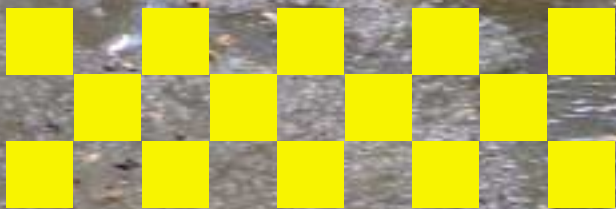


November 2007

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Mascot



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

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Also see the Club Nights section on page 4 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

Welcome to Nigel Williams, our new Chairperson, back on the Committee after a short break; and also to Philip Sellen as this year's new General Member, plus Bill, back on the Committee also as a General Member. Hope you all got to see the first two episodes of Wreck Rescue on Discovery Realtime in early October, featuring the TOTAL restoration of a rather sad-looking Sprite Mk1 by new member, Lizzie Bartlett. The finished article looks superb. Well done to Lizzie!

November has arrived after a bit an Indian Summer in October, when I'm sure, like us, you've been desperate to get out in your cars before the nights really set in. In our green Coupe we met up with some of our chums from South Yorkshire (FULL-THROTTLE Club) on a drive up to the Dales – it was actually warmer than it had been in September! After that it was a case of making full use of any sunny weekend to get out and about. A blast up to Burnsall in the 950 (albeit 110bhp 1330cc) in mid-October certainly cleared the cobwebs away. The sobering thought is that within a matter of a few weeks the local Council, in their wisdom, will be gritting the roads (even the side roads) with the same gusto they showed last year. Overkill to say the least! Anyway enough of our activities – both the Calendar and the Binders seem to be selling VERY well ... I think we'll have to be on to the printers again soon! Thanks for all your kind comments on the Calendar – the revenue raised will be put to very good use within the Club. November has the NEC Classic Car Show (MASC Stand organised by the Warwickshire Group) and, of course, this year's AGM.

There's once more some brilliant stuff in this edition from our expert band of contributors – a really fascinating piece, yet again from John (Hitchcock) Davies, this time on the Bonnet Release mechanism – it's just amazing from where he pulls all this mix of information. There's a Sun Bay report; Martin Ingall has Circuit des Remparts covered; there's first showing of a fabulous and evocative new suite of promotional material produced by Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird for Spridget 50 with the official Entry Form for the event; Buster's A-Team article, reproduced from Practical Classics; Adrian Turley has written a detailed report on his travels to the Pyrenees in May (Part II next month); along with loads of Area Reports.

Even more colour this month and more content ... again all due to the many and varied articles sent in by MASCOT contributors. My thanks to all of you – MASCOT really does go from strength to strength with all your help and support.

And don't forget, please keep on sending in your photos (PORTRAIT format) for the front cover. PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for DECEMBER issue is Midday SUNDAY 11 November.

Barry, Editor, 1150, editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk



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: 1979 MG Midget 1500 in action. Owned by Colin and Nay Carpenter from Surrey.

MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB

2008

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Club Nights

- 1st Monday **London Area (Congestion Zone) – NEW VENUE**, Meet at **The Plumbers Arms**, 14 Belgrave Street, Belgravia, SW1W OLN at 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 and 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 Jeffery, 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 Saturday **Yorkshire Area – November meeting will be on Saturday 3rd at The Three Hares**, Main Street, Bilbrough, York, YO23 3PH at 11:30 for 12:00 lunch. Following will be a short drive to the Craven Motorcycle collection. Winter meetings will be the first Saturday of the month until May when they will revert to the 1st Thursday. 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 and 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
- 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.

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Club Website

Members Only pages for November, User name: Micro Password: Blister

Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

Events organised so far for 2007

November

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

Sunday 18th AGM at the Patrick Collection, Birmingham. Please see details in the October *MASCOT*.

Friday 30th Cambridgeshire Area are going to the dogs! Yes, they are going to Peterborough Greyhound Stadium. Details from David Dixon on 01733 222810

December

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

Wednesday 12th North West Area's Christmas Dinner. Contact Les Robinson on 01772 432138

Sunday 16th Lincolnshire Area's Christmas Lunch at The White Hart, Lissington. 12:30. Details/bookings to Brian Jeffrey, 01552 531425 or brianlincs1ot@yahoo.co.uk .

Tuesday 18th Surrey Area Christmas Meal. Venue to be decided but probably Kingswood Arms. Details from David Wright, davidandchrisw@btinternet.com

Events organised so far for 2008

May

Saturday 3rd To Tuesday 6th Surrey Area Annual Tour. New Forest. Details from Sue Judd. suej001@btinternet.com or Chris Harding, harding.c@btconnect.com

Friday 16th To Sunday 18th International Healey Weekend at Goodwood.

Saturday 24th Spridget 50 at Gaydon – The Big Party. To register an expression of interest and receive priority booking, please contact Jeremy Cogman on 07702 958450 or email: organiser@spridget50.com

June

Thursday 12th To Sunday 15th Surrey Area's D Day Beaches Tour.

July

Tuesday 8th To Tuesday 15th Surrey Area's Le Mans Tour.

Friday 25th To Sunday 27th Cambridgeshire Area are going to Silverstone Classic Meeting. Details from Hubie Albany on 01733 265548

Sunday 27th Kent meeting at Cliftonville Car Show, Margate, Kent.

August

Thursday 21st To Sunday 24th 10th International MG Meeting in Berlin. Information and registration see www.mg-club-berlin.de or fax 0049-3084-707204 or Tel: 0049-3084-728381

December

Tuesday 16th

Surrey Area's Christmas Meal.

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

The Summer continues as I write this. Don't know if it makes up for the lousy May, June, July and half of August though! Hope that you have had and are managing to have, good Spridgeting trips. I suppose it is the same with most members but I've not managed to use the Midget as much this summer as I had planned to. Why do things conspire to stop me using the dear old Midget as much as I wanted to? But next year, things will be different, won't they?

Can I make a plea to all listed members? If your details are incorrect, can you please let

me know so that MAD is up to date and therefore, useful. Thanks.

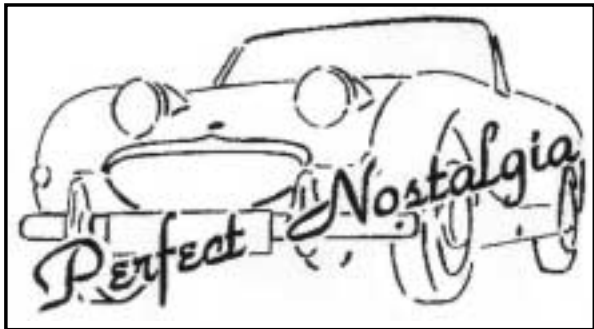
Don't forget, if you don't carry your copy of the Mutual Assistance Directory and you would like a copy you can download it from the members only section of our website. However, if you do not have access to the web or don't know someone who does, I will print off a copy and send it to you. Please remember that it is constantly updated so to be up to date, download it at least every month.

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Secretarial Scriblings

For me, the October edition of *MASCOT* was good news and bad news. Good news because it was another bumper edition full of excellent material. Good news because it contained 4 images of my Frogeye. Bad news because of all the colour! My Frogeye looks quite good in glorious monochrome, but in colour.... So now everyone knows why I refer to it as the 'Multi shades of red Frogeye' yes, it is more than just a bit cosmetically challenged. So too is my Sprite MkIV so I will admit to that before it too appears within these pages in its true colours!

I could say that this is deliberate. If potential new members to the club learn that the Club's Secretary drives around in a couple of tired old Sprites, then it is not going to put anyone off if they should fear that their Spridgley thing is not good enough. Club's tend to get a 'Spit and polish' image and that every nut and bolt must be to original specification. Well, I have worked very hard over the last 25 years to dispel this image of the Midget and Sprite Club! I continue to work very hard to maintain this policy by a concerted and dedicated campaign of neglect to my Sprite's more visible attributes – so there! Despite this, I do believe that we should get out there and have fun with our cars; this most definitely is a policy of the club and one that we are very good at. Never mind the cosmetics, never mind the spec, if you are having fun, then you are very welcome. Before the flood of comments arrive from those with the shining and modified examples, then I have to state that you too are equally welcome, which leads me to our 2008 calendar. This is full of top notch examples. Have you ordered your copy yet? Only 500 copies are being printed and are sure to sell quickly. Certain to be a collector's item – act now! As our 2008 calendar depicts our Spridgley things in their finest state, should we produce an alternative calendar for Spridgley things in a sorry state? If so, then may I offer subject matter for a couple of months please?

On the elections front. It is good to see Nigel Williams back on the committee. Nigel was a co-founder of the club way back in early 1983 and has much experience as a previous

committee member of 24 years. Our retiring Chairperson, Bill Mohan is still with us as a General committee member, handing over the hot seat to Nigel. Bill has done a great job and has been a very good ambassador for the committee in getting along to so many meetings and events around the country. Something he will no doubt continue to do. New to the committee is Phil Sellen, a Midget MkII owner from my neck of the woods. Phil is an active member of the Bristol group. Phil's Midget is about as good as it is possible to get, it has taken him a long time to achieve this and now complete, has loads of time on his hands. (He's going to have something to say about that) Calm down Phil, its just the committee initiation wind up, you need a long spring for the job!

50 Years of the Sprite is getting closer and the organising committee are working very hard to make it an event to remember. If you want to remember it, then you will have to be there. We are only doing it once so clear your calendar for it, it's going to be THE event of the decade – or half century even! Also in 2008, it will be the quarter century of the Midget and Sprite club, a fact that we shall not let pass un-noticed within these pages. For Nigel and me, we have been there from the very beginnings, if our combined memories are still intact, then some first hand revelations of 25 years of MASC. (If our combined memories are a bit fuzzy – then we will make it up instead – would anyone be the wiser!)

Actually, this will be the time for me to refer to 25 years worth of *MASCOT*. Yes, I have the complete works and what better account of the people, places and things that makes up our history. This will also be the time when I should invest in a complete set of *MASCOT* Binders from our regalia stock. Mike Grout, our Regalia officer has the stock, but I don't quite have the funds for a complete set (work it out). Christmas is coming, hint-hint!

So there is my dilemma, a complete set of *MASCOT* binders or a re-spray for one of my Sprites, I suspect the Binders might arrive first.

Terry Horler

Ballot Results

Thanks to the 135 members for returning their ballot forms for this years election of committee members. The results are as follows:

Committee Position	Candidate	Votes In Favour	Not in Favour
Chairperson	Nigel Williams	126	7
General Secretary	Terry Horler	127	4
Webmaster	Toby Anscombe	128	4
Advertising	Gary Lazarus	120	4
General	Bill Mohan	128	5
General	Phil Sellen	125	5

The above are elected to serve the club from the 1st of October 2007 to the end of September 2008.

It should be noted that the position of Treasurer was listed as 'NO NOMINATION' on the ballot form. Despite this, 'NO NOMINATION' received 28 votes in favour. The position of Treasurer has still to be formally elected and any members wishing to stand should apply to the Secretary for a Nomination Form. This to be returned by the 10th of November 2007. In the meantime, Anita Lachowicz continues to look after the club's finances and has stated her intention to re-stand for election. Ballot forms for the election of Treasurer will accompany the December edition of *MASCOT*.

We take this opportunity to welcome Nigel Williams and Phil Sellen as new members to the committee and to thank the retiring members for their services to the club.

The above results were collated by an independent adjudicator and non member of the club, Mr Mike Helbrow. We thank Mr Helbrow for acting on our behalf.

Terry Horler (for the committee)

Subscription Increase

It's been a long time since we have pulled this heading out of the box, but now, we have to. We will skip the usual bickerings about the cost of living, the world shortage of staples and the effect of melting icebergs on print costs, you have heard it all before we know. The rub is, the subscription rate will rise from £20 per year to £25 per year as from the 1st of December 2007. The joint member subscription will remain at £1 per person per year.

We believe the club has offered excellent value for money during the £20 subscription years, a look at the improved *MASCOT* in the last 12 months has been a cherry on the cake for all of us. This alone makes the increase of £5 per year still excellent value for money. Remember, your committee have to pay the increase too!

Terry Horler (For the committee)

Notice of Ballot

As you will have seen, the Ballot Form(s) that were included with the September edition, contained no nomination for the position of Treasurer. Subsequent to the deadline for the return of Nomination forms, our existing Treasurer, Anita Lachowicz informed us that she would be returning her Nomination form. Under the rules of our Constitution, we must go through the full process of giving notice of and the holding of another ballot to fill the post of Treasurer. Hence, we again invite nominations from the membership and give notice of a Ballot for the committee position of Treasurer.

Nomination Forms are available from the club General Secretary and must be returned by the closing date of the 10th of November 2007. Ballot Forms will be included with the December edition with a return date of the 10th of January 2008. As always, if you have an interest or any questions concerning the above, please contact any of the committee.

Terry Horler

On Opening the Bonnet

Anyone brave enough to open the bonnet of a Frogeye needs considerable muscle power and risks breaking their back. If this doesn't put them in Hospital immediately, then concussion from a falling bonnet will probably do so a few seconds later. If the bonnet slips whilst our intrepid Spridgeteer is reaching in to check the level of water in the battery, then the bang to the head and the blow to the back can be delivered simultaneously in an automotive *coup-de-grace!* The early *AN5* bonnet was indeed a miraculously engineered contraption.

The revised bonnet familiar to most owners, which remained with the car without significant change until the end of production, first made its appearance with the *HAN6* and *GAN1* cars, those rare birds that Terry Horler has christened the 'MASC-misfits' (see *MASCOT*, October 2007, page 18). These days, when many regard the Frogeye as the most desirable of all Sprites, it is easy to forget that in 1961 this revised bonnet was greeted with almost universal acclaim – those few who disapproved were probably orthopaedic surgeons who suddenly found themselves with less business and more time to spend on their golf courses. These later bonnets are much lighter and easier to open and, of all variants, the bonnets of the early *HAN6/7* and *GAN1/2* cars are arguably the most practical because their bonnet props are on the *left* side of the car, and so best suited for *right*-handed owners. These early revised bonnets do sag in an unsightly fashion when propped open and this single fact probably lies behind the switch to the later bonnet prop arrangement introduced with the *HAN8/GAN3* cars. This later prop allows a less sagging and more centrally supported bonnet and was placed on the right side of the vehicle because (I think) it would not otherwise clear the carburettors and air filters when the bonnet is closed. I hasten to add that this is my own private theory; I have no firm evidence for it; I just cannot think of any other logical reason for the change from left to right bonnet prop. No matter the reason, the fact remains that this "improved" *GAN3* prop

condemned the owners of all Spridgets later than Terry's MASC-misfits to fuss with their bonnet props with their left hand, an awkward thing for most of us because some 85-90% of our population is right handed. I believe that this change of prop was totally unnecessary (because a *GAN1* bonnet can sag for months and then close with perfect alignment) and that it is a very early example of the rot that was to beset progressively all later versions of the vehicle: changes made for purely cosmetic rather than sound engineering reasons. There are other examples of this early rot but rather than digress into an extremely emotive area we shall now concentrate on the main subject of this article – the bonnet release knob and cable.

The *HAN6/GAN1* bonnet is opened with a simple cable, operated by pulling an internal circular release knob (Figure 1) screwed to the inside left foot-well panel. As far as I can tell



Figure 1
(photograph courtesy of Classic Bits)

(reading further beyond page 73 in Terry's book than I have ever read before), this same cable and knob continued unchanged until the advent of the 'rubber bumper' GAN6 cars when for some obscure reason (probably cost) the circular knob was replaced by a fancy T-shaped handle.

Although this bonnet release cable is simplicity itself, the route it should take from the inner foot-well to the bonnet release mechanism behind the grille is not well documented. In particular, the route of this cable into the behind-grille area is not illustrated at all in the factory Parts List (Fig 2) and the position of the forward 'P' clip (part 37 in Fig 2) is ill defined. In fact, the bonnet cable diagram is uncharacteristically vague. This could be viewed as a rare lapse by the factory Drawing Office staff but in their defence, the little hole designed to carry the inner wire of the cable into the space between grille and radiator is probably very hard to illustrate in any diagram.

In an attempt to describe properly the position of this minuscule hole, I have taken a photograph looking UP into the front left wheel arch of my own MASC-misfit (Figure 3). In this photograph, the bonnet cable can be seen passing through its rubber grommet in the left



Figure 3

hand mud shield. The cable is then secured to the *underside* of the front end assembly by the forward 'P' clip mentioned earlier. Without this 'P' clip, the cable is in danger of being snagged and damaged by the bonnet's safety catch as it plunges down when the bonnet is closed. Continuing on, the inner cable wire then dives through a fascinating little hole in the front end, the outer part of the cable terminating at this point. And there it is, voila!

The screw securing the forward 'P' clip to the underside of the front end is a fiddly thing to install without the help of a friend and it is possible that on some cars this was a special

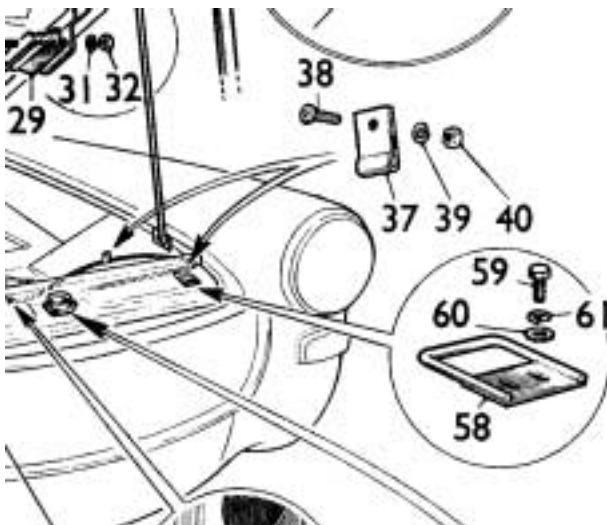


Figure 2

stud, not the simple screw indicated in Fig 2 (if anyone can shed any light on this, please do write in, thanks). The tiny hole for the inner cable is extremely easy to miss and when looking it might help to darken the garage and shine a light from behind. Even so, it may be filled with mud and almost totally invisible. Alternatively, try enlisting the help of a sharp-eyed youngster with 20/20 vision, if it can be separated from its iPod and mobile phone for 30 seconds. When my Dutch friend Niek Herwegh finally found his hole with the help of Figure 3 (after twice saying it wasn't there and after my patience had almost run out), his email summed the

situation up nicely – “I FOUND IT!! Blimey! It's something you would expect in a needle, not a motorcar!” Three other friends have made rapid ‘adjustments’ after discovering with varying degrees of shock that their cables were taking interesting and ingenious but nevertheless non-standard routes in the wheel arch area. I wonder how many more ‘adjustments’ will follow this month?

With very occasional lubrication, these bonnet release cables will give long and trouble-free service. Anyone seeking a replacement cable for an early car should be aware that many suppliers will attempt to fob us off with one of the fancy GAN6 T-handled things (it's the later improved model Sir, recommended by the factory for all cars: we only have one in stock, they are hard to obtain and it is a popular item). If you refuse to be fobbed off in this manner and want a fine replica replacement early bonnet cable, then contact Duncan Lloyd at ‘Classic Bits’,
3 St Johns Crescent, Stansted,
Essex CM24 8JT;
Phone: 01279-812367,
Mobile: 07752-637200
(callers by appointment only please).

Duncan supplies the replica cable illustrated in Figure 1 – a very high quality piece, to me indistinguishable from the original factory item. Duncan can also supply other hard-to-obtain

parts for our cars, including a very good replica early choke cable. For a full list of what is available, either contact Duncan direct or visit his eBay shop ...
<http://stores.ebay.co.uk/Classic-Bits>

Finally, remember to grab a torch before you peek up into your front left wheel-arch with a magnifying glass – and if you are an Old Fogey like me, don't bend over too quickly because opening a Frogeye bonnet is not the only manoeuvre that can break your back.

John E. Davies (Member 3443)
jed2@cus.cam.ac.uk

A post script to John Davies article regarding the route taken by the bonnet release cable; I had difficulty in locating the tiny aperture for the inner cable from the perspective of the wheel arch, due to underseal and paint which must have easily filled the hole. With the grille out, I managed to pin point a very small depression on the surface; this was easily cleared out by twisting a $\frac{1}{16}$ " drill bit carefully back and forth.

Having re-routed the bonnet cable correctly, it just remains to fit the P clip under the slam panel. Strangely, I cannot remember ever having noticed the aperture for the P clip before?

Philip Sellen 1153



For a range of high quality interesting,
and hard to find items for the
AH Sprite and MG Midget and other
classic cars visit:

<http://stores.ebay.co.uk/classic-bits>

TEL: 01279 812367

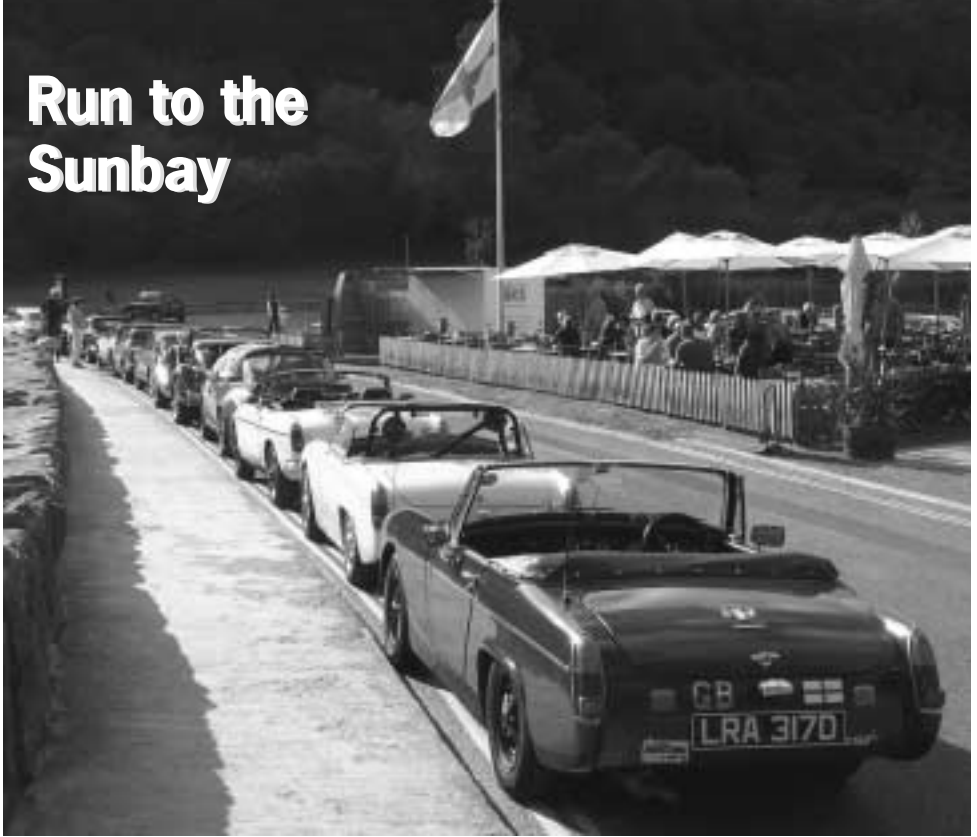
**AUSTIN-HEALEY
SPRITE**

**RUNNING AND
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LONGBRIDGE
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Run to the Sunbay



For what is now an annual event, this being the third visit, we had organised a weekend at the Sun Bay Hotel in Hope Cove, Devon for the weekend of September 21st and 22nd. Due to work commitments, people were making their own way there on the Friday, so Sue and I plus Pam and Bill set off together on the Friday morning in our Midgets for an uneventful journey down. I managed to keep the roof off until we stopped for a coffee, but then it started raining so I gave in to the inevitable, and we finished the journey with hoods up. Not that it makes much difference in my car – we were dripped on from all sides. Bill and Gwyn + Rory the dog arrived at the hotel in Lara and their eurobox – I don't think Gwyn fancied 200 miles with Rory on her lap. Rob and Bubs turned up in a posh Merc convertible, as the Westfield is not on the road at the moment, – mine host Johnny was lending them his MGB for the following day's drive. The prize – had there been one – for the longest journey went (for the second year running) to Les and Diane

from Leyland, Lancs, who arrived looking remarkably refreshed in their immaculate Mk.2 Sprite from a 300 + miles journey. John and Pom turned up late in the evening in a MGBGT, as they could not get away until after work.

Johnny and Jane (mine hosts) had organised a well thought out picture quiz for the Friday evening, which was entered by all the other residents as well. As we failed again to fill all 14 rooms (please note for next year), Johnny had put out an advert himself, so we were additionally blessed with a 1965 Mini which had come from Watford, plus another MGB from Torquay. Having to put ourselves into teams for the quiz, I had the foresight to adopt schoolboy tactics for choosing whose team I wanted to be in (I had previously emailed Les to "double bagzee" being in his team, having been in it last year when he singlehandedly won the first prize). So I duly abandoned my wife and joined up with Les and Diane, and despite my input, we narrowly won again.

Saturday greeted us with clear blue skies, so for the third year running we had a fantastic day for our run out, being joined by some local cars, namely a Porsche 911, MGF, Johnny and Jane in their E-Type and an Excalibur. To complete the line up, we had 2 Harley Davidson Bikes plus a Triumph 650 as outriders.



Our route took us along the coast to Dartmouth, stopping at the Marine Hotel for lunch, the cars causing some considerable interest, all parked in line along the full length of the hotel. We returned through Salcombe and finished up at the Winking Prawn (careful) for afternoon tea and the obligatory slab of treacle tart. On arriving back at the hotel, Simon, who owned the Excalibur, had generously provided bottles of chilled champagne to greet us with.

A disco had been organised at the Hotel for the evening, with a fancy dress theme of St. Trinians, Schoolboys and The Blues Brothers. It is too long a story to explain that mix, but suffice to say that everyone entered into the spirit and dressed up, including the owners and the waitresses. The disco was as usual a great success, finally playing the last

requests at 0130hrs (Sorry, that was my fault – needed to finish with some Quo).

Then had to retire to the bar to cool down – it's tough, isn't it.)

Sunday reverted to rain again I'm afraid, so it was back home with hoods up and wet trousers once more.

Funnily enough, Mo and Phil from the Warks Brigade had earlier decided to come for the weekend, but had to pull out due to work commitments, and as Sue and I were tootling home up the M5 somewhere near J8, who should pull up alongside us in their Spridget ...

Next year more of the same, so keep September free.

Geoff Mears



A Frogeye Returns Home



Being a lifelong Spridget fan, I always wanted a Frogeye. I already owned a Mk III Midget (for 27 years) and so to own a car upon which the Midget was based would be great. I live in the small seaside town of Tenby in Pembrokeshire and in 1996, whilst working in the town, a work colleague told me that he knew of a Frogeye that was partly restored but in an unfinished state sitting in a barn on the edge of Tenby. It belonged to the local Vet. This person had bought the car years before and had been quietly restoring it. Every opportunity I had to take my dog or cat to the vet, I volunteered. Of course there was an ulterior motive in that I wanted to see the car. I didn't get the chance and a short while later my job moved to another town. A couple of years went by and one day I decided to take the bull by the horns and call and see the vet. He had now retired. He agreed to show me the car.

When I saw it I was just so excited. Inside his barn he had constructed what could best be described as a sarcophagus made of insulation board. The car was inside this. It was nowhere near complete. Whilst much of the bodywork had been

professionally repaired and in fact sprayed in Old English White there was micro blistering. The bonnet had not been touched and was in a real state (see *MASCOT 281 Saving a Frogeye Bonnet*), the mechanicals were in bits and the interior missing. I asked if he had thought about selling it but he was adamant that he was going to finish it. I left dejected. Over the next few years I would bump into him and he would give the same answer although no work had progressed on the car.

Then one evening in 2005 my son and I were driving along the road next to his home when I saw his sheep had escaped on to the road. My son and I managed to get them back into the field and I decided to call and tell him what had happened. Of course sheep turned to Frogs and low and behold he agreed to sell me the car. I was over the moon.

Whilst the car had deteriorated a little since that first viewing, it was still a very viable restoration project. I spent the next couple of years restoring it.

During this period I realised that its registration number emanated from the Isle of Wight, beginning RDL. Whilst being a member of MASC, I'm also a member of the MGOC and I saw that they had a weekend planned on the Isle of Wight during the weekend of 21-23 September 2007. What a perfect opportunity to reunite the car with the Island. My wife



Sharon and I duly booked and on Thursday 20 September 2007 we headed off from Tenby in the Frogeye, hood down, for our overnight stop at Botley near Southampton. This was a journey of 240 miles and its first major trip. The next morning we headed for Portsmouth and the ferry to Fishbourne.

Our hotel was in Shanklin where we were to be joined by 49 MGs. Needless to say we were the only Frogeye and the oldest car on the event. During the weekend we took part in all the events including the Saturday Road Run where I met an Isle of Wight resident, Dave Batchelor with his OEW 1961 Frogeye (1275cc). He was really excited at seeing a Frogeye with an Isle of Wight registration number and kept saying "That's an Island car". Needless to say I photographed the Frogeyes together. Everywhere we went our car drew smiles and admiring looks. We were sad to have to leave and on the Sunday headed home to Tenby.

We had done a round trip of 650 miles in our perfectly standard 1958 Frogeye (chassis 1991). The car went like a dream bar one problem, which I traced to a poor earth on the chassis. Sharon and I were delighted and it is truly a part of our MG family. It has also been christened 'Poppy'.



Since returning I have contacted the County Press which is an Island newspaper, appealing for any information as to the original owner of the car. You never know, I might be lucky!

Neil Thomas, 3617





Angouleme – Circuit des Remparts 2007

On this our second trip to Angouleme we were joined by a small convoy of Sprites and Midgets from the MASC. With JJO on the trailer behind my Alfa we cruised down



to Le Mans on the Thursday. Next day we left the solo Spridgets to enjoy a tour of fairy castles, etc and proceeded to our friend's home at Champniers, near Angouleme. Visiting the town in the afternoon to collect my 'goody bag' from the mairie we found there were already many classic and vintage cars from the UK, France and other European countries congregating in the streets and squares, and many of the cafes and bars were doing a good trade. From the goody bag I discovered I was entered with the Sports and GT cars including a number of Jag XKs and a C type, plus a Lotus 11, a Peerless and a Reliant Sabre 6. The only similar vehicle to mine was Dick Skipworth's ex-Ecurie Ecosse Sprite. Last year my full race 998cc engine with 649 cam and alloy flywheel proved to have minimal torque and, with the 4.55 diff, I had to change into 1st for all 3 hairpins on every lap. This time I had a 1330 engine with 286 scatter cam, which gives good torque, and a 4.875 diff.

On Saturday afternoon we had to go through the painful process of administration and



fire extinguisher, which was not 'in date'. So what would they be after this time? The first hurdle involved my FIVA log book – it seems I should have a full FIA log book for the car. The simple reason I haven't is that it cost £400 to £500 and for one annual event that seems excessive. Next were the tyres – nothing in the regs to say that we can't use modern sticky 60 series rubber but clearly what they wanted to see was historic Dunlop racing tyres. Then they didn't like the distributor being electronic. They photographed the distributor and the carburetors – by which time I was thinking along the lines "Well, if you don't want me to participate I'll be off to the bar and spectate". Eventually the necessary sticker was applied to the car and we should have been ready for Sunday practice. We intended to drive back to our digs in the Sebring but it refused to start as the fuel pump was just pumping air. After much grovelling about in the dust under the car, a puff from Midget racer Robert Dean into the tank got rid of the air lock and we were off. Overnight I changed the pump hoses which seems to have remedied the fault.



scrutineering. After a lengthy wait at the Hotel de Ville to show my competition licence and to hire a transponder (for electronic lap timing) we proceeded to the paddock for scrutineering. Last year we had problems with my racing overalls which were not to FIA spec and with my



Sunday dawned fine and sunny – the temperature went above 30 in the afternoon. In practice I was delighted to find I could get round the hairpins, on most occasions, without needing first gear and was passing bigger cars in the twisty bits. However, after 4 or 5 laps the oil pressure light was coming on and I decided to come in. I was pleased to find I was 6th fastest out of 14 cars with a lap in 1m 05. There followed a lot of deliberation about the oil pressure problem followed by a dash back to the house for some Penrite 25/75 oil to replace the normal 20/50. This brought the cold pressure up to 60 lbs but clearly the engine wasn't right.

The start of the "race" was a complete fiasco. No-one was quite sure how this was to be effected but someone told me it was with a flag. When all appeared ready a French tricolour was raised momentarily and nothing



happened. The front two rows remained stationary. Then cars started moving forward from the back resulting in some bent bodywork to several cars and we were off. The Lotus 11 soon hit a barrier so we had to cruise past it under yellow flags. Then Dick Skipworth abandoned his Sprite on the exit of the top hairpin bringing out the safety car.

JJO was getting very hot, as was I – we had waited 40 minutes in the paddock in the heat beforehand. The oil pressure was dropping below 30lbs and the light kept coming on. Perhaps foolishly I pressed on hoping to finish. The safety car pulled in and 2 cars behind me must have been shown a green flag before I was and rushed past. My gear changes were becoming stiffer and then halfway down the straight the motor seemed to seize so I pulled off. The motor was in fact still running and wouldn't stop so I put it in 3rd to stall it. As a result I ended up with a jammed gearbox as well as a seized engine.

I think I had made a reasonable showing, running near the front of the field for 9 laps, and received a standing ovation from some of the grandstands as I toured back on the breakdown truck.

I had had a lot of fun despite the rather unsatisfactory result, and now have to sort out the wrecked centre main bearing and rebuild the engine – AGAIN!

Martin Ingall

Spridget 50

A busy month for Spridget 50 has just passed though you might not know it from the outside!

Firstly, the information I promised you last month. The MG Owners Club have very kindly offered to handle all the bookings as they are already set up for doing this. This saves Spridget 50 much expense and effort and is very much appreciated. Please see below for booking details.

We had our committee meeting at Gaydon on the 29th September which was an incredibly usefully exercise. We were able to view the area where we are going to be packing 1000 Sprites and Midgets into and measure out the space where the special displays will be. Four of us attended in Spridgets and we took the opportunity to get some smashing publicity photos outside the Museum. Unfortunately on the way up from Hampshire the Toyota gearbox in my Mk2 Sprite started making some nasty noises in first and second so that's another job to be done between now and the 24th of May 2008.

It was my first visit to Gaydon and I was very impressed. It's a super building and the collection while not large is very interesting. After the meeting Bill Mohan, Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird and I spent some time wandering amongst the exhibits and mulling on some of the missed opportunities of the British car industry.

But back to Spridget 50. Our next milestone is a major publicity effort at the Classic Motor Show at the NEC in November. The flyer is presently being updated to include more information, the price and booking details. A poster is also being produced.

Four of the five clubs involved have stands at the NEC and each will have at least one Spridget on. The Spridget 50 message will also be very prominent on each stand with flyers and posters.

With all that has been going on we've not really had a chance to think about regalia for the event but we are now addressing that and we are hoping to have a wide range of Spridget 50 branded clothing and souvenirs available soon.

I can also confirm that we will be having a concours competition on the day. To encourage entries there will be no entry fee however we do ask that you register when booking. There will also be a 'Pride of ownership' contest, with no emphasis on originality, that you can enter on the day.

Pat Kimber (yes, he is 'a Kimber') from the Austin Healey Club is busy organising some excellent talks and demos for the day. Some of the speakers he is lining up sound very interesting and I hope I'll be able to get enough free time on the day to attend at least one of the sessions.

Finally, if you'd like to be involved in the greatest Spridget event ever then do please get in touch. The committee would love some more volunteers to do some organising (you don't have to attend any meetings) and then on the day we are going to need lots of people for marshalling and manning various stands. You won't have to commit your entire day and we cannot possibly organise the event without lots of helpers. Come and be a part of it.

Jeremy Cogman

jeremy@cogman.co.uk 07702 958450



SPRIDGET 50



THE BIG PARTY

A unique event to celebrate fifty years of the Austin Healey Sprite and the MG Midget

The Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire
Saturday 24th May 2008

Entry £12 per car

Call the ticket hotline on: 01954 231125
or visit: www.spridget50.com for more details



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You are invited to attend



SPRIDGET 50 THE BIG PARTY

Probably the biggest gathering of Sprites and Midgets ever!
All models and variants welcome.

Entry fee of £12 includes:

- Event entry for Spridget, driver and passenger
- Spridget only parking, with up to 1000 cars anticipated
- Individually numbered rally plaque
- Commemorative souvenirs
- Reduced price Gaydon museum entry

Activities to include:

- Historic and Racing Car display
- Demonstrations and forums
- Limited edition regalia and trade stands
- Concours and Pride of Ownership competitions
- Fun activities including 'Rocker Box Racing'

Plus much more... visit: www.spridget50.com for further details.

Call the ticket hotline on: **01954 231125**

or fill in this form enclosing a cheque for £12 payable to "MGOC"
or payment card details and send to:

**Spridget 50, Octagon House, 1 Over Road,
Swavesey, Cambridge, CB24 4QZ, UK.**

Admission packs will be sent out several weeks prior to the event.
Every effort will be made to provide all the advertised attractions.

However, the organisers reserve the right to alter the programme if necessary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Email (optional): _____

Spridget Model: _____ Registration Number: _____


Please enter my vehicle in the following: Concours Competition
(Please tick one box only) Pride of Ownership Competition

If paying by card please complete the following:

Card type (Visa/Mastercard etc.): _____ Card no: _____

Expiry date: _____ Security no (last 3 digits from signature strip): _____

Issue (where applicable): _____

A photograph showing three elderly men with grey hair working on the interior of a car. They are focused on a component near the steering wheel. The car has a red dashboard and a black steering wheel. The men are wearing casual clothing; one is wearing a light blue t-shirt with a Union Jack on the sleeve. The scene is brightly lit, likely in a workshop or garage.

**IF YOU HAVE AN
AUSTIN-HEALEY
PROBLEM YOU CAN'T
FIX, AND IF YOU CAN
FIND THEM, MAYBE
YOU CAN HIRE...***

THE *A* TEAM

*Actually, Sprinto owner Buster Evans called on the 'Organisation of Specialised Handyman & Technician' (OSHNT) to help him out. They became 'The Buster Cluster'.

www.productofaesthetics.co.uk

PRIZES UP FOR GRABS!

VOTE FOR THIS RESTO STORY AT WWW.PRACTICALCLASSICS.CO.UK (GO TO THE MESSAGE BOARDS)

Every year Practical Classics runs its Restore Of The Year competition. Buster Evans' Sprite is entered into the 2007 race. To vote for him, or for any of the 11 other entries in the race, go to the PC website at www.practicalclassics.co.uk.

click on the 'message boards' button, go to the General Chat forum, and go to the thread entitled Restore Of The Year 2007. When you cast your vote you will automatically be entered into a draw to win a 12-month subscription to PC.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: AL CLARENS & TOM WOOD INTERVIEWER THEODORE I GILLAM

I'VE ALWAYS maintained the Austin-Healey Sprite is one of the most influential cars in American history. It virtually single-handedly introduced the average American to an affordable sports car. Even a poor enlisted sailor like me could afford one.

I'd joined the US Navy in 1959 and a fellow sailor at the Memphis Naval Air Station had a foreign sports car. I didn't want the typical American car, and this brand new Sprite cost less than \$2000, which was about \$1000 cheaper than everything else, so I bought it.

I wouldn't think anything of driving the Sprite 2000 miles from Memphis to Los Angeles in just 50 hours and that's before freeways. When I left the Navy in 1963, I went off on a 7000-mile odyssey with just \$500 and a Texaco credit card in my pocket. I drove along the Mississippi, through Alabama, down into Florida and up the east coast of the States.

The Sprite's been through the best and the worst of times. I went on my first date with my wife, Pam, in this car. We dated for two weeks and then decided to get married - but we did the decent thing and waited another four weeks. We've now been hitched for 41 years.

By the early Nineties, the Sprite was getting tired. I don't know how many miles it'd done because after it went round the clock a few times, the speedo broke and has been ever since. I stripped the car bare, pulled the engine and transmission and was fully intent on putting it back to its showroom condition. Soon after that, however, I had terrible back pain which resulted in me having major back surgery. Since then I haven't been able to bend over and I find it hard to walk, so the Sprite just sat there.

I've been a member of the Internet Spridget List, spridgetsvillains.com.net, since the first day it was up and running. The List is a group of about 750 people worldwide, mainly in America, who have fun and help

each other out. They're a great bunch of people who all want to keep these cars going. Because of that, there's the same spirit we had years ago, where people will do anything for anyone and not even expect payment for it.

In December 2005 Ron Seave, who was one of the first members of the Spridget List, came out an

1960 AUSTIN-HEALEY SPRITE

- ENGINE: 1498cc 4-cyl/50hp
- POWER: 40-45mph/33hp
- TORQUE: 15.5lb-ft/21kgm
- GEARBOX: 4-speed manual
- TOP SPEED: 80mph
- 0-50MPH: 10sec
- MPG: 30mpg
- LENGTH: 10ft 3 1/2ins/314cm
- WIDTH: 46 1/2ins/118cm
- WEIGHT: 1100kg/2430lb
- CONCOURS VALUE: £10,000-£15,000

These guys had flown in from all over the country, at their own expense, just to help me out!

OWNER'S PROFILE

California-born and raised, Robert 'Buster' Evans lives in Eugene, a sports reporter after leaving the Navy, then eventually had his own newspaper. He quit to become a cop for five years then went back to college, got his degree and taught history at California State University. At 60 he's now enjoying his retirement.



It's amazing what can be done in three days. Buster and wife Pam test the finished Sprite.

business to where I live in Anaheim and had a look at the Sprite. He said, 'Man, this would make the greatest OSHT project.' I'd never heard of it before so he had to explain the OSHT stood for Organisation of Spridget Handymen in Transit. It sounded like a good idea but most of these guys were on the other side of the country. Got serious.

Anyway, Ron had already named the project 'the Buster Cluster' and called Frank Clark in New Jersey who's a carpenter by day and the country's leading expert and restorer of Spridgets the rest of the time. Ron asked if he wanted to go to California to help put my car together. He then called Peter Caldwell, whose World Wide Auto Parts in Madison, Wisconsin, is a major supplier of Spridget parts and asked him the same question.

Once it went out on the Spridget List and people thought it sounded like a good idea, I had to get things moving. The car's body wasn't too bad but had some rust from an accident 40 years previously. Other little cancer spots were appearing here and there, especially under the wing leading, and there were lots of dinks and dents.

I took the stripped Sprite to MAACD of Stanton, a national collision repair and auto painting franchise, got chatting and found their estimator had a Sprite at the same time I'd bought mine. They repaired the front wheel.

OSHT Who's Who: the team who made it all happen.

NAME: Ron Seave
LOCATION: Eugene, Oregon
ROLE: OSHT Coordinator
DESCRIPTION: Business director for an aerospace company
WHAT HE DOES: Member of work wherever required

NAME: Frank & David
LOCATION: Terns
NAME: Steve
LOCATION: New Jersey
DESCRIPTION: Carpenter
WHAT HE DOES: Got a license from installing engine, timing, wiring, boost and just about everything else. Two

NAME: Jim Johnson
LOCATION: Dodge City, Kansas
DESCRIPTION: Retired meteorologist
WHAT HE DOES: General assembly work, seats, exhaust, boost rollers, etc.

NAME: Peter Caldwell
LOCATION: Madison, Wisconsin
DESCRIPTION: Owner, World Wide Auto Parts
WHAT HE DOES: Friend and major cooperation, front end, engine work

NAME: Paul
AGGRESSIVE LOCATION: Portland, Oregon
DESCRIPTION: Owner/operator of MeritAuto
WHAT HE DOES: Lots of work on mechanical parts

NAME: Bob Seave
LOCATION: Upstate New York
DESCRIPTION: Director of technology for a international company
WHAT HE DOES: Various jobs, often head first in the beach

NAME: Al Clarens
LOCATION: Dayton Beach, Florida
DESCRIPTION: Retired photographer
WHAT HE DOES: Photography and fine car/bike tuning

THE A TEAM



Buster's stopped down Sprite on its way to the paintshop.



All hands on deck again for the barnet - sorry, hood.

arches by welding masonry rebar over the arches, free of charge, and mixed three different paint formulas until they matched the virgin paint under a tall light assembly. They were really enthusiastic and did a great job.

In the meantime I was buying parts, mainly in Britain because quality is like a religion to the British. I used AH Spares who were really helpful, and I managed to buy a lot of parts at the Baseline Autojumbles, including a couple of seats. Eventually, I had a painted shell, a transmission rebuilt free of charge by Paul Aggissroon, who I'd never met before, a new front end with Peter Caldwell built stacks, new interior and a new wiring harness, so I could put the Sprite back to the way it was. I labelled everything, put it all in boxes and put it out on tables in my double garage. All I needed was some help to put it all together.

One member, Ann Johnson, used to be a meteorologist for the National Weather Service so he started to make

NEED TO KNOW

AH Spares
Website:
www.ahspares.co.uk
Buster's website www.busterandbelle.com
Baseline, Portland, Oregon
www.baselineautojumbles.com
MAACO
www.maaco.com
Sprigget List: www.busterandbelle.com/spriggetlist.html
World Wide Auto Parts, Madison, Wisconsin
www.worldwideautoparts.com

predictions about the weather in Anaheim as we didn't want it too hot or humid. From that information we set a date: July 26. A number of guys said they'd come but you know people bail on you at the last minute so we guessed that if maybe five or six turned up, we'd be doing OK.

Imagine my surprise when phone calls started to come in from people who needed to be picked up from various airports. These guys had flown in from Connecticut, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, Kansas - in fact, from all over the country, at their own expense, just to help me out. Some people from California, Arizona and Oregon drive over in their cars, too, and when I counted up there were 23 Sprigget handyman ready to get to work. I could only put up eight people so most of them stayed at hotels, also at their own expense.

The amazing thing is that this was the first time most of the people had actually met each other face-to-face, despite talking to each other for maybe ten years or so.

There wasn't any great plan in the way the guys did things. Everyone was in the garage, on our pool deck, or out in the alley and people found their own jobs. I have to say that I don't know exactly what went on all of the time because I was out and about, running around getting bits and pieces, and making sure everyone was fed and watered. Glen Byrns brought five gallons of porter and five gallons of stout, brewed by his friend, and my wife made vast quantities of food. We went through two kegs and 179 bottles of beer, two cases of water, 134 Pepsi's, Cokes and 7-Ups, and 24 big bags of ice. Susan Hillier from MAACO came round with doughnuts for us all.

By Saturday evening they had the engine installed. As everyone crowded into the garage, Frank lit the starter three times and it fired up. Boy, did that sound great. Sunday was almost anti-climactic. Out of all the parts I had stored, I found I was missing only one thing, so when Pam and I went for our first drive, like we did when we first met, it only had one headlamp. We drove to the end of our alley and back again, to find a bunch of grown men with tears in their eyes. It was a moving experience for all of us.



Teamwork and making good friends is what the OSHIT support group is all about.

'Before that weekend we were strangers but now some really close friendships have been formed'

OS HIT Who's Who [cont.]

NAME: Robert Carls
LOCATION: San Diego, California
OS HIT: Professional film producer
WHAT HE DOES: Filming, teaching parks and leisure to people, riding road etc.

NAME: Larry Miller
LOCATION: Dallas, California
OS HIT: Retired US Navy and retired computer programmer
WHAT HE DOES: Small jobs like digging down latrines.

NAME: Robert E. Houston
LOCATION: Santa Teresa, New Mexico
OS HIT: Works for Mexican trucking company
WHAT HE DOES: Rebuilding stock axles, publishing webzine.com forum, etc.

NAME: Jim Easler
LOCATION: Scottsdale, Arizona
OS HIT: Retired independent contractor sales engineer
WHAT HE DOES: Filled in whenever he could

NAME: Clyde Byrns
LOCATION: Death, California
OS HIT: Works with DMK at a veterinary genetic laboratory
WHAT HE DOES: Worked on engine, suspension and brakes

NAME: Mike Stevens
LOCATION: Tustin, California
OS HIT: Motion picture artist
WHAT HE DOES: Theater assembler

NAME: Jim Rogers
LOCATION: San Juan Capistrano, California
OS HIT: Self-employed land planner/urban designer
WHAT HE DOES: Cheap labor - helped with axle, engine and interior



Finding the right parts certainly isn't a problem, many of them coming from the UK.

We drove to the end of our alley and back to find a bunch of men with tears in their eyes

As a token of my thanks and to mark the occasion, I gave everyone a Buster Cluster T-shirt, coffee cup with the Buster Cluster logo, an AH Sports Club mug and a dashboard plaque. Colin Dadds from Australia couldn't make it to the Buster Cluster but he sent me a grab handle and in return I sent him a plaque.

Let's get this straight - I didn't restore this car. These wonderful guys on the Spridget list did. They came for a mystical, magical three days and they went home with lots of good memories. Before that weekend we were a bunch of strangers but now some really close friendships have been formed. I'm sure there will be other CSHIT projects but none can be the same as this one. As for the Sprite, we're hoping to come over to Britain for the 30th Anniversary at Gaydon next year. See you there, perhaps.

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Practical Classics is very pleased that Malcolm wanted to print this article and hopes all you Midget and Sprite lovers enjoyed the story of Buster and his team. Now for a quick plug... Practical Classics always fills its pages with interesting, useful articles on all manner of old car related subjects, so why not think about subscribing? PC would love to have more Midget and Sprite fans among its readership.

Steve Pierce
LUCASVILLE, Arkansas,
California
Self-employed
Construction upfitter
with AF&T
Various jobs including
rear bumper

Ray Phillips
WALLINGFORD,
Connecticut
SALES AND SERVICE
Insurance Agent
Various jobs
Kingpins, interior,
drum bear and axle
plates

Norman Olsen
LAKELAND, Ontario,
Oregon
Retired fighter pilot
Various jobs. A few
small jobs

Vigil
SUNOLTAH, Fountain
Valley, California
RETIRED
Network consultant
Various jobs
Helped install many
different parts

Hal Faulkner
LUCASVILLE, Rio Vista,
California
Self-employed
Trailer
Joe's grocery store
chain worker
Various jobs
Various jobs, brought
some important tools

Levy Block
LUCASVILLE, Coosco,
California
Self-employed
Computer
programmer
Various jobs
Dashboard, firewall
and brakes

Billie Jackson
LUCASVILLE, San
Bernardino
Self-employed
Flight related
engineer
Various jobs
Worked on the
lockdown panel to
install the ignition
switch correctly

Moors Run August 18th 2007

After coffee at Lord Stones café on the edge of the Cleveland Hills above Carlton Bank nine Spridgets set off to explore the North Yorkshire moors. The weather was not looking too good so most opted for their hoods on. I decided to brave it but a couple of miles down the road before the village of Chop Gate, the mist was looking thicker down the valley so we pulled in and fitted the hood, not a two minute job as most Frogeye owners know. Even through the mist and drizzle the heather was clearly visible, for a taste of what was to come when we reached the moor top.

During the climb up though Westerdale the weather greatly improved and the sweet smell of the heather filled the car interior over and above the hot engine.

We snapped Ray and Sue crossing the ford and thought every one had negotiated it successfully only to find out later that the handbrake cable on Tim and Sarah's Sabrina had snapped not long after leaving Lord Stones so they had returned home. They did join us for the after-run debrief at the Cross Keys and I'm sure they'll tackle the route at a later date. Wearing woolly hats Gerry and Trish, who joined us for the first time, stayed warm with the hood down for the whole day, the way Midgets should be driven.

Even though the weather wasn't at its best with suitable refreshments at Castleton tea rooms, topped

off with ice cream at Ayton, the views over Fryupdale were spectacular and I think we all appreciated the North Yorkshire moors in their splendour.



Thanks to everyone who joined us, some travelling quite a distance even before the gruelling climb up Carlton Bank to the start.



Geoff and Hilary Tucker

BMH Re-visited – 14 August '07

Firstly a BIG thank you to Terry Horler for a super write-up and Alan Lo for the photos. And thanks to Barry for making sure it all appeared in September's *MASCOT*. Well done all!

I've been in contact with BMH again and they will be happy to see us again. There's no definite dates yet, but it should be around mid-Summer '08. As soon as a date becomes available it will be advertised in *MASCOT*. The

visits are generally 12 per visit on a first-come, first served basis. I may be able to arrange 2 trips during the same week if required. If there is no time for an advert here, I will contact the 30 people who were unfortunately not able to be included in the visit this year.

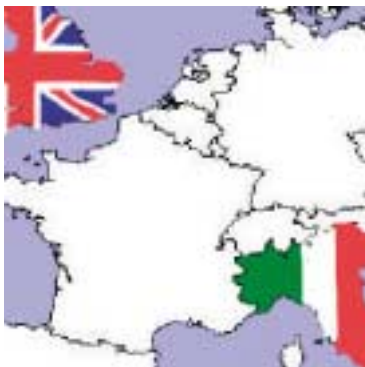
George Harrison

MASC Miglia (September) 2009

The idea for this tour would be a round trip over eleven or twelve days. Following a Speedferries catamaran trip from Dover to Boulogne the tour would be in the region of 2000 miles. The rough outline would be (overnight in italics)

1. Boulogne to *Reims*. Stops at Arras and Vimy Ridge Canadian Memorial
2. Reims to *Mulhouse* for the French National (Schlumph) Motor museum and also the Locomotive Museum.
3. *Mulhouse* driving through Switzerland to Stelvio Pass (some 40+ hairpin bends over 27 miles) *Overnight stop TBA*
4. *Overnight stop* to Brescia for Mille Miglia Museum. *Overnight stop possibly Turin*
5. *Turin to Nice* via Tende Tunnel and Monte Carlo
6. Nice to *Overnight stop TBA*
7. *Overnight stop to Angouleme*
8. *Angouleme* A day without driving
9. *Angouleme* A day without driving to watch the Circuit des Remparts classic motor race.
10. Angouleme to *Le Mans*
11. Le Mans to *Boulogne*

Many of you will be aware that Sue and Jim Judd, John Larrington and I have for many



years toured extensively across Europe, in Sprites (948 – 1275), on the MSA Euroclassic. That event has unfortunately become too expensive.

The **MASC Miglia (September) 2009** would be a cheaper alternative staying primarily at well tried and tested Campanile Hotels. Daily driving would, hopefully, be limited to no more than 250miles. Stops would be attempted at

places of interest.

I would consider running this event simultaneously with a shorter Angouleme Tour 2009 for those persons with limited leave (6 days).

I would, as usual, be on hand, with overalls and tools, to deal with minor breakdowns on the major tour.

Entries would be for Midgets and Sprites or derivatives only.

As such a tour would take some time to plan and I will only proceed if I receive sufficient interest therefore. Expressions of interest are requested.

Alan Anstead

Area Representative for Surrey and Kent
Sections Tel: 01322-384050
Mail to alan.anstead@bopenworld.com

To the Pyrenees with an Austin-Healey Sprite

The rebuild of PMK 536 F was completed in the Spring of 2005 and much of that and the following year was spent going to some shows and a lot of country drives with different clubs in Wales, the Cotswolds, and Southern England. The idea of a driving holiday came to mind after a conversation with our son's future Mother-in-Law (we hope!), during which she mentioned that she had a vacant week at her holiday home on the Orkney Isles and would we be interested.



So, June 2006, saw us take 3 days to drive to the Islands, spend a week there, and take 3 days to return. All went very well; the travelling was good and taken in easy stages

(180-220 miles per day, on average), the holiday home overlooking Scapa Flow was wonderful, and the car performed well. Luggage space was not a problem; we have a second boot-lid with a spare-wheel mounting attached, thus giving the whole of the boot space for dry and secure stowage of all things necessary.

I had always wanted to drive in the Pyrenees and 'Management' always enjoyed France, so she soon warmed to the idea of a 3-week holiday in May '07, 1 week to drive down the west coast of France, 1 week in a 'Gîte' somewhere in the Pyrenees, and a week to return home via the French Alps, the Vosges mountains, and the eastern side of France. During winter '06 and early spring '07 a route was mapped out on the dining table, a nice-looking Gîte was found in the RSPB's excellent quarterly magazine, Birds, in the eastern foothills of the Pyrenees, suitable Dover to Calais and return ferry crossings were booked, along with hotels at regular intervals on both the outward and return journeys.

The decision to pre-book all the hotels was taken with the idea that it would give us more time to sightsee en-route, rather than have to

start looking for them at about 4pm every day. We chose the Ibis group of hotels and found them to be basic, but very clean and adequate. Pre-booking also gave us a sense of security, knowing that we had safe parking for the car, and a good restaurant and comfortable bed at the end of each day's travel. A route-card holder was made and the entire route written down on 5"x3" cards. The holder was positioned above the dashboard using the windscreen centre rod bracket and angled towards the driver. All this allowed Management to enjoy the scenery instead of having her head buried in a road atlas all day. The system worked very well although the atlas did have to be consulted on several occasions (more on that later). Also attached to one side of the holder was a bracket to mount a forward-facing camcorder to record some of the better driving experiences along the route (more on that later, as well).

And so it was with car prepared, passports checked, Euros acquired, cases packed and loaded (along with a lot of other things deemed to be necessary) that the journey began. The rest of the story I will tell you on a day-by-day basis – we kept a diary!

Monday May 14th. Worcester to Calais

Now I know you are asking – why start a holiday on a Monday and not the previous Saturday? Two reasons:- ferry crossings are

cheaper on a Monday than on a Saturday, but more importantly, Sunday May 13th. was the Cheltenham and Cleve Vale Rotary Club's annual thrash up Prescott (enough said!).

So Monday it was, and it poured down with rain all day. The holiday very nearly came to an abrupt end, before it had started, when less than three miles out of Worcester, a car pulled out in front of us from the right. A bit of 'undertaking' using a convenient bus-stop saved the day, but we could not help wondering, as we continued, if the English could do this to us, then with what would the French greet us! The cross-country journey from Worcester to Dover (well, even with a 3-7 diff. Sprites were never motorway cars!) was otherwise uneventful, passing Oxford, Reading, Guildford, and Eastbourne. Waitrose in Wallingford provided an excellent coffee and sticky-bun for a mid-morning break and the journey continued with Management plugging gaps in a hood, that only fits where it touches, all the way to Dover.

Our crossing was the 17.45, but as we had arrived at 16.50 and the next one was 17.00, the Nice Man at P&O said that if we wanted to, and if we were quick, we could board the 17.00. Well, we both wanted to, and were quick! Ten minutes later saw us boarded, parked, and heading for the restaurant. Ports and ferries are so much more civilised than airports and planes! At 19.45, local time, we were disembarked at Calais and heading for our first hotel, a five-minute drive away. The internet booking system had worked, the hotel was expecting us, and a small, but dry (high priority after the day's journey) room was ready. We were in France.

Tuesday May 15th. Calais to Falaise

We awoke to blue skies, sunshine, and a light breeze, and setting off, after an excellent continental breakfast, we felt that we had it made. Successfully negotiating Calais centre and finding the coast road that we wanted, we headed west towards Boulogne. High ground near Cap Grand Nez gave us a wonderful view, over a flat-calm Channel, of the White Cliffs of Dover. The hood was down, the weather was fine, the roads smooth with little traffic; oh! this is the life, we thought. Our euphoria lasted until Abberville, when two

things happened. We got lost in the town-centre and it started to rain, heavily. The hood went up, the road-atlas came out, and u-turns became regular occurrences. A good hotel on the outskirts of Falaise provided a much-needed refuge and our spirits were further lifted by the evening meal. Perhaps the day had not been so bad after all; it just needed a few adjustments to the route plan!

Wednesday May 16th. Falaise to Chatelleraut

At last, a day that started fine and finished even better. Our route now took us south, by-passing Le Mans (shame) and heading into the Loire Valley. Long straight roads and open countryside took us into the Loire Valley and to the riverside town of Saumer, with its magnificent chateau high on a hill overlooking the town. A walk round the chateau stretched our legs and then onward to a supermarket in Chinon to purchase a picnic lunch. A pleasant hour eating the lunch in a roadside picnic area on the edge of town, watched by chaffinches who cleaned up after us, was followed by a short journey to Richelieu. This is a walled town with large old houses, each with a big courtyard behind imposing gates. Another excellent evening meal in a hotel at Chatelleraut, where our 4th floor room gave us a very good view over the local forest.

Thursday May 17th. Chatelleraut to Perigueux

A change of weather and scenery. The weather was wet and windy all day and the scenery changed from long straight roads and wide-open spaces to hills and valleys with forests and undulating sweeping roads. A visit to Angouleme had been planned and much looked forward to, but the weather put a dampener on it. We took a walk round the famous Ramparts and the old town, but, although the town is on a hill, little of the surrounding countryside could be seen. Lunch was taken in the car-park of a Carrefour hypermarket on the edge of town, before we drove on to our next hotel in Perigueux, the capital of the Dordogne, on the river Isle. Our exercise for the day was a walk round this lovely medieval town before the evening meal in the hotel restaurant overlooking the river.

Friday May 18th. Perigueux to Montauban

What a difference a day makes – dry and sunny and ‘hood down’. A nice morning’s drive through rolling countryside to the small town of Beaulieu, full of alleyways and small squares with medieval houses and churches, and a bonus! Beaulieu is in the heart of ‘strawberry’ country, and very good they were too! Lunch was taken at a local ‘friterie’, crepes and fresh orange-juice (Mmm!). Forty minutes drive saw us entering Rocamadour, a town of 12th. century pilgrimage origins, ‘glued’ onto the side of a rock-face. We parked the car in the valley overlooked by the town and took ‘le petit train’ up to the High Street, a popular place with the tourists. We drove on, south, through Cahors (got lost – out with the road-map) and on to Montauban (got lost – out with...) and our next hotel. It should have been easy to find – it was in the dead centre of town, yes, next to a cemetery (sorry, bad joke, but we needed one after today). We must crack this problem of town-centres without sign-posts.

Saturday May 19th. Montauban to Moulin-de Perle

Weather fine, hood down, and into the mountains – what more could we want. A visit to Carcassonne came first; this is a place that I have wanted to visit for many years and it did not disappoint. This town is something of a ‘one-off’, a complete, walled, medieval town on a hill. A wonderful place, very popular with the tourists. Lunch in a corner restaurant. watching the world go by, was very good, followed by a walkabout with Management doing the by now obligatory purchasing of postcards. We drove on to the Fenouillesdes, the eastern foothills of the Pyrenees, stopping only at a supermarket in Quillan before continuing to our ‘Gîte’ in the mountains. The roads are beginning to get interesting; I can feel a twitch in my right foot, I shall do my best to control it (not for too long, I hope).

Sunday May 20th

After a week on the road it was felt that a quiet day would be a good idea, so the morning was

spent at a street market in Esperaza, and it was some market; it took over the whole town. A freshly cooked chicken purchased in the market provided the basis of a very good Sunday lunch back at the Gîte (a few bottles of Kronenburg 1664 helped!) A gentle walk mid-afternoon along deserted roads nearby was the day’s exercise. This is a lovely area for flora and fauna, there being both in abundance.

Monday May 21st

It was time to get out and on the road. The weather started damp but had improved by midday to fine and sunny. Leaving the Gîte we took to the mountains proper through Sournia to Prades for lunch before returning via



Mosset, the Col de Jeu, and Axat. This was our first taste of the mountain roads in the Pyrenees and much use was made of the camcorder in its fixed position behind the windscreen and facing forward. This produced some wonderful ‘footage’, aided by a fair measure of ‘hooligan’ driving, which earned a reprimand from Management, as the few cars that came the other way and flashed by were on HER side, not mine. So I will behave myself from now on, but these roads and passes make Prescott look very tame by comparison.

Adrian Turley 3745

To be continued



Kent and Surrey



Trip to Europe



heaviest tank battle ever on Dutch soil in September 1944. The Marshall Museum houses over 150 historical vehicles and aircraft including some tanks from the Battle of Overloon. Just over the border in Germany we came across the Reichswald Forest CWGC Cemetery containing over 7,500 war graves mostly from early 1945 operations. Sadly we didn't have enough time left to see much of Arnhem so plan to go back another time.

On Friday afternoon it was time to head off to find our farmhouse B&B for the Dutch Spridget Tour weekend. We met up with the organisers, Sipke (Spike), Tom

The 1,900-mile trip in our Midget started with an excellent weekend at the Goodwood Revival enjoying Chicane Grandstand seats to view the track action in between visits to the Paddock. We helped Jeremy Cogman and Sarah to distribute Spridget 50 leaflets and chatted with the owner of a Sebring replica with some interesting period parts.

On the Monday it was off to France to make the most of driving along quiet roads and through many sleepy villages. Then into the Champagne area where the fields were full of pickers. Luxembourg was next, travelling along the western side of the Moselle valley for a while before crossing over to Germany. A strange odour had developed, emanating from the engine bay somewhere, but we only tracked down the source when the Midget failed to restart. The battery fluid had been evaporating. No wonder it smelt horrid! Luckily on topping up the battery it recovered and we had no further problems. In Germany we headed for Holland via Nurburgring. It was not a public day so we didn't go to the circuit instead making do with stopping by a bridge taking the track over the road. In Holland we visited Liberty Park in Overloon. Consisting of two museums it is built on the site of the

and Richard and some of the other participants, including Arie, in Overdinkel near the German border and had a very relaxing evening over a Grolsch or two. The Saturday morning start included over 30 Spridgets of various ages with a few from Germany and just us from Britain. It was good to meet Bas from Groningen and the BBS. The organisers had produced a special English version of the road book for us including Tulip instructions, an arrow stage and a compass section all in both kilometres and miles. We also had 18





photographed locations to spot, in the correct order, along the way. The organisation was excellent: an ice cream stop, a sandwich and coffee stop and in the evening a BBQ with plenty more Grolsch and wine available. We thoroughly enjoyed the day and chatted to lots of people. Every team received a smart compass as a souvenir and Mark and I came 4th in getting the photo locations spotted. Arie

our 'Tot ziens'. Mark and Arie led the way in Arie's K-series with Muriel and I following in my Midget across Holland (by motorway through necessity) to the Rotterdam ferry. We hope to go back next year for the 5th Dutch Spridget Tour. See you there maybe.

Anita Lachowicz and Mark Boldry

was busy handing out Spridget 50 leaflets and quiet a few folk are keen to come over to Gaydon next May.

On Sunday those remaining gathered for a 'follow-the-leader' tour of the area criss-crossing the border many times. We visited a watchtower and a land museum before finishing at a caf, where we enjoyed waffle, hot cherries, ice cream and cream before thanking the organisers and saying

Classic Motor Show – 9/10/11 November 2007

Warwickshire Area Group are again organising the MASC stand at the NEC in November. This year the show's theme is First and Last so we are showing Chris Yates' Frogeye Sprite, Paul Coveney's Austin Sprite, John Davies' Mk I Midget and Andy Bourne's Midget 1500.

Still time to save money and buy your tickets online, which when you hand the stubs to us on the stand will earn the club £1.00 commission.

Please all come and introduce yourselves to us on stand 2C10 and take the opportunity for maybe a sit down and a chat !

2008 Silverstone Classic

Silverstone Classic will be held on Fri 25 – Sun 27 July. The featured marque will be **Lola**. More details to follow when available. Keep these dates free so as not to miss this great event. Many thanks Hubie Albany.

Cambridgeshire Report

Mad Cat night arrived and despite the gathering autumnal gloom it turned out to be a nice sunny evening and so it was the first Sprite trip since our latest French adventure. We turned up early planning to get a meal before proceedings kicked off (and save Mum from the washing up) as it turned out we were not alone Trish and Mick were slightly ahead of us and Nigel and Diane slightly behind all with the same idea so it quickly became an eating meeting. When 8 o'clock rolled round (or slightly after) I made my excuses and went next door into the bar to see who else had arrived and was greeted by Sally and Hubie who mentioned that they had heard another Sprite arrive but no one had appeared, so another door and I was out in the car park to find yet another MASC meeting taking place outside among our six proper cars. Biggles was crawling about under various Spridgets with his digital callipers in his hand tacking measurements, and even borrowed my torch, I managed to coax most people inside and form a joined up meeting apart from Biggles who was flitting in and out armed with strange mechanical objects swaddled in old towels (kind of fumble bags without the fumbling).

Eventually the joined up meeting got cracking with arrangements for the weekend trip to Donnington Park, in the end we decided to all meet up at Peterborough services on the A1 for breakfast (yet another eating meeting) and then travel in convoy. We agreed to use the scenic route supplied by my mate the aptly named Don. While the men were talking car things it seems the ladies were not just knitting and doing their nails but actually plotting the Christmas meal and had decided that this year it would be combined with an activity and that we would do it all in Peterborough.

The initial plan was for a rematch from last years bowling event but that got revised into a night at the Dogs (sounds like fun to me). Also the treasure hunt had been rescheduled for the 30th. Next HTJ produced a fumble bag and I



have to say it was a bit tricky so I finished up with a slightly less than perfect score, and even our famous fumblers struggled somewhat.

It was Diane's birthday and she had a very nice sparkly thing to show for it (happy birthday Diane). Biggles continued to do mysterious things in the car park as the evening progressed very pleasantly, HTJ kept alluding to some mysterious secret (the thing that Diane had mentioned in last month's Mad Cat report) and kept offering me tranquillisers to help with the shock when he finally told me (a crash trolley was even mentioned). Eventually HTJ could contain himself no more and had to spill the beans, Was he a mass murderer, a person of dubious sexuality or even someone who shops at Tesco, no much worse he had secured a place in the MASC calendar for his poor Midget with a picture containing a hideously inappropriate object, yes a roof, a roof on an open car. Actually it was quite nice to think that at least two of the Cambs guys had got through the rigorous selection criteria and made it in to the calendar, and to be honest I am not that surprised at John (I think all the time he spent in Australia has left it's mark). The meeting broke up at about closing time leaving us with just a day before the next event.

Saturday dawned bright and early with brilliant sunshine (as always for our events) so I loaded up the gazebo and headed for Haddon and breakfast for 8-30. Suitably stuffed with bacon baguettes I led our brave little convoy out on to the open road, through tunnels of

trees, past ancient windmills and by still waters. By the time we reached Donington (a little later than expected) most of us had travelled past Stilton, Melton Mowbray and other tasty places. There was a wonderful echoey tunnel leading us under the track to the infield parking, however the event seemed poorly organized with not much marshalling and no one to direct us to our prebooked MASC area, in the end we just picked a good vantage point and parked there, Sally and Hubie graciously provided us all with a much appreciated cup of tea as the racing commenced. A short time later we were joined by a contingent from the Home Counties, who had also given up looking for the MASC area and parked further round the track (they later joined us at our spot). My apologies to anyone else from MASC who may have been at the event but did not find us but it just wasn't that well organized. The event itself was very good with some fabulous cars (I have never seen so many Bugattis in one place before) and some brilliant racing, but I think we were all a little spoilt for it by the fabulous Silverstone event a few weeks before. Silverstone was a little better value for money, much better organized, a lot bigger, the pits



were more welcoming, there was a lot more to see and really it was better in every way. To be fair I think Donington was a good event and if we had not been to Silverstone we would have appreciated it a lot more. It was an enjoyable day and the MASC contingent didn't start to break up and drift off until about 5-30 with the Home Counties guys heading south to their homes and the Cambs guys travelling north to forage for food. Pat and I sadly had a prior engagement and so tagged on the back of the convoy for as long as possible before breaking off at Empingham and heading for home.

Dave Dixon

Bristol Area Report

Here I am, tapping this out at 8.00am on Sunday the 14th of October, the final day for inclusion in the November edition of *MASCOT*. Mr Editor is at this very moment sharpening his editorial deadline axe. No, I don't believe in doing things at the last moment, but this month, I have been waiting for that last minute story to illuminate my otherwise lacklustre scriptures. So, unless something earth shattering happens within the next half hour, this is it.

Our October meeting at the Rose and Crown at Pucklechurch saw 6 of us gathered around the table. Again, I was out of step with the majority. It is usually me that turns up in a non Spridgley thing when everyone else does. So I turn up in my multi shades of red Frogeye (not so obvious in the dark), and only Phil Sellen braves the darkness in his Midget Mk11. More importantly however, people turn up in whatever to make it a good evening.

Alan Lo brings along his laptop with the latest monthly photos and video clips, Andy Cross has a very interesting book which contains the development story of the A Series engine, amongst other contemporary engines. John Battey bids us farewell for the winter months as he heads off to Fiji to escape our salt laden roads.

Colin Gayle has one more outing in his Hill climb/sprint Midget to look forward too this year, and I have a bag of Ace Mercury wheel embellisher adaptors to get rid of (definitely an under the table transaction). Alan has more recently acquired some Ace Astra wheel embellishers, despite some obvious differences between the Mercury and Astra types, not so obvious; the adaptor threads are different too. Seems like you have a problem there Alan!

Event wise, I attended the monthly Tintern gathering of Classic vehicles in the Frogeye.

Unfortunately, none of my Masc chums could make it for a convoy over the Severn Bridge. Likewise, neither were any of my fellow Classic and Historic Club members heading that way to my knowledge. Instead, I was the odd one out in the local Mini Club. Five cars arrived at the Severn Bridge toll booths, only 2 got through, one Mini and my Frogeye. As we departed the toll booths, I saw a Mini driver exit his vehicle, it had broken down. I would like to say that the ensuing queue jammed up the Motorway half way to London, it might make good reading but it wouldn't be the truth! Nevertheless, it was a good 20 minutes before the remaining Minis rejoined us. Now that sort of thing never happens in the Midget and Sprite Club does it?

It was a good Tintern gathering, a very informal event on the first Sunday of the month – you just turn up and enjoy. A convoy of Classic commercial vehicles and cars passed by and were rumoured to be finishing their run at Chepstow Race Course, this we passed on our way to Tintern. We called in on our way home and were rewarded by a second dosage of Classic vehicles on the same day. Around 50 commercials and 25 cars, and no entry fee here either.

Well, half an hour has passed and nothing earth shattering has occurred, sorry Barry, it may be dull, but at least it's on time.

Terry Horler

Dutch Report

Hi folks, it's been a while but I'm back. I had some very busy but fun months which involved travelling with the Midget. Thank you Alex for writing last month's report and keeping us up to date on the finishing of your Midget project. Now where have I been? Just about the whole of Europe or more specific: Germany, South England, again in south England, Yorkshire, Scotland.

Have you ever been in an elevator specially for cars??? Those who did the Saturday run on the German Spridgetreffen have, I kid you not! In the harbour area of Hamburg-city the route to take went under the river but not by ordinary tunnel, oh no, they made us take a car lift which could take 2 Spridgets at once which then dropped 20 to 30 mtrs (I think). Once at the bottom the doors opened and there was a nice single road tunnel with great acoustics (he he he) which led to... another elevator. This one took us up again and delivered us at

normal ground level again. What an experience!!! Great engineers these Germans.

Visited MG Silverstone in June where I met lots of other Spridgetteers from MASC and the BBS. It's great to be able to put faces to names especially to the Walbran family from New Zealand. Probably the biggest K-Spridgets gathering too with at least 9 cars attending. I visited Silverstone again in July for the Classic Event and met even more MASC-eteers and went from there to Yorkshire and Scotland.

More on that in a later story but I can tell you the Scottish Trip was great and for those who want to do the same route just follow the oil-track from Yorkshire all the way to Kendall, Scottish east/north/west coast and Orkney Isles. The oil track was made by Matt Wrigglesworth's leaking 1275 Midget which made the Exxon-Valdez oil-disaster look like nothing. Will be continued... Cheers.

Arie



Emails to the Editor

From John Sprinzel

Hi Barry,

Enjoyed the September magazine, as always, and especially seeing a Sebring on the cover. I did notice however, that the anti-roll bar end links pointed downwards. I always turned these up, so that the knuckle was not in danger of hitting anything, which would certainly happen with that low suspension. In our day, kerbs didn't exist on race tracks, and were often just edged by low concrete block walls, but nowadays the high kerbs would be really bad for those low ends. Just a thought!

Aloha, John

Hi Barry,

I hope you don't get too cross with me writing all the time, but when I see obvious historical errors, I feel they need to be corrected because once stuff is in print, it then goes on to be quoted by others as fact.

With reference to the article "The Record Takers" (*MASCOT* p 32–34 October '07 issue), Graham Hill was not in on the formation of Speedwell – he approached me sometime the following year for a job as Works Manager. He was Engines Boss at Lotus, and felt that his usefulness there prevented Colin from giving him a race car drive. After he joined us, this in fact happened, as the history books show, and his assistant at Lotus, Keith Duckworth, took over and eventually teamed up with Mike Costin, another Lotus genius, to form Cosworth which played such a huge part in British Motor Sport, and later for their worldwide successes.

The Speedwell Bonnet was designed long before the GT, and was developed by George Hulbert, Frank Costin and myself in order to get rid of the original headlamps which were not exactly the perfect answer to aerodynamics. I ran the prototype on the Liege-Rome Rally in 1959, and Stuart Turner and I won the class.

The GT was designed and built onto my original Sprite PMO 200 at the end of 1959, and first displayed to the public at the Racing Car Show of 1960, in the parade of Championship winning cars (It had won the British Rally Championship of 1959) so John Venner Pack's brilliant success with the GT cannot have been in 1959. John was not at Speedwell during my time there. I left Speedwell at the end of 1959, to join Healeys, and the record breaker idea was just then being developed by the firm.

Speedwell didn't have any "successes at Sebring" it was Donald Healey Motor Company and my own firm's cars which raced at Sebring in 1960 and 1961, and – as most of your readers will know, the Sebring Sprite had our bodywork shaped by Williams and Pritchard and the interior trimmed by the original pair of Wood and Pickett, before the firm grew and became famous for custom Minis.

Again, with the Sebring, the bonnet came first, on the 1960 RAC and the full Sebring Coachwork appeared at Sebring in 1961, on cars driven by Pat and Stirling Moss and Paul Hawkins and Cyril Simson. The original PMO200 car was driven later that year, by Vic Elford and Paul Hawkins on the RAC Rally, which was both of these great racers first International Event as drivers.

The Speedwell Records information is, I am pretty sure, totally correct though by the time they took the cars to Belgium, I was well esconced at Healeys.

By the way, I got to know Frank Costin when he came to us at Speedwell to try and get us to be the agent for Marcos cars, which he had just designed (the original REALLY ugly one) I actually did a road test for some magazine or other, and took it to Tring to Moss family home for Stirling to try out. He reckoned it had magic roadholding. Although we turned the Marcos down then, My Lancaster Mews firm became the only Marcos agent in the sixties, when that beautiful coupe was their product, first in wood and then in steel. I sold one of those to a young Canadian lady, who is still with me today, my wife Caryl.

Aloha, John

From Alan Anstead

Hi Barry

Another brilliant edition for October!

MASC Miglia 2009 ... if interested I need expressions of interest (by e-mail please) as it will take some planning hence 2009. If I get enough interest I may also re-run the Angouleme tour for 2008. Get your diaries out as 2008 events continue to number. Last nights Sussex meet seemed a success so to all that live in that County. "What about some support."

Alan Anstead

Warwickshire Report



Cambridgeshire members

It has been a quiet month following the flurry of activity with August events; our only planned outing followed a suggestion from Hubie Albany from the Cambridgeshire Group that we join them for the “See Red Event” at Donington Park. Andy Bourne, who has already shown his overdrive project earlier in *MASCOT*, was now keen to test his new installation in his Midget and Chris was running-in his Sat Nav in the new Mk IV Sprite so they met up at 7.00 am on the M40 bridge at Gaydon to travel together. Arriving well in advance of anybody else it was possible to park in a prime site with a perfect view of the track from the cars themselves. Practice commenced in the morning with the serious racing after lunch and we were treated to vehicles ranging from Edwardian racers to Formula Junior and early Grand Prix cars as well as motor cycles. The highlight for me was the W125 Mercedes “Silver Arrow” which completed several laps of the circuit demonstrating the sheer power (8 cyl in-line, 5,660 cc and 646 bhp) and awesome presence of this 1937 racing car with a top speed of over 186 mph!!

We shared the experience with the members of the Cambridgeshire whom we eventually found in the VSCC paddock where one enterprising member had converted the boot of his Sprite into a tea station and was providing everyone with tea and coffee.

John Platt kindly offered to chair our October Meeting as Alan and Chris were not available and he outlined the day he had planned at the Autumn Steam and Vintage Rally at Toddington which replaced the originally planned Severn Valley Railway event having



Mercedes W125

been cancelled due to sections of the track being literally washed away in the floods.

There was the National Restoration Show and Grand British Autojumble on Sunday 28th October to stock up for winter projects, but the next MASC event also being masterminded by

John with help from the Warwickshire members is the Classic Motor Show at the NEC Birmingham where we look forward to meeting many of our old friends and making new ones.

Chris and Sheila



Track-side view

Is There An Area Group Near You?

Those members fortunate to be within reach of an Area Group will already appreciate the benefits, with lasting friendships made and someone always close to solve the inevitable problems that we occasionally have with our cars.

Certain parts of the country could do with a group and it would only take two of you meeting monthly at a decent pub to start a new group.

I have checked the database and can identify possible areas vacant with member numbers Devon/Cornwall (14) Oxfordshire (11) Northern Ireland (6) Some have had active groups previously. Wiltshire (18) needs an area rep following the sad death of Ian Rider

Should you consider gauging interest for a group near you, I would be happy to put other members in touch to test the water.

Contact John Platt (membership sec) details in *MASCOT*.

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Yorkshire Report

Monthly Meetings

These have been a bit hit and miss over the summer months, partly due to the poor weather but mostly due to poor organisation on my part. I hope you will accept my apologies. However some of us did get together for a BBQ at the beginning of August and for a Moors Run organised by Geoff and Hilary. Matt and Lizzie, Andy B, Guy and Arie headed off for a tour of Scotland visiting a Spridget owner in Orkney. Some of us made it to Silverstone for the Classic at the end of July where it was great to meet with MASC members from other areas as well as other Spridget owners from other clubs. More recently some of us met up at Tim and Sarah's wedding although not all of us were able to bring our Spridgets.

Our October meeting was held in Birstall, near Batley. Mark H and his Dad Ken were there to update us on what has been done on Mark's Midget since we last saw them months ago. Mark was very interested in Mike Y's Smart convertible. I hope he's not thinking of selling the Midget. Nick and his Dad Richard arrived in Nick's Caterham and have offered to organise the February 2008



meeting. Andy B brought some photos of racing Frogeyes for Mark's research for our Frogeye (yes we now have a Frogeye in our 'garage'). Mike N had a drink in the wrong pub before joining us in his Midget. Mick and Tim arrived a bit later even though both live close by. Ian was there too but Claire couldn't make it this time. We missed meeting Jonathan F who did come to the pub but sadly wasn't able to spot us in the corner. He has a 1500 Midget due to be on the road next spring.

Rally News

In September Simon and Trevor came 13th overall out of 38 finishers in the 19th Classic Marathon taking in 2300km of awesome scenery in Norway in Simon's 'Yellow Peril' MKIV Sprite. Nick and Josie have been so busy continuing with their rally season that we haven't seen them for ages as they are away so often.



Tyne Bridges Run October 7th



Lisa from Whitley Bay organised a Tyne Bridges Run. Starting in Byker, Newcastle we crossed numerous bridges over the Tyne as we followed its course inland towards Alston in Cumbria. Mark and I took my Sprite out for a change and collected Andrew H in his Frogeye and Nick V and friend Steve in Nick's superbly restored Midget on our way north from Knaresborough. Lisa and Rob arrived next in her 1500. Jim and Kerry couldn't come in his Midget 'Sooty' as it is still in restoration mode. Good to meet Jim as many of us have chatted to him on the BBS. Guy drove over from Kendal in his Austin Sprite and last to arrive was Jordan in his IOW. Our first mistake was

to drive off leaving all three driver-only cars at the back. At least Jordan had some idea of how to get out of Newcastle! We eventually regrouped in a lay-by somewhere before losing Lisa, Andrew and Guy at the traffic lights over the bridge in Hexham as Rob had stopped following the instructions. Mark and I stopped a bit further on to wait for them but gave up only to find out later that they had taken a short cut to catch up. Well they missed some great scenery as even through the mizzle we had some fantastic views. The best moment was when a fabulous red squirrel ran across the narrow road near Slaggyford. We regrouped at a pub in Alston to chat and look at some of the pictures and videos taken during the day over an excellent Black Sheep or two before heading home in different directions.

Dates

Saturday 3rd November at The Three Hares, Bilbrough, York YO23 3PH meeting at 11.30am for lunch at 12.00pm followed by a short drive to see the Craven Collection of Motorbikes at Stockton on the Forest. There is Garden Centre and Teashop over the road for those not interested in the bikes and memorabilia collection.

December meeting Sat 1st contact me for details.

Anita



Summer Hits the Home Counties!

So summer has finally hit the Home Counties. It was Sunday 16 September and time for our second run in two weeks! It was Maurice and Sharon's time to organise us.

The weather was a big draw as we managed to entice 9 cars on to the run. One Frogeye driven by Maurice, a MkII Sprite for Lily and Vic, a MkIII Sprite driven by Chris with Pat, Steve's MkIII Midget with Bryan co-piloting, Dave and Jenny in their MkIV Sprite and Ian and his 1500 Midget. Plus we had Mike and Sue in his A40 (a Sprite with a big body!) and Maurice and Sharon's friends in their lovely Morris Minor convertible (a cousin?). Those of you who are more numerically gifted will have spotted that's only 8 cars. Well Jen and I made it 9, but we had to follow behind the others at a respectful distance in the MX5. Our Frog just wouldn't go despite hours of tinkering.

We didn't meet at Tesco for a change, but at the Bridgewater Arms in Little Gaddesden. After Maurice provided each car with a packet of Polos for the trip (a new Home Counties tradition?) we were off on our travels. A great route took us over Ivinghoe Beacon and on to



Winslow, where we stopped for coffee in a classic British tea shop. We filled the small car park to capacity and took all the seats inside, in fact a couple of us had to stand. It was agreed by the more senior members of the group that it was a trip down memory lane and very quaint, but they didn't know what a double espresso mochaccino was!

From the tea shop we followed a winding route out towards the Claydon's and on through the Bucks countryside and ending with a flirt with the edge of Oxfordshire.

We had a few notable events on the road; at one point the queue of cars ahead of us came to an abrupt halt and people jumped from their cars. To us it looked like we had stopped to pick up road kill, but it turned out that Maurice's spare cap had blown off Sharon's head, "We wouldn't have stopped if it had been my hat" Sharon quipped at lunch. Another more serious looking incident was Lily and Vic taking to the grass along a straight road as we passed two joggers. Was Vic giving them an extra bit of



space I thought, but I understand that the off roading may have been caused by Vic checking the lady jogger's front bumpers in his mirrors.

When we stopped for lunch at the Bell in Cheersley, a lovely old thatched pub where there was a wide selection of food on offer, something for everyone in fact. They coped very well with us all. The weather was good enough for us to sit in the garden, despite our

initial scepticism, but we had to rearrange the furniture to get us all sitting in a line.

We consulted the map and left the pub to follow the multitude of routes home that is always the case for the HCNW. Good weather, good route, good food, good company; all in all a good day.

Mark Hall

Linc'slot

Three Spridgets at the White Hart on Thursday. One regular, Pete and Mary's 1500, and two new faces. Nice to meet Phil with his red MK III Midget, and Ray with his green one. Hey, was that British racing green? I couldn't tell under the orange car park lights.

Lizzie Bartlett fielded questions about the renovation of Freddie, her exquisite Frogeye Sprite. As I write, I am hoping to be able to see the TV programme about it, shown on the 9th October, on Discovery Real Time. Congratulations to Lizzie, not only for the renovation, and the programme, but also for the very good article she wrote for last month's *MASCOT*. Well done.

I'm afraid my Midget had a bulb failure, preventing me from using it to attend the

meeting. Couldn't risk the wrath of the local Constabulary.

Hope to see Tim and Jill next month. Tim tells me he took one of his classics to London for a filming session. It was a Vauxhall Victor. He says he wished it had been his Sprite as that, at least, has a heater.

Details of our Christmas Sunday Lunch are in the front of this *MASCOT*.

Some of us are off to the Classic Motor Show at the N.E.C. on Sunday 11th November. Hope to see you there. Don't forget to video The Antiques Road Show on the BBC on this day. It is Remembrance Sunday, and the program was filmed at the East Kibby Aviation Heritage Centre where they have a taxiing Lancaster.

Brian Jeffery

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