resolution, coupled with a postal ballot for the changeover. It is planned to hold this EGM at the Patrick Collection in Birmingham on the 3rd June. Ballot papers will be included with next month's copy of MASCOT. All voting members will have a vote on the issue in accordance with the club's constitution.

The present committee are proposing to continue as directors of the board and the board will be subject to election every club year at the end of August as the committee are at present. A company secretary will be appointed whose responsibilities are outlined in standard company law, including filing company records at Companies House. It is our intention to use the current constitution as the basis for the new company's articles and memorandum.

As always the decision will be yours, hence the vote and the purpose behind the EGM. We hope you decide to modernise, it is for your protection that we recommend the changeover.

If any member would like further information on how this affects them or for a more detailed explanation please feel free to contact the committee.

Membership Matters

The Committee announce that we have discontinued the Bank Order system of membership. We will not receive further renewals by B/O after 1 March 2007.

Payments can be made by cheque or online via our secure web link using a credit card.

This is to ensure the more efficient processing of members renewals following historical difficulties collecting the correct amount.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CANCEL YOUR BANK ORDERS.

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members

3817	John Mulcahy and Rachel Foster	Yorkshire	Midget Mk 3
3818	Grant Grafton	Devon	Frogeye
3819	Ian Lewis	Gtr Manchester	Sprite Mk 4
3820	Alex and Paul Tigwell	Berkshire	Austin Sprite
3821	Marcus Pieper	Germany	Midget Mk 3
3822	Sarah Paterson and Andy Cloke	Middlesex	Midget 1500
3823	John and Ann Mackie	Cornwall	Midget 1500
3825	Malcolm and Jan Youngman	Kent	Midget Mk 3
3826	Alan and Richard Crowther	South Gloucestershire	Frogeye
3827	Mark Guthrie	Staffordshire	Midget Mk 2
3828	John Bennett	Staffordshire	Midget Mk 2

MASC at Silverstone Classic 2007

July 27th, 28th and 29th

Put these notes in your diary; mow the lawn the weekend before, postpone the visit to Ikea, visit Aunt Jane next week, ask the neighbours to walk the dog and free yourself up to join the MASC stand at Silverstone. Booking details are in February MASCOT. It would help if I could have some idea of numbers by early May so that I can

book enough space for our used car lot. We have to have six to qualify. A special appeal to those of us who are considerably older than our cars and are now unemployed; please try to be there on Friday. Plenty of space for zimmer frames and wheel chairs and the toilet queues are short.

Chris Jackson

MASCOT Back Issues – for Sale

We have the following back issues of MASCOT for sale. Your chance to snap up some valuable archive material on Spridgets – Variants, Models, Technical tips etc.

Remember no January issues until this year

2002 – Apr, June, July, Nov, Dec

2003 – Feb, Mar, May, June, July, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec

2004 – Feb, Mar, Apr, May, July, Aug, Nov, Dec

2005 – Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June, July, Aug, Nov, Dec

2006 – Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June, July, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec

2007 – Jan, Feb, Mar

Price £1.00 each post paid but amazing discounts available for bulk buys! All must go otherwise will be recycled! Please contact John Platt – details on page 1.

Friends Reunited

When legendary racer and tuner John Sprinzel returned to England to experience the Goodwood Revival, he teamed up with Sir Stirling Moss and one of his most successful cars, Sebring Sprite PMO 200.

Words: Tom Coulthard • Photography: Steve Hancock, Paul Webb





He's such a star, John Spurluel. Not in the way of chauffeurs driving Royce into swimming pools or hating television from hotel balconies, but a true hero who can bring inspiration into the lives of us mere mortals. Here at the Goodwood Festival meeting he's chatting with fans, joking, signing autographs and generally holding court with amazing ease.

It's no surprise the American car clubs vie with each other to have him as their guest of honour, so that next year the Japanese are hoping to tempt him over. It's just a pity that he seems to be accorded less honour in his own country than he might be.

A man who won his class in the inaugural British Saloon Car Championship (within an ace of winning the title outright) before going on to be double British Rally Champion the year after. A man who notched up seconds and thirds in European Championship rallies in a 1000cc car. Someone who founded one of the best-known tuning firms in the world – Speedwell – and was a works team driver for BMC, Triumph, Saab, Porsche, Peugeot, Rover, Ford and Datsun. Someone who as a privateer could take on the might of those works teams and catch the occasional snook at them, as in his fourth place on the 1964 East African Safari rally in a second-hand Mercedes 250. Someone who went on to a career in journalism and television which drew even more people into motor sport.

That joke is not better remembered doesn't dampen his high spirits one bit when I mention it. He quotes Lawrence Durrell at me: 'Saidleely, one day you wake up and realise with complete certainty that 95% of the activities of the human race, to which you supposed you belonged, have no relevance whatsoever for you.' Now, at the age of 75, John might be thought entitled to this Zen level of calm, but my weekend is spent trying to get through to the 'real' Spurluel, the one who in the 1950s and '60s was said to be a complex and volatile character.

At Goodwood's pre-event cricket match I further my assault on

'Managing to secure the services of the greatest English driver of all time was a huge honour for me in 1961, and I will be every bit as honoured to see Sir Stirling drive my old car again 45 years later'

the fastest times. 'Remember, I'd been a member of the BMC team under our captain, John Gott, a wonderful man whom I had huge respect for, so I'd seen at first hand what a great team captain could do to hold things together and motivate people. We'd got Roy Pider in that year, for goodness' sake, and later Vic Elford, who is still the last Englishman to win the Monte Carlo Rally.'

In the fall before Lord March begins the Drivers' Briefing, I remind John of the International Mans Rally of 1973, where – at the age of 45 – he set a fastest stage time by a clear second in an MG Midget, despite the field including both Roy Pider and Roger Clark in works Escort RS1600s. 'Yes, it was a good time – but I don't know – maybe we got a "flyer" John can't possibly self-effacing.

After the briefing, John admits that he isn't that keen on watching motor racing. 'Now, doing it – that's another thing. But when I was a young ringer you could still see what Grand Prix drivers were doing. I remember the Argentinian Froilan Gonzalez: he literally took hold of his car and wrenched it around corners and around other drivers. His fellow countryman Fangio, on the other hand, was so gentle, it was poetry in motion. He would be on the same line every time he went around Woodliffe at Silverstone. When he drove the Mercedes streamline, he just touched the oil barrels marking the inside of the corner as every lap, nicking a bit more of the front wing every time – unbelievable.'

Just then a Supermarine Spitfire and North American P-51 Mustang zoom and swoop overhead. Himself a former RAF pilot, though too young to have fought in the war, John finds it deeply

Top right
Spurluel tries to persuade Pat Flinn to relinquish PFD 180 to her brother-Stirling, as the car was finishing club-champ Flinn appears not to be too keen



Above right
1961 Sebring from left; Pat Moss, John Spruzel, Cyril Searles, Stirling Moss and Bruce McLaren with PMO 200 and 5. (2)

excitation. 'The sound of those engines really gives me chicken skin.' Eh, (chicken skin) 'Goose bumps,' John corrects himself. '...two nations divided by a common language and all that.'

This is another reason why John is not as well remembered as he should be – he's been out of the country for most of the last 30 years. 'The oil crisis came along in 1973 and by then I had a string of garages selling powerful, expensive sports cars. Overnight the market for those cars just disappeared and suddenly you couldn't give them away. I got out and went "back to nature" and we did our own version of *The Good Life*, only with Felicity Kendal played by my lovely wife Caryl.'

'When a while of that we sold up and bought a boat and sailed round the Aegean for a few years,' John says, going on to mention, quite in passing, that they both represented Greece at the wind surfing World Championships – three years running.

John and Caryl have flown the 8000 miles from their current home in the Hawaiian Islands specifically to see Saturday's Fordwater Trophy. This is for special-bodied GT cars that competed in long-distance events on Continental racetracks such as Le Mans, Monza and the fearsome Nordschleife of the Nürburgring, and it will feature at least nine cars built by or connected with the tuning companies John founded. Among the drivers, pride of place must go to Sir Stirling Moss, who will be piloting the same alloy-bodied Spruzel Sebring Sprite coupé, registered PMO 200, that he drove (for John as entrant) at the Sebringraceway in Florida on March 24, 1961, in the International

4 Hour GT race. 'Managing to secure the services of the greatest English driver of all time was a huge honour for me in 1961,' John says, 'and I will be every bit as honoured to see Sir Stirling drive my old car again 45 years later.'

'Goodwood was always my favourite racetrack – partly because I drove my first race here in 1957. My very first event had been the 1955 RAC Rally, which I'd read about in *Autosport*. I got in an entry without really expecting to get accepted and when I was, I realised I didn't have a car they would allow, so I asked my mother if I could borrow her little shopping car – a black Austin A50. I didn't want to worry her so I told her I wanted it for a 'touring holiday in Wales and the Lake District'. Unfortunately, your start number was still decided by ballot in those days – and I'd drawn number one. The RAC Rally was a big deal then and they featured the start on the evening television news, which my mother saw back in Golden Green But, bless her, she soon forgave me and we managed to finish a pretty respectable sixth in class from a total entry of 130.'

'I was bitten by the bug and bought a TR2 for the 1956 season, and did reasonably well, but it wasn't until I got hold of one of the new A35s that I began to be noticed. Murray Chambers (who's still as bright as a button at the age of 96) asked me to join the BMC works rally team on the 1957 Seatrike Rally and I had a great time. The Continental rallies used to have circuit tests in those days, partly to stop you using too low a back axle ratio on the Alpine hills/climbs. So I thought I ought to gain some



Sir Jackie Stewart cried out "John, hi!" and made a point of coming over to chat. And Sir Stirling reunited with my old car. It doesn't get better than that!

Above
Sir Stirling Moss pits through Goodwood's chicanes in PMD 200. Harry Sneyd-Smith, La Mans MGA parking hard behind.

experience of circuit driving – which is what brought me here to Goodwood on the Whit Monday of 1957.

"I found out that the meeting was being televised – live, of course – and as I winning my first race had not been lucky enough, the lady people found that they needed a few minutes of "No-6" and the next race. So the legendary John Baxter – in his trademark downsticker hat and plus fours – sat me on the pit counter, one in the face check strip and joins that I'd been racing in, and asked me about the "remarkable speed" of my car. Well, I had to say something, so I said the car had been tuned by "Speedwell of Golders Green" (actually the name of the local telephone exchange) and on Monday morning my father's print works was besieged by phone calls from impressed enthusiasts wanting us to make their Austin A550 go that quickly.

"Speedwell was a huge success, but at the beginning of 1960 Donald Husley headhunted me to set up the Husley Speed Equipment Division at the London showrooms in Grosvenor Street, he sweetened the deal by offering me works drives at the Silver 12 Hours and at Le Mans... After the best part of a year with Donald I left to set up on my own at Lancaster Mews, where we produced the alloy-bodied Stirling Sportscars." (See page 90 for the history of PMD 200 and the Mews).

Friday's practice for the Fordwater Trophy goes very well in warm sunshine, and although PMD has some fuel starvation problems John clearly enjoys catching up with dozens of old friends, particularly Sir Stirling and Susie Moss. Saturday

morning at Goodwood dawns dry but overcast, John is full of energy, as ever, but seems slightly nervous, as if he's anxious that everything should go smoothly. By the time the cars head for the assembly area, he is as jumpy as a kitten – we get a glimpse of how things really were when manufacturers' and drivers' reputations were at stake. The cars on this grid with which John has been associated include two Speedwell GTs, Williams & Pittard Sebring's S 221 and PMD 200, Peter Jackson's and Jack Wheeler's Sportscars, as well as the alloy-bodied Morgan SLR, which were the product of a joint venture between John and Chris Lawrence, known as Sprinco-Lawrence Racing.

As the cars go out onto the track, the skies open and the circuit turns slating pink – fortunately the Sportscars avoid too many triple toe loops. One of John's cars wins the race (the Morgan SLR of Keith Allen) and the first Sprite home is the wonderfully original ex-Adrian Boyd Speedwell GT, piloted by Daniel Wylie. Chris Dagg finishes well in S 221 and Sir Stirling wins an epic battle with that dozen of MG racers, Barry Siders-Smith in the so-La Mans MGA.

Sunday's highlight for Sprinco fans is the final part of the season car race; the extraordinary performance of the Rae Davis A550 vividly recalls John's achievements in his cars 150 KMH and MKX 342. John is ecstatic with the whole weekend. "We've had a great time here; I said hello to Sir Jack Brabham and Sir John Whitman... and Sir Jackie Stewart cried out "John, hi!" and made a point of coming over to chat. And Sir Stirling reunited with my old car. It doesn't get any better than that!"

Cushions Galore!

Long before the end of Frogeye production at Abingdon, several people (including the Healeys) tried cutting away the top deck behind the seats as far back as the hood line, creating a rear platform where large objects could be stored and retrieved easily without the need to rummage around in a dark cavern. These and other successful experiments resulted in the change being incorporated into the rear panelling of the Mark 2 Sprite and Mark 1 Midget.

In addition, Abingdon offered a rear cushion (Figure 1) for this new rear platform in a rather forlorn effort to convince potential customers that the new cars could accommodate more than two people. This ruse had worked quite well for Triumph – with a slightly bigger car – but it was not very successful with the Spridget: at £4 7s 6d each in 1961, Abingdon never sold many rear cushions. When the top deck was cut back still further to accommodate the new hood of the GAN4/HAN9 vehicles, the rear cushion quietly disappeared from the factory list of optional extras.

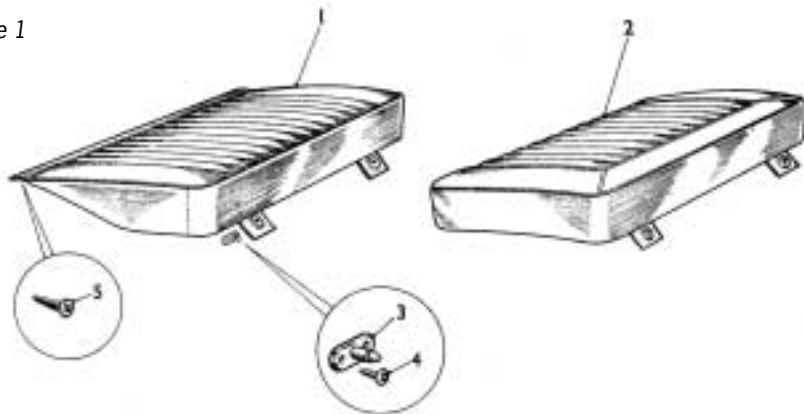
There are several possible reasons for this lack of sales success. Setting aside the now obvious safety aspects (not so obvious in 1961), the rear cushion provides hardly any leg room even for a child, and precious little headroom with the car's roof in place. Nevertheless, this cushion is actually an extremely useful item because it creates a level rear platform which makes an excellent storage area for parcels, picnic hampers and

the like. As a bonus, it also looks extremely handsome in the cockpit of an early car (see the photograph on page 79 in Terry's book 'Original Sprite and Midget'). With the gift of hindsight, this rear cushion may have enjoyed much greater popularity – and made more money for Abingdon – if it had been described as a 'rear shelf' rather than as 'an occasional rear seat for small children'.

Today, the cars for which these cushions were designed are a rare sight and original rear cushions for them even more so. When a new old stock GAN1/2/3 red/grey piping cushion was advertised recently on eBay, I threw caution to the wind, bid furiously and managed to win it as a replacement for the worn and mouse-nibbled but otherwise identical rear cushion which my car has possessed since new. The acquisition of this NOS cushion has turned out to be extremely lucky – not only for me but for Alan Lo and three other people as well. Read on, for it may well turn out to be lucky for you too.

Instead of wrapping my old rear cushion in bubble wrap and adding it to the embarrassingly large pile of old Spridget bits in my loft, I gave it to Ian Hawkes, an expert professional motor trimmer friend near Cambridge. Ian carefully unpicked and dismantled this cushion, made proper templates and patterns and used them to manufacture four new replica rear cushions, one of them blue with pale blue piping for Alan Lo's magnificent Clipper Blue GAN1. The

Figure 1



excellent quality of these replica cushions reflects Ian's skill and probably exceeds the quality of the original factory items (the photo shows Ian holding two of them): they fit the cars beautifully and the only way I can tell they are replicas is to look at the line of staples underneath: Ian's staples are perfectly spaced and lined up, the factory ones look as if they were applied in feverish haste (which they probably were, as the factory cushion makers would have been paid a set contract rate per cushion!). Ian the trimmer has retained the patterns and further batches of cushions can be made, if there is sufficient demand. Note that although the HAN6 cars had a different cushion pleat pattern (left diagram, Figure 1), this should be easy to replicate. So, if you are the proud owner of a HAN6/7/8 or GAN1/2/3 car and if you are interested in ordering a rear cushion, please do contact me for more details. The price of a particular cushion will depend upon the material (Alan's cushion was a little more expensive, for example, because Ian had to make the pale blue piping required). There were no less than seventeen colour options



(red with white piping, black with red piping etc.) for HAN6 and GAN1 but only four for the later cars (HAN7/8 and GAN2/3) which all had the same cushion pleat pattern and piping colour. To ensure a good match, anyone who orders a cushion will be advised to supply a sample of their car's material. Finally, note that any payments will be made direct to Ian. I have no wish to be seen as an entrepreneurial profiteer, but I do look forward to the day when I walk into Ian's workshop and see – CUSHIONS GALORE!

John E. Davies jed2@cus.cam.ac.uk

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Spridget 50 – The Big Party – 13 months to go!

The 20th May 2008 marks the Golden Anniversary of the press launch of the Austin Healey Sprite at Monte Carlo in 1958 – 50 years since the introduction of the car that, in its various AH and MG incarnations, unites us all.

To celebrate the anniversary in style, the Official Sprite and Midget 50th Birthday Party will be held at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon, on Sunday 18th May 2008 – and you're welcome to join us! A fun day is planned, with hundreds of Sprites, Midgets and derivants, owners and enthusiasts from across the UK, Europe and beyond. The emphasis is on celebration rather than concourse – although we'll have our fair share of those, as well as the more dog-eared but no less loved daily drivers – and everything in between. Come one, come all! The party has the full backing and support of the Midget and Sprite Club, the Healey Driver's Club, the MG Owner's Club, and the MG Car Club. We're also gaining increasing support from many European clubs and individual Spridget owners.

Mid-March saw the steering committee gathering for a second time at the MGOC nerve-centre in Swavesey, where we were joined by Richard Monk, Manager of the MGOC, and our own Carlo La Duca who is graphically designing the event. Carlo has also kindly offered to be our European contact, and will soon be contacting European clubs and owners, co-ordinating their entries and supplying translated versions of our flier into different languages.

Having found our way there the first time, the second meeting kicked off earlier in the day and a lot was covered. Much of the meeting

was taken up with arrangements for publicity, advertising and ticketing. We have decided that the publicity will continue for most of the summer, with tickets actually going on sale around the time of the Birmingham NEC Classic Car show in October '07. Meanwhile, throughout the year, we will be distributing advertising fliers at every classic car show and event, large and small, up and down the country, and from every conceivable AH / MG spares, garage or repair specialist across the land and beyond! We are about to make the transition from the current effective but very homemade flier, to a professionally designed and produced version (that Carlo again!) – featuring our finalised logo. We'll have a large stock printed, but it will also be available for download (as is the current one) from www.spridget50.com to enable you – yes, you! – to print off a few and spread the word – maybe leave under wipers or through letterboxes whenever you see a parked Spridget. Alongside the fliers will be publicity in much of the Classic Car press, although for most of the year this will take the form of editorial and articles – we'll start the actual advertising towards the end of '07.

Some debate was given over to the decision of the Austin Healey Club to hold their annual International Healey Weekend over the same weekend as Spridget 50. We examined the possibility of moving our event, but concluded that this wasn't possible, given other important events in the Spridget calendar the previous weekend – and a Bank Holiday the following. So we will be sticking to our date of Sunday 18 May 2008 – and are very hopeful that Sprite owners attending the Austin Healey Club event on Saturday will travel up from Goodwood to join us on our Sunday. We'd be

delighted to see ALL Sprite and Midget owners and enthusiasts, regardless of any (or no) club affiliation.

On the day we're optimistic that we'll have *around one thousand* Sprites, Midgets and derivatives! – the largest number ever gathered together (apart from Abingdon or Southampton docks, anyway). We'll have famous cars and personalities, a technical talk or two, up to twenty specially invited Spridget-oriented trade stands, and a few fun competitions – with prizes of course! Along with the excellent British Motor Heritage Museum (and a specially arranged foyer display) at a specially discounted rate, we're aiming to make it a very full, exciting and

memorable day. And of course the sun will shine!

We will be limited to a maximum of one thousand cars – so when tickets do go on sale later this year, they will be on a strictly first come, first served basis – with priority given to all who have registered initial interest by email to organiser@spridget50.com (that's me) – or if you've no internet, on my phone 07963 433832. At this early stage I already have over 260 entrants – please don't leave it until it's too late – a quick email or phone call now guarantees you the offer of a ticket.

More next month!

Steve Clark, Spridget 50 Organiser



Spridget 50 – The Big Party

All friends of the AH Sprite and MG Midget invite you to

The Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire
Sunday 18 May, 2008

*for the Official party to celebrate 50 years since
the launch of the Austin Healey "Frogeye" Sprite
and all subsequent Sprites, MG Midgets and derivatives.
Let's make this the largest collection of Spridgets ever seen!*

To register an early no-obligation expression of interest, and
to receive priority Booking Information, please contact

✉ organiser@spridget50.com
☎ 07963 433832

with your name, Spridget age and details
www.spridget50.com



YRX 727



I read with great interest the article in February's issue of MASCOT, regarding the three Works' MG Midgets with alloy panels. Perhaps I might add a little from my own personal involvement with one of them – YRX 727. It is true that Mike Hughes sold the car to (his brother-in-law) Peter Riley, but this was in 1964/5 and not the later date quoted. Peter continued to use the car in local (to Liverpool Motor Club) events including one night rallies, autocross, driving tests and the like. My participation was from the left hand seat as navigator on the rallies. These typically were in North Wales and the Lake District.

The original, quite highly tuned 995 cc engine found the uphill hairpins on the mountain passes rather a struggle, so modifications were made. These were carried out by Skip Brown, who at the time rallied an ex-works big Healey and whose name still exists on a garage specialising in rallying preparation, although he is now long deceased. Skip fitted a 1600cc 'B Series' engine that gave the torque necessary to get up the hills. Fitting it required a fair amount of reshaping of the alloy bonnet to form a clearance bulge. The photograph shown (thought to be in 1965), was taken whilst Peter was competing on the sand at Southport and this modification is clearly visible.

Motor Sport had taken place on the flat sandy beach at Southport (circa 15 miles to the north of Liverpool where the tides go out a long way) from between the two world war years – in 1926 Major Henry Seagrave set a land speed record of 152.33 mph there in his 4 litre Sunbeam. Rather later, in about 1963, Liverpool Motor Club attempted a return to Motor Sport on the sands of Southport. The local authority allowed vehicular parking on

the beach, and were only too keen to allow organised events to take place and attract more visitors. As a start, the first events were called 'sandocross'. This suited the RAC Motor Sport governing body because they could be run under the then autocross rules – that is with one car departing against the clock, with the next car being sent off once the first one was about half way around its first lap.

This worked well enough and the RAC (after receiving the reports of its observers), eventually allowed racing to take place – but without many of the more onerous circuit and vehicle conditions being imposed. Even then, only about six or eight cars could start together. About two 'sandocross' events were organised in both 1964 and '65, and I know the photo of YRX 727 was taken then, and not during the later sand races.

It was around this time that tobacco sponsorship was filtering its way down to club events (there was a national Players No 6 autocross championship). As can be seen from the course markers in the photo, Liverpool Motor Club had managed to obtain finances on behalf of Stirling cigarettes. The 'circuit' was in excess of a mile per lap, so it needed a lot of course markers. The Sunday dates of the events had to be synchronised with the moon, to coincide with low and high tides. The clerk of the course and his helpers had an early start laying out the 'circuit' and spectator barriers, but were at least finished and packed away by late afternoon, as the time of the last run was inflexibly fixed by the incoming tide. I am unaware of Peter Riley removing the alloy panels as suggested in the article, but I do recall one of the front wings incurring quite severe accident damage, and that may have been replaced rather than repaired.

The car's current whereabouts is unknown to me and investigation of the DVLA web site produces nothing for any of the three cars. However, I suppose YRX 727 could be tucked away somewhere awaiting a rebuild or, as is more likely, scrapped. Life is strange isn't it, if YRX 727 still existed today in its original form, it would command quite a high price, but in the sixties very little thought was given to the

car's past history and future value, let alone the modifications made to make the car more competitive!

Mike Sutton

(Photographs of the construction of my Sebring Replica – NSU 368, exist on Martin Ingall's website: sebringsprite.com – my interest in Spridgets continues).

Ramblings from a Nissen Hut

The Nissen hut was originally designed by Peter Norman Nissen in 1916 to house people around the war years as a safe haven against the German bombs so, where else would I choose to store my pride and joy. DRF 62K is a Austin-Healey Sprite Mk4 which became very tired and sad looking and in need of a bit of T.L.C., so it was put into the Nissen hut at the bottom of the garden where I started to seriously inspect it. It was not long before I realised it needed open heart surgery in the form of a new heritage shell and a complete overhaul of everything else. This is the story of that Sprite.

I bought this, my first Sprite, three years ago, having been a mini man in my youth, the car had been built as a fast road car but I suspect it had been in some competitions at some time in its life, it was lowered and stiffened with a 92 bhp motor, which was fun to drive hard, but not too good low down, so I had to decide what to do.

I bought a heritage shell from MGBhive in Wisbech having completely stripped the old one and thrown it out. I have to say that, contrary to what people told me I found the shell to be well put together, it came with a black protective undercoat and complete with bonnet, boot and doors already fitted. There is an instruction sheet showing the correct joints to seal, so, having got it up onto stands and this was where I began. I later undercoated all the shell trying to get to those awkward places

with the spray gun, as I don't have any way of rotating the body.

Next step was the painting, I decided to use cellulose paint in preference to two-pack, as this is what it would have been originally. It will, in the near future, become impossible for the man in the street to buy paint, so I purchased enough to complete the job, however getting a good quality thinners proved a harder task. The shell is now painted everywhere in Teal Blue with the exceptions of the outer panels, this will become clearer later!! Having stripped the old shell I could now inspect all the bits and pieces and decide on a plan of action. I wanted a car that was classic looking, with comfortable suspension, but a mildly tuned engine, trying to keep within the boundaries of what was available in the day.

I decided to move to wire wheels to give it a classic look, to throw away the hard suspension and revert to a standard set-up. So, I located a narrower wire wheel axle and a set of chrome wires from the Sprite website then set about stripping all the suspension parts and sending them for powder coating. Morspeed, a local firm was then entrusted to do the engine machining. Another call to order a shed load of parts and a week later we were starting to assemble components and all of a sudden it starts to become car-like again.

The back-end is the easiest to assemble, although I have fitted a shock absorber conversion at the rear and in order to get the





top shock bolt in you need to expand the rear springs with a porta-power as there is no weight in the shell. I put the differential into the new axle casing opting to keep the 3.7:1 ratio that together with a 4-speed box should work just as well as a 5-speed and more in keeping with the Classic image. I have checked out all the brakes and renewed components as required, it is amazing what difference new cotter pins and new cables make to the braking system and with new springs and bushes the rear end now starts to look business-like.

The front suspension is a little more tricky to do because you have two springs to compress, so once again all the parts are powder-coated and new bushes used. I swapped the front shockers with Peter May Engineering for some

up-rated ones, at this point I realised that you need to tap out all the threads in the bodysell to remove the protective coating. This done, I fitted the shock absorbers and the bottom wishbone but you also have to check out the threaded parts of the suspension and clean out any coating there as well. Luckily the king pins were alright, so with that all assembled I now had to get the spring in, this was achieved by making up tubes and threaded rod together with the bottom spring plate pulled the spring up using the two holes until I could get the other two bolts in their holes and, bingo, it was in, now repeat the other side, add an anti-roll bar and your suspension is complete... to be continued.

Mike Vann

Classic and Sportscar Action Day Castle Combe Circuit – Saturday 9 June

So far, I have been rather underwhelmed by the response to this event. Last year, we had a flood of members coming along but to date, only a trickle for this year. The details appeared in the March edition so this is by way of a reminder to contact me if you are interested in this highly enjoyable day

at the famous Castle Combe circuit in Wiltshire. Time is now tight to make our club booking so please let me know ASAP if you are interested. Address and phone number on page 1.

Terry Horler

Terry Horler's Response to John Davies

My thanks to John Davies for clearing up this rather grey area (or whatever colour that may seem appropriate). When compiling O.S&M way back in 1992/3, finding original spec HAN7/8 and GAN2/3 in the various colour options was nigh on impossible in the time available to me. This, and other items, prompted me to include a cop out disclaimer in the introduction, however, the responsibility for the misfire in print is ultimately – all mine. The positive thing is, someone took the trouble to find out, the only shame of it is that John got there before I did! Hence, my thanks and appreciation to John and other enthusiasts who have taken the

trouble to try and colour in some of the more obscure grey areas of our Spridgley things since O. S&M was first published in 1994.

Incidentally, the latest reprint contains a virtual rewrite of the Innocenti chapter. Since then however, someone now tells me that the Coupe version has a longer wheelbase than the Spider. No prizes for guessing who. Should I have the opportunity for another up date to O.S&M, then gear lever cowls and Innocenti wheelbase variations will be on the list.

Terry Horler
(Older, wiser, alright, just older then)

Bolton Abbey Production Car Trial

3 December 2006

This was to be the third PCT with Ilkley and District Motor Club, for Sue and I in her '79 1500 Midget. A leisurely start time meant leaving Barnsley about 9.00 am to reach the Strid, just North of Bolton Abbey in Wharfedale about 10.15am, with daughter Katy having her first trip in the Midget. Sue followed in the Golf with Jenny and the dogs, who were to go walking in Wharfedale with Katy.

The day dawned dry but overcast and as the first part of the journey was up the M1 the top stayed up until we reached the Beamsley road out of Ilkley. The first test of the day was getting into the field, a muddy tight turn almost bringing the Midget to a halt! The usual procedure of unloading the car, letting the back tyres down to 16psi and negotiating scrutineering were soon accomplished, and after some persuasion passenger Sue was extracted from the warmth of the Golf, and the day's event commenced. Eight sections were arranged around the hill, which were to be attempted three times.

The previous night's rain had left the field extremely slippery and as the only rear wheel drive production car entered the Midget soon began to struggle. When I say struggle, I mean to get to the first section! A series of forward and backward zigzags and eventually we made it! This was to be the pattern until the ground dried out later in the day. Back in old days (1970s) when I first entered PCTs, a

Midget was quite competitive, but now the events are dominated by small FWD cars such as AXs, Metros and Corsas. Frankly we don't stand a chance so enjoyment and personal performance are the goals. The first round of eight sections proved to be a real challenge as the Midget struggled for grip but as the grass dried we found progress easier and our scores began to improve, even cleaning one section.

All too soon the 24 sections have been completed, and at around 2.30pm it's time to pack up, remembering to pump up the rear tyres, and think about heading home, top still down despite the occasional drizzle. A quick look at the results revealed that once again we had won our class! Easy when it's the only car in the class but we were not last overall and had a thoroughly enjoyable time, with a pleasant winter drive down Wharfedale to Leeds and the delights of the M1 still to come.

Production Car Trials are an ideal introduction to motor sport, relying on the skill of the driver, and passenger, in a non-damaging environment, the only requirements are a hosepipe or jet wash to clean the mud off when you get home.

IDMC run several club PCTs throughout the year and it would be great to see more Midgets getting down and dirty, doing what sports cars are meant to do! We may even be able to persuade IDMC to have a Midget class if there is enough interest.



Just as postscript, on the 4 February I picked up Nick the Navigator, on the way to the Croft Historic Rally in the A40, and discovered we had won a lovely engraved glass tankard for our efforts in the PCT.

Nigel Middlehurst

Warwickshire Report



A post-restoration car

Even though our February's meeting fell on Valentine's Day, there was no significant drop in the number attending; however, we were moved from our usual private room to make space for the large number of amorous couples who were dining.

The MG Show took place on Sunday March 25th with Barry showing his extremely well presented Midget which contrasted well with the project car kindly loaned by Dave Parker. This demonstrated a before and after restoration scenario that attracted a great deal of attention from the many people who visited the stand.

Stuart's V8 Midget as always was admired by everyone, particularly as he had recently had a well deserved write-up in a Club magazine.

Chris was going to show his Frogeye, but when we arrived the night before with the project car on its trailer, he found the allocated area was not as large as requested so the Frogeye had to be left at home.

There would not have been a stand but for Alan's help in storing and transporting what is left of the clubs equipment, and Andy for providing trailer and towing vehicle.

Mike Crouch supervised the regalia sales and many of the club stalwarts such as Terry, Anita, John and Alan from the Committee and Alan Anstead et al. made it an opportunity for members to get together as well as advertising the club to the general public (we ran out of application forms before the end).

Unfortunately we were unable to take up the offer to have a stand at the Restoration Show on March 11th at Stoneleigh due to the proximity of the MG event. However, the organisers are offering a £1000 prize for the best presented project so it should be taken very seriously in the future!!!

The route and amenities are being sorted by us for the 4C's Run and a trial run in the pouring rain/floods last week showed that it was feasible.

Terry and Alan have expressed an interest in our Bristol neighbours joining us for part of the outing and I was really pleased to receive a call from Peter Young of the Somerset area to say he would try to meet us at the Cider Distillery to welcome us.

This month's members' project is of sufficient content to justify an article of its own – so expect to be enthralled by the Ramblings from a Nissan Hut which appears in this magazine. It is not a war tale, unless you describe Mike Vann's complete rebuild of his Mk IV Sprite as a battle against the odds!!

Chris and Sheila



Before and after restoration



The project car



The team on the stand

NW Area Report

Shortly after last month's meeting I got a phone call from Ian asking if we would be interested in a visit to Chevron Racing Ltd. As you would expect I said yes. So hastily Ian made the arrangements and the date was set. On Wednesday 28th March that we arrived at Chevron Racing Ltd who are based in Antrobus. There was about 20 of us altogether made up of club members plus friends from the Healey and Mid Cheshire Racing clubs. Those of you who are well into middle age or in Ian's case well past this point, will probably remember Chevron cars. Then based in Bolton, they were one of the most successful racing car manufacturers in the '60s and '70s. Unfortunately they went into liquidation in 1978 following the death of founder Derek Bennet. Following a number of attempts to resurrect the business, Chevron Racing Ltd was eventually set up by ex employee Vin Malkie. On arrival we were greeted by Helen Malkie who runs the business with husband Vin. Chevron Racing Ltd specialise in the preparation and restoration of historic racing cars, in particular Chevron's. There were probably about 15 cars in total and Helen gave us an excellent tour and briefing on the company and the cars. These cars date back to the time before electronic wizardry and relied on pure mechanical power, working on the principal that there is no substitute for cubic capacity. A prime example of this were two Lola Can-Am cars powered by 9.1 ltr (yes 9.1 ltr!) V8 engines.

There were a variety of cars to be seen including a gorgeous Chevron B16 (number 2



Lola



Chevron B16

on my dream list now, second only to the GT40) and a Williams FW07 F1 car, plus a selection of F3 and sports racing cars.

On the build stands was a Chevron which was being rebuilt after being written off. The chassis was complete and the engine was installed, just waiting for the body to be fitted. Can you believe it only takes 3 weeks to build this car from scratch! Anyway, I asked Vin what the engine was and compared with the Lola's it was just a baby, a mere 8.8 ltr V8, 900 bhp and 875 lbft torque. Just imagine that in a Sprite!



8.8 ltr engine

As part of the tour Helen took us into the office. Much like any other office really, oh, apart from the ex Elio De Angelis Shadow F1 car, an original Chevron B1 and another Chevron sports racer parked at one end. Incidentally, Helen is an accomplished racing driver and the Shadow is one of her cars. The



most interesting things in our office at work are the photocopier and the microwave, how boring is that? In fact where I sit there isn't even a window to gaze out of, the only thing

directly in front of me is the men's bog. There is a partition to one side of me however and here I have a picture of my Sprite parked next to a loch in Scotland and a picture of a GT40 so at least I can sit and daydream. As well as the racing side of the business, Chevron are in the process of manufacturing a road version of the B1 and we were fortunate to see one of the first ones off the line. These will be manufactured in South Africa and something like 20 per year will be made initially.

To top off the evening there was an ample supply of tea, coffee plus Hob-Nobs and



chocolate digestives, well they made the effort to provide biscuits so it seemed a shame not to eat them. As Andrew is on a diet it was my duty to eat his share so he wouldn't succumb to temptation, I mean that's what friends are for isn't it. All in all a fantastic night, thanks again to Ian for organising this.

Don't forget May club night when we are having a talk by Natalie Goodwin. This promises to be a good evening so why not come along.

Well that's it for now, see you at next club night on 11th April.

Les

South Staffs and Brum at Middleton

Not a bad turn out, Bob in his B, John C in his Spit mk IV and Geoff and I in Midgets. We were visited by Mark who was interested in joining but... Not sure! We made him welcome, even offered him a pint which he declined but no problem, next morning he joined on-line. A result, which made me very happy. Another new face in Tamworth, becoming quite the place lately.

Welcome Mark, nice to have you on board.

Trev offered me a pdf-ing tool because I'd been having file reducing problems with stuff I needed to post when in my Chairbloke's hat. Much thanks Trevor I will have to practise with it now, won't I?

I have a new Screen to fit so I am looking to buy a new header rail seal when I visit

Swavesey at the weekend along with a new checkstrap for the passenger's door.

It looks as if an early summer Brum Tunnels Run is on the cards as the roadworks on the A38 seems to be leaving the tunnels unscathed, more to follow soon. Thanks to Bill McK for that, (A run up to Cosford afterwards, should be good.)

Some of us may be joining Les and his crew up in the Peak District too so spring looks very busy. Geoff and Sue will do their wholeweekend and some others of us are thinking of doing the Saturday trip. Looking forward to it!

Bill Mohan

Kent and Surrey Meetings

Kent – Sunday 18 February 2007

Cold and over cast with a threat of rain. The weather did not stop seven people turning up for the monthly meet at The Moat. Two braved the weather with hoods down whilst two still arrived in Spridgets but with hoods erect. Bringing the meeting forward so that it would not clash with the MG Show at Stoneleigh on the 25th did not seem to deter. Where were the other members? It's your club so if you don't like what is on the menu you must let me know. Who knows you may be sitting on that gem of an idea that we all can action.

Surrey – Tuesday 20 February 2007

What is up with our weather at the moment? Fog warnings were out on the M25 as the fog drifted across the motorway. New member Andrew Rees put in his first appearance at our regular meet.

Eighteen people braved the weather. Peter Gardiner, yet again, arrived in his rubber bumper Midget. Desperate to secure the annual Surrey Section prize of a bottle of wine awarded to the member arriving at monthly meetings the most times in a Spridget, Peter regularly turns up in his car at both Surrey and Kent meets. It is not too late for others to make a challenge. Peter has also come forward offering to enquire as to the possibility of having a club presence at Woodchurch Wings and Things later in the year. (see: www.woodchurchwarbirds.com)

Nigel Saynor obviously seeking better all round vision in the fog arrived in his Frogeye with sidescreens and hood stowed. I bet the heater was on though.

Nay and Col stepped forward to manage a club stand at the Ardingly show in July. This

is a regular Surrey Section event and a popular show.

Having heard me enthuse about our September Tour to Angouleme (France) later in the year to view the Circuit des Remparts motor race, and surrounding area, Mike Gorman is in the latter stages of purchasing a property there.

Our tour to Arnhem in June has attracted eleven cars from as far afield as Hants and Warks.

Chris Harding wants to put on a club event at his homestead near Turners Hill but does not know in what shape or form. He has a field with woodland attached. Suggestions have included an inter Club Section tug-of-war (any other Section accept this Challenge?), cricket, rounders. Perhaps an 'It's A Knockout' type event between Club Sections. If anyone has any ideas then please come forward. Chris also wants to reduce his collection of restoration projects so that he can concentrate on just one – a Frogeye. If anyone wants to make an offer on a Chrome bumper 1275 Mk 3 Midget for restoration then make him an offer harding.c@btconnect.com. I am sure Ashley Hinton will be able to supply the necessary panels for completion, as I overheard him discussing his current stock.

** Would any Kent or Surrey members, and especially new members, NOT in receipt of my regular reminder e-mails please contact me so that I can add you to my e-mail directory in order that you do not miss out on reminders, forthcoming area events, or amendments?

Alan Anstead

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

Notts/Derby Area Report

As we received a mention in South Staffs and Birmingham report last month, we have been prompted to submit a report. The Notts/Derby section is open for business and we meet on the 1st Thursday of every

month at the Sitwell Arms, which is just North of Derby at Horsley Woodhouse. If you are thinking of coming along it is best to contact Ian just to make sure we will be there.

Rob Sheldon

Cambridgeshire Report



We had a little bit of drama with the February club night since we had arranged a change of venue to fit in with a visit to one of Hubie's contacts who had kindly consented to let us take a look at his collection of exotic classic racing cars and preparation workshops. The problem was that on the appointed night there was the threat of the worst weather of the winter with deep snow and subzero temperatures, on top of this our host had to cancel at the last moment, consequently, for the first time ever, I cancelled the meeting. As it happened the snow was nowhere as bad as predicted, but good sense had prevailed.

Fortunately Hubie managed to rearrange the visit for the following Thursday (hence it got reported a month late) on a much better night. Inevitably this resulted frantic phone calls and emails to all the usual suspects to try to ensure everyone knew what was going on, such was my dedication to trying to ensure everyone got the message that I even sacrificed watching Top Gear so I could spend the time phoning (not that this was fully appreciated by everyone). If you turned up at the Mad Cat and there was no meeting I can only apologise, it was just too good an opportunity to miss and everything happened at short notice.

Unfortunately we had picked the one Thursday night of the year that the appointed meeting place (pub) was overrun with rude people in suits Hubie even got told off by a complete stranger for not wearing a tie. We managed to muster the troops despite the bulging car park and set off in convoy to a remote farmhouse. We parked and were immediately ushered inside a workshop full of truly exotic classic racing cars, single seaters and sports cars all built for racing and most with interesting histories and podium places in famous events across the world under their belts (it is amazing what you can sometimes find right on your doorstep). The cars ranged from the late Fifties to the early Eighties, and went from Formula Fords through Lolas to a Formula 5000, all loved, raced and in various stages of restoration or preparation. It turned

out, our hosts (a husband and wife team) both raced these cars and funded their habit by restoring and preparing classic racing cars, and building racing engines. Best of all they cut their teeth on Midgets and Sprites and had some fabulous photos of Spridget race action to show us.

As well as showing us fifteen or more wonderful and highly valuable classic racing cars, including firing up that Formula 5000 for us, what a noise (and I thought Spitfire engines were loud) we were treated to a look at some of the fascinating equipment for setting up and balancing these cars. My personal favourite being a rig that supported the car and accurately measured the weight loading on each wheel so that the suspension and trim of the car could be adjusted for even

loading of each wheel. The quality and workmanship of all the parts of these brilliant cars was tremendous and very accessible since most of the cars had the bodies lifted off. We maybe stayed longer than we should have but our host was very understanding and patient with us and I think enjoyed our enthusiasm for his collection.

We eventually adjourned to the pub just in time for a swift half and the setting of a couple more event dates before returning home. I think everyone would join me in a huge vote of thanks to Hubie and our host for providing such an interesting evening for us (thanks Guys).

See you all at the Mad Cat

Dave Dixon

Dutch Report

At the time I'm writing this I still haven't done anything on my car to prepare it for the coming season. I made a list in December of this to do/replace/improve on the midget. The planning was that by the end of March the Midget would be ready... Was it to cold to work in the garage? Are the things to do on the car not important/necessary? No and no, its just that time slipped by so fast and now its almost Spring. I could blame it on the parts for not having arrived yet but I was also late at ordering them. Could it be I was just a little lazy this winter? Big comfort to me is that I'm probably not the only one who still hasn't finished the list of things to do on their car. Shame on all of you (and me) lazy Spridget owners!!! Next winter I'll do better, like I promised last year...



On the 25 February history was written: THE FIRST MASC NATTER in Holland!!! Our fresh new Dutch member Alex and I met at a local pub in a small town called Hensbroek in the north-west of Holland. No huge numbers of Spridgets yet, but we had a great time anyway discussing our cars, women and good beers. Alex is working hard on restoring his RWA Midget and it's ready for painting now: Pale Primrose (icecream car yellow). He's planning to have it finished by the end of this year. Just in time for its maiden-run to the Sprites 50th Birthday event at Gaydon 2008. So no excuses Alex, just finish the car!

First event coming up for this year is the All Sprite Run (Midgets welcomed too) on the 20th of May.

8/9/10 June MASC Battlefield trip in the Arnhem area in Holland (contact: alan.anstead@btoopenworld.com).

15/16/17 June Spridgettreffen in Germany.

8 (and perhaps the 9th too) September the anual Dutch spridgetrun with english written roadbooks so come over and join us! I better do something on my car now but what can I do with out parts? I'll give it a well deserved wash with the radio on, the sun shining and a nice beer, much better then lying under a car.

Cheers

Arie

Home Counties North West Mini Report



Location, location, location. Where are we? This is the report for February's activities, written in March for you to read in April!!! Problem is.. that February was designated a period of hibernation (see Feb. MASCOT); what can you report on that? I fitted a new pair of rear springs and now ride high enough for the exhaust pipe to stop knocking out luckless snails. (Must have been done in my sleep). So to the future! March 18th will be (was) our first run and pub lunch

with promise of seven cars. Other than that our programme was published last month. So let me remind you of SILVERSTONE. I have promises from four club members so far. We need six cars on each day to qualify for our piece of hallowed ground. Just to encourage me please drop me a note to say you will be there. May your road for 2007 be beautiful and curvy.

Chris Jackson

London Report

I've got Squirrels in my Plumbago

By way of explanation, Plumbago isn't the disease you may have thought it to be, but a climbing plant of the Caryophyllales order, found growing mainly in the Southern hemisphere and on the front of my house. But more of that later.

After reading about my attempt to coerce you all into using your Spridgets over the winter period, I have to confess that I have barely used my Frogeye since its New Year's forage across the London bridges. For two reasons. Firstly a failing alternator and the accompanied dull red glow of the ignition light had rendered my battery powerless and flat. And secondly while the car would have had no problem happily splashing around the London streets. It has just been too cold and damp for me to feel the need to venture down to the garage, disconnect the battery and trundle back up to the house. (30 metres

away), charge it overnight and then repeat the process in reverse all over again. Only to have to do once more the following day.

So the Monthly meeting at the Mulberry Bush was attended, disappointingly in the Renault instead. Apart from the usual group who will remain nameless for reasons which will become apparent in a moment. We had the added bonus of a rare visit from Sam Raouf (without his rebuilt Frogeye) who'd just returned from a trip abroad having had the odious task of test driving a Bugatti Veyron on behalf of his (obviously very wealthy) boss. Was he disappointed to drive it? I think not. But we were all a bit jealous of the fact that he had been let loose in probably the best and fastest road car ever built.

Unusually for a mid-week night, everyone present apart from me (as I was driving) carried on drinking throughout the evening.

I'm no expert on these things but I am reliably informed that seven pints of Winter Warmer on an empty stomach can slightly impair your ability to talk coherently, let alone walk in a straight line. So for this reason alone, those in attendance, for the sake of their Spousal relationships, will remain nameless.

Our second meeting of the month, at London's Ace Café Classic car night was again attended by me without the Frogeye. Once more we were blessed with the same weather that had kept me away from the garage for the preceding three weeks. But quite a few brave and hardy folk ventured out in all types of classic treasures with a respectable smattering of Spridgets among them.

Now this is where the Plumbago becomes relevant. You see, for the last four years, this magnificent climbing plant (the one from the Southern hemisphere and the front of my house) has played host to a squirrel whose

nest building exploits only seems to occur at the onset of spring and warmer sunny weather. So like the old seafaring folk who would hang seaweed outside their windows to act as a natural barometer, I have my living breathing squirrel rummaging around in my Plumbago to tell me that it's time to go down to the garage to change the alternator. Last Saturday, this is exactly what I planned and my squirrel's prediction of fair weather came true. I whipped the new alternator in and spent a sunny afternoon racing around Central London recharging the battery (as on the weekends, Mayor Ken switches off his Congestion Zone cash register).

That's why when I see my lovely plants annual decimation, I can still smile. Because I know that Spring and Spridgeting weather is just around the corner.

Gary Lazarus

Anyone Interested in a New South West Wales Area?

After bemoaning the fact that there didn't seem to be many MASC members in South West Wales, I have since found out that there are quite a few members living in the area and lots of non MASC Spridget owners here.

Would you therefore be interested in forming a new Area to cover South West Wales? If so,

please contact me, David Hill, at 01239 811307 or david@hillnet.clara.net. If there is enough interest we can have monthly meetings and summer events and a lot of FUN! Looking forward to hearing from you.

David Hill

Bristol Area Report

Now then, I do have a predicament. As our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, and March being the month that it is, our meeting falls well after deadline date for MASCOT. So what can I say since the last report then???

Er. Um ahh The Bristol group did bump into each other at the Stoneleigh MG show in February, Alan had a huge bag of petrol filler caps which he reckons will pay his mortgage off but not quite enough to pay for the planned work on the oldest Midget in the

village. I did get to meet a lot of fellow members that I only get to read about in MASCOT. I did get to see a 16 valve Midget, that only has 2 valves per cylinder (Go on, work it out) and despite Global warming, I bought a club fleece jacket from the club stand. We shall have to wait until next issue to conclude if our change of meeting venue in Pucklechurch was a success. Best to phone Alan Lo or me to see where we meet in April.

Terry Horler

From the Editor's Library



Austin Healey Sprite Hardtop sales brochure BMC Publication no:1841 Pink and grayscale

From the Archives

Speedwell's sporty special Sprite

ably looking around while waiting at some stockists, Alister Ross, of Cambridge spotted a Sprite sports car sandwiched between the end of a house and a garden hedge. He went to investigate and soon found himself the owner of a basket of bits that made up a 1961 Speedwell Sprite Gran Turismo.

This car had been bought by the last owner in 1968 and stripped down but had then been left when the owner joined the Navy. He had intended to fit an MG engine but could not get it fit.

Winton has tried to trace the history of 5447 HK. Five of the previous owners were no longer at the addresses in the logbook but, by chance, the first owner, a Mr Henry was. The original standard Sprite had been a birthday present for him in 1960 when he was 18. Immediately it was sent to Speedwell of North London for conversion into one of its Gran Turismo models.

One of Mr Henry's memories of driving the car was that he was taught to heel and toe on West Way by Graham Hill, who was, of course, one of

the directors of Speedwell. In 1962 he sold the car to Speedwell and remembers the firm fitting it with a 1500cc Fiat engine, with which it was reputed to have achieved over 120mph. He last touch with the car not long afterwards.

While Speedwell was well known as a performance enhancer it converted only a few Sprites to this specification. Alister Ross (at now with a BMC A-series engine again) has an aluminium coupe body with glass fibre bonnet, close-ratio gearbox,



Stripped in 1968, Speedwell Gran Turismo now gets rebuild

competition-type clutch, Speedwell Chassis head modifications. Alister would dearly love to know the racing history of 5447 HK.

Market Place

Adverts to Alan Lo

23 Charnell Road, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS16 5NE
email: alan@mobuzzing.net Tel: 0117 9572617

For Sale

Sprite Mk 111 parts – complete wire wheel rear axle with two wire wheels plus pair front adapters, eared spinners, (also 2 further wire wheels of doubtful condition). Dual master cylinder. Complete windscreen, 2 r/h dashboards, boot lid, radiator, heater fan, wiper motor and rack, no. plate light and plinth, 2 new old stock outer footwell panels l and r. Offers for items 1 and 2, the rest can be thrown in gratis.

Neil 01578 750249/07973 232824 or lylestane@tiscali.co.uk (Scottish Borders)

Sprite MK1 – Don Francis is selling his highly modified Sprite MK 1, featured in Retro Cars and Practical Classics magazines. Born December 23-29 1959 (Heritage Certificate). Fitted Ford Zetec two litre DOHC engine. Piper 270 cams, Dunnell 3D electric ignition. Approx 175 BHP. Granada 3 litre close ratio gearbox. Peter May racing – shafts and double bearing hubs. 155 mm front discs, Metro 4-pot callipers. Genuine 1960s fast-back Ashley hardtop. Real 6 x13 Minilite alloys. Rollover bar. Lots more, approx £4,000 of bits fitted.

Ring 01684 562399 for a chat and full specifications if interested.

MK 1 Frogeye Sprite Parts for Sale

Front bumper (slight kink at end)	£20
Pair Over riders	£20
Pair Rear bumpers	£25
1 R/hand outer sill	£12
Heater box	£15
Oil filter unit complete	£10
Tatty blower unit (works)	£10
Pair rear lights	£20
Pair rear brake drums	£15
Pair bonnet stays	£20
Pedal box	£20
Prop-shaft	£25
Pair engine mounts	£15
Pair engine mount rubbers	£10
Pair anti-roll rubbers	£3
2 chrome door trims	£5
One cockpit rear trim	£5
2 doors	£55

Not MK1 Sprite

HS6 1 " carburettor	£12
Pair cross drilled discs	£20
One front-line services racing steel – shaft	£30
Blower unit and radiator	£25
Engine rear plate	£10
Morris Minor 1098 engine for re-build	£20

Pair "Brooklands" aero screens – very expensive new £55. 4 – 5 x 13 steel wheels fitted unused 185 x 60 x 13 tyres – all good £110.

Don Francis 01684 562399
(Worcestershire)

Wanted

Frogeye body shell must be sound, free from corrosion and damage, or will consider restoration project that needs completing, if this has a good shell.

Please e-mail details to david_lees@ic24.net or call 01704 220222

Brilliant!

Aren't clubs brilliant? This one is! You can go to a brilliant pub. Chat with brilliant people about brilliant cars, or anything you want. Brilliant!

I can't wait for the MASCOT to arrive. It's brilliant! All those articles. Brilliant! All those reports. Brilliant! Written by brilliant people from all over the known world. England, brilliant. Scotland, brilliant. Holland, brilliant! If any one of them should stop writing in our brilliant MASCOT, it would not be so brilliant.

Members who rely solely upon our brilliant magazine, and do not attend our brilliant pubs, would surely be most upset if any of the writers of the brilliant reports were to disappear. Let's hope they never do.

Brilliant Brian Jeffery, Lincs Area

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