

# Mascot



The Magazine  
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 December '07

As I mentioned in November's WHEELNUT, I thought the local Council would start gritting here before we'd got half way through November. GREAT! Christmas is almost here! I must admit, we did cut it fine, as we'd only just managed to get 3 of the Innocentis into storage the day before. That leaves me with the white one to work on over the Winter. I haven't even altered the front lights to RHD yet, never mind the new engine, dashboard trim, dials and new seats etc etc! Plus it then needs its UK registration. All interesting stuff!

No news to report on the AGM as yet, but there's always the January issue ... yes, I'm hopeful to repeat last year's milestone and produce an edition of *MASCOT* for the start of 2008 – possibly the most significant year in MASC history. As I'm sure you're all aware by now, MASC celebrates it's SILVER JUBILEE next year and the SPRITE is 50 in May.

Our full-size A3 Calendar, shown on the facing page, officially marks this momentous year and so I hope you are all going to get one ordered for the start of 2008. They are running down steadily, but if you get your order placed in the next week you should get yours before Christmas (as long as you're reading this in the UK, of course!). Support your Club! They're £8.99 inc UK p & p from Mike Grout, our Regalia officer (contact details on p.1). Overseas buyers please email Mike for shipping prices to your particular country.

One more item to report: if you didn't notice already from the front cover flash, *MASCOT* has won a prestigious National Award! YES! With the introduction of colour and the increase in page count, the judges at *CLASSIC & SPORTSCAR* magazine voted it the Most Improved Club Magazine for 2007! So all the hard work and many, many contributions from within the Membership finally paid off. We're all very pleased at *MASCOT* Towers.

David Evans, C&S's Chief Sub-Editor commented: *"...a magazine that we felt boasts pretty much the ideal mix of technical articles, restoration stories and event reports, plus archive road tests and race reports. And the magazine's A5 size reflects its compact subject matter: Most Improved Club Magazine is the Midget and Sprite Club's MASCOT, edited by Barry Lowe. In fact I was that impressed with MASCOT as a whole that I nearly promoted it to the Club Magazine of the Year category."*

Apparently *MASCOT* was up against half a dozen strong contenders, including last year's Club Magazine of the Year winner! We should all feel mighty proud that *MASCOT* has reached this new level – it couldn't be done, of course, without YOUR contributions each month. So do please keep them pouring in – it's particularly important this time of year.

Did you also see the free publicity we got in the December issue of *CLASSIC CARS?* MASC is on page 24. It's great to see we're getting lots of recognition from the market leaders in the classic car arena.

So, in your Award-Winning *MASCOT* this month we have a Beaulieu Autojumble article penned by Steve Bell "That Sprite Guy" from the Austin Healey Club in the States; there's a full report on the Birmingham Tunnels Run organised by Bill Mohan; Gary Lazarus has sent in some of his expanding photo collection. Part Two of Adrian Turley's detailed report on his travels to the Pyrenees is inside, together with a fascinating piece written by David Wright for *Model Collector* magazine entitled Little Sprites. Plus once again, we have had a bumper crop of Area Reports.

As I said last month, *MASCOT* really does go from strength to strength with all your help and support.

PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for JANUARY issue is Midday WEDNESDAY 12 December

Best wishes for Christmas

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



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The statements and opinions expressed in each and every issue of the *MASCOT* are not necessarily the considered views of the Midget and Sprite Club. The views expressed by the editorial contributors, letter writers and advertisers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Club. The Midget and Sprite Club accepts no responsibility for the results of following contributor's advice, nor does it necessarily endorse the services or products offered by advertisers.

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*Front cover picture: A modified Mk.1 Sprite from South Africa, built in period to Sebring spec' (Girling brakes, wire wheels, etc.), with parts shipped out from the Donald Healey Motor Co. The steel bonnet was reworked by a South African B.M.C. dealership. The car also features an Ashley hardtop.*



MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB  
1983 SILVER JUBILEE 2008

# MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB



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# Club Nights

- 1st Monday **London Area** (Congestion Zone) – NEW VENUE, Meet at The Plumbers Arms, 14 Belgrave Street, Belgravia, SW1W 0LN 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** – Contact me, Anita 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email spridget.girl@ntlworld.com for details.
- 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
- 3rd Thursday  
NEW! **Sussex** – Meet at **The Friars Oak**, Hassocks, BN6 9NA from 19:00. 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  
Occasional Meetings **Somerset** – Meet at **The Lord Nelson**, Norton-sub- Hamdon. 8.00pm  
**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 December, User name: Micro Password: Blister

## Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

### Events organised for 2007 and 2008 so far

#### 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 Jeffery, 01552 531425 or [brianlincs1ot@yahoo.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:davidandchrisw@btinternet.com)

#### 2008

##### May

- Saturday 3rd To Tuesday 6th Surrey Area Annual Tour. New Forest. Details from Sue Judd. [suej001@btinternet.com](mailto:suej001@btinternet.com) or Chris Harding, [harding.c@btconnect.com](mailto: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 Steve Clark on 07963 433832 or email: [organiser@spridget50.com](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:david@hillnet.clara.net)) have confirmed dates for new events asap.

Remember there are Club Night Natters throughout the year and that area events are also open to members from other areas! Please also note that the above lists only M&SC events or events where we have a presence or an interest. General classic events are listed in the classic press.

# Mutual Assistance Directory

Well, winter has arrived and my Midget is tucked up safe and sound. As soon as salt was spread on the roads around here because there may be a frost, that was it until the spring. Why do they salt roads when only a frost is likely or possible? The unsalted roads around here during a heavy frost are no more skiddy than the salted roads. Strange. Seems a waste of money and effort to me.

So, once Christmas is been and gone, we can start to look forward to summer and some Spridget trips again. Great! Hope that you all have asked Santa for all the Spridgety

accessories you need. Don't leave it too late as he does get very busy in the coming weeks.

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

**David Hill**

# Secretarial Scriblings

Great news – *MASCOT* has been judged the most improved club magazine of the year by *Classic and Sportscar Magazine*. Announced at the National Classic Car Show at the NEC, we should all feel very proud that *MASCOT* has come out on top. Editor, Barry Lowe, has put in an enormous amount of time and effort to improve what was already a very good magazine for a club of our size and resources. No matter how hard an editor works, it still needs the support of members to provide the material to work with, and this year, it has been material aplenty. There was a time when it was difficult to fill 24 pages; indeed, I have just found an old *MASCOT* of just 20 pages. *MASCOT* has swollen to 48 pages this year and could still do with a bit more to get everything in. Truth is, despite a big increase in advertising revenue, at 48 pages, it is costing more than is sustainable for all 12 editions per year. It is going to be a tricky balancing act, to keep *MASCOT* near to where it is now and to budget, but this is a much happier task than the lean years of a 24, or even a 20 page magazine. My thanks and congratulations to all the *MASCOT* 'team', Editor, Contributors and Quorum, our printers, for truly a top job.

Also at the NEC, the MASC show stand was once again in the very capable hands of our Warwickshire branch. Although the Warwickshire branch has a large membership,

2 of the cars on display came from much further afield. An Austin Sprite from Kent and a Midget Mk1 from Cambridge. Now you have to admire support like that. It never ceases to amaze me how far some members are prepared to go for their club – fantastic. The club stand was absolutely buzzing when I arrived there on Sunday afternoon, it was even busier on the Saturday I was told. The Warwickshire branch was well prepared with plenty of members on hand to talk to the public and visiting members, of which there were many. *Practical Classics Magazine* used a photo of our 2006 NEC Club Stand to promote the show (and of course, just a little publicity for the club too). Despite our rather meagre club display equipment, I think we must be doing something right.

Have you ordered your 2008 Club calendar yet? Mine has arrived and very good it is too. Stocks are limited and 2008 is not far away. Whilst in purchasing mode, I picked up some *MASCOT* binders from the club stand. Starting with the earlier years of *MASCOT*, they slipped in quite easily but the larger editions of 2007 took just a little more jiggling. I was almost relieved when the 11 editions per year period came to be 'binderised'. This is definitely the best way to keep those ancient manuscripts safe and sound – and I have the whole lot to look after!

By the time you read this, our Annual General Meeting will have taken place at the Patrick Foundation in Birmingham. Our new committee will be in place to serve your club so please give them your support and ideas for the future. I will not be amongst them as I am standing down as General Secretary and as such, this will be my last Secretarial

Scribblings. On the positive side, the loss of this page will go some way to help the **MASCOT** budget, unless someone else wants to have a go.

Happy Christmas and a happy new year.

**Terry Horler**

## New Members

**We extend a warm welcome to the following rejoined and new members**

527	Graham Rodda	Gwent	Frogeye
3644	David Bruzas	Surrey	Frogeye/climax engine
3919	Bob Wallis	Surrey	Frogeye
3920	Steve Cowling	Worcestershire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3921	Gary Keynes	Hampshire	Midget 1500
3922	Graham Dorman	Leicestershire	Midget Mk 2
3923	Neal Gelder	Flintshire	Sprite Mk 3
3924	Colin Scotchford	Hertfordshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3925	James Steele-Sargent and Madaline Farrow	West Sussex	Sprite Mk 4
3926	anon		
3927	Dominique Petch	Cleveland	Looking for a Frogeye
3928	Glenn Reid	Greater Manchester	Sprite Mk 4
3929	Leslie Grieve	Northumberland	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3930	Michael Brennan	County Kilkenny	Frogeye
3931	Paul Boland	West Midlands	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3932	Damion and Ericka Mount	Buckinghamshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3933	Michael Jones	Denbighshire	Midget 1500
3934	Michael Hogan	County Galway	Frogeye/Midget Mk 3
3935	Keith and Shanta Thomas	West Midlands	Midget 1500
3936	Anthony Griffiths	Staffordshire	Looking for a Midget RWA

## Book Review

Just released in time for Christmas, *Buying a Classic British Sportscar* is a very useful addition to any enthusiast's library.

Whether in the market to buy a classic British sports car or just simply a reference to what there is, this book has it. Unlike many other guides and reference works, the author has gone to considerable lengths to ensure accuracy by actually talking to the clubs and owners of the cars featured. Far from being just an A to Z guide, the information contained is gained from people with first hand knowledge and experience of those vehicles.

The Midget and Sprite Club were consulted on all our models, including Innocenti, Arkley and

Lenham derivatives. If the care and attention to detail given to our subject matter is anything to go by, then this was indeed a mammoth task to ensure similar accuracy of all cars featured. Author Peter Hingston, has dealt with each model in a very concise and methodical manner, not easy considering the complexities that can exist with some models. All inside images are in black and white.

Priced at £22.95, I think this good value for all the research and material contained.

ISBN 978-0-906555-25-5  
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**Terry Horler**



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# A Yank at Beaulieu

As a recently retired school teacher, the legendary Beaulieu auto jumble was on my to do list for this fall when I no longer had to be going back to classes. So I made plans with a good friend from the Michigan area, Bruce Gearns to fly into London and take in this grand event for the first time!

Staying at the Travelodge outside of Lyndhurst is a story for another time, not to mention the deplorable breakfast at the Little Thief, oops, I mean Little Chef restaurants!

Even though I had read about Beaulieu and had talked about Beaulieu I was not prepared for the scope and size of the event.

We arrived on Friday, Dealer Day, and as a Bugeye owner I began to make several small purchases. It is fairly difficult to hide my New England accent, so every one I spoke with knew I was over from the States. I am not sure what, if any, part that played in making deals with the many vendors, but the fact that I was limited in size and weight as to what I could bring back was the final determining factor in what I could buy anyway!

To begin with, the additional car models that exist in England and not in the States did create a bit of a disadvantage for me as things that I may have recognized as Bugeye, may not have been!

However, there was plenty of stuff that I did recognize and I found there did always seem to be a quantity discount if I could afford to carry the extra weight back home in my luggage.

I must say that every vendor seems to have their own slant on what an auto jumble should be. There was one group of gentlemen who set up a door and frame on their lot, complete with door knocker and electric buzzer! Their site theme was that of a British pub complete with bar, draught beer, wall (tent) decorations and the like.

Upon entering, through the door, you were immediately met with a beer and a comfortable chair. Hospitable they were! A bit crazy too, probably! But what a great visit we had. After twenty minutes and upon making a

small donation for the libations, we left through the door! They did this all weekend long! I don't think they actually had anything for sale, it was more of a weekend away from their normal lives, if such there be!

Other vendors worked out of campers, trailers, motorhomes and many brought elaborate canopies to set up to protect their goods. I met many wonderful people including Peter Lawrence, export manager for Lucas and DJ Grove of PBL 75 Sprite notoriety.

It was equally exciting for me to speak with people and get their story so to speak about why they were there and what association they had with British cars.

There were two gentlemen who used to work at the MG factory and made a donation of an original piece of roof slate to me!

I had a long conversation with three young men who had recently broken away from a very reputable, well known Austin Healey replacement parts company to begin business on their own. Fascinating stuff!

After 3 days I was exhausted, primarily from carrying all of the parts I kept buying. I came with only one small suitcase and went home with two, as well as bulging back pack. My fears of curious customs agents went unfounded and most of my booty has been safely stored away for future use.

Oh yes, did I mention we met Lord Montagu of Beaulieu? I had a great chat and took some photos and I believe some of those may end up in the Austin Healey Marquee in the near future.

I must say, I had a great time, met many wonderful people, bought too much NOS stuff and spent much too much money, given the current dollar versus pound status! It looks like this is going to be an event for which I will be coming back for many years to come.

Finally, after leaving Beaulieu, I travelled to Perranporth to spend a few days with Bic and Mary Healey. Bic, or Brian, as perhaps you better know him, was the sales manager for the Donald Healey Motorcar Company.

I must say I had a spectacular visit. I was amazed at how sub-tropical Cornwall actually was. The Healeys were very gracious hosts.



I got my own personal tour of Cornwall, from Perranporth to Land's End to Penzance and back again with Bic giving me the documentary. I would not have missed it for anything! We chatted about many things, not just the cars and the past, although that certainly entered into it.

As I was getting ready to leave for home, Bic was taking a phone call from an area organiser who wanted him to speak at an upcoming club gathering. It seems that there will always be that demand from this very entertaining and surviving family member.

In closing, I must say that all the warnings I received still had not adequately prepared me for the width of the roads and the numerous roundabouts that I was subjected to in and around Beaulieu. And for those of you who haven't had the chance to drive on the backroads of New Forest, watch where you drive as there are numerous road hazards to be avoided and I'm not speaking of the roaming wild animals, but what they decided to leave behind!

I had a blast; I'll do it again in a heartbeat. If you haven't been to the Beaulieu auto jumble, you just have to go! It is a one of a kind experience!

**Steve Bell**

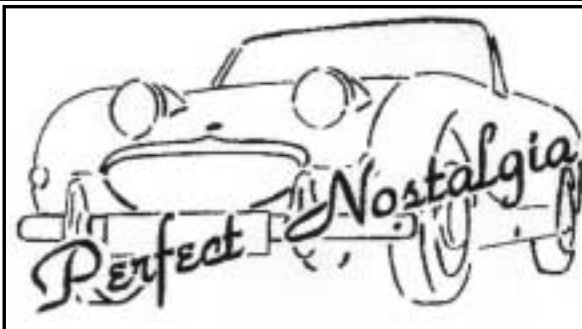
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Austin Healey Marque Magazine

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# Two Midgets go to Brittany



love driving we decided we would take the long route and drive from our homes in West Wales to Dover, taking the Speed Ferry to Boulogne and then head on down to our gîte. On Saturday 31 August 2007, with cars loaded up for a week's stay, we travelled with hoods down as far as Ashford in Kent, staying the night in the Travelodge. The next morning we were up bright and early catching the 8am Speed Ferry to Boulogne.

Upon arrival in France we set off on our journey through Pas de Calais, Normandy and on to Brittany. Again hoods down all the way. Our gîte in Langoelan was a welcome sight. So far from

In 2006 I attended the Classic Le Mans in my 1970 MkIII Midget. I was accompanied on the trip by my friend Paul Evans from Pontsian in Carmarthenshire. Also attending with us were friends Cliff and Syd in another MkIII Midget. We had a great time. In fact Paul was so taken with our little adventure that he couldn't wait to visit France again and so suggested that we should visit France, taking our wives as well this time. And so the scene was set. Paul found a Gîte for us near Pontivy in central Brittany. Because we both

Tenby to the gite I had knocked up 750 miles. Both cars had performed impeccably. We were soon settled in to our brilliant accommodation having been welcomed by our hosts, David and Nadine, with wine and homemade cake.

The following day, Sunday, was a special day in the annual calendar of Langoelan village as a 'Pardon' was being held in the local church. I must confess that none of us had ever heard of such an event before but we soon got into the swing of it! Following a church service, the

hundred plus people attending settled down to an all day party. Marquees had been erected in the church grounds and a Heineken beer tent next to the side door of the Church was doing a roaring trade. At the rear of the church were six 'Boule' lanes which provided some enthusiastic and serious competition. A multi-course meal was laid on followed by crêpes of all descriptions washed down with copious amounts of cider and wine. What a day we had. It is one all four of us will never forget!

Next day we decided to explore the area and so headed off for the





hole whilst turning the engine over. There was no compression on cylinders 2 and 3. It could only mean a blown head gasket. There were no other signs to support this such as loss of water, water in the oil, milky deposits on the oil filler cap etc. but it couldn't be anything else. A new head gasket was one thing I didn't have with me. I was determined that I wasn't going to be taken home on the back of a recovery vehicle and so I phoned MGOC spares and spoke to Andrew. What a gem he was. No problem he

north Brittany coast and the Rose Granite peninsula. What a lovely area this is. We had a great day clocking up another 200 miles in the process. Both cars once again behaved themselves. That is until my Midget was a couple of miles from our gîte when it began to lose power. I continued to our gîte until checking out the problem. There was nothing obviously wrong.

The following morning, Paul and I began a search for the misfire whilst Vanessa and Sharon caught up with their sunbathing. Being a pessimist I had taken a lot of tools and spares with me and so in a methodical fashion I replaced the various bits including rotor arm, condenser, coil, distributor cap and plug leads. This made absolutely no difference. A few phonecalls ensued to friends back home for advice. All suggested the things I had already tried. Paul and I then tested each plug to ensure there was no fault with them. This was when we discovered a problem with the plugs on 2 and 3 cylinder. A 'Heath Robinson' compression test ensued (ie thumb over a plug

said we will send one out to you by overnight carrier. It will be with you by lunchtime tomorrow. Wow! The order was placed there and then. In the meantime, our hosts David and Nadine, in a spectacular act of generosity allowed the four of us to use their own Ford Focus to travel around in. How kind was this. Wednesday arrived and no part had arrived. Thursday and no part had arrived. Having spoken to Andrew several times in the meantime he assured me it had been sent, but had established that the delivery driver had been unable to locate the address and so had returned it to the sender! Andrew arranged to send another one out to me. Come Friday lunchtime this had also not arrived. The clock was now ticking. Our ferry back from Boulogne was early Sunday morning. Some frantic calls to the carrier established that it had once again failed to find the address and so was on its way back to the depot. With the assistance of Nadine (very fluent French speaker) we got the van stopped, jumped in the Focus and drove 35 miles to meet it and collect the part. Success, I had the new gasket in my hands.



We arrived back at the gîte by 4.30pm and together with Paul we stripped the head off. We could then see the problem. The gasket had blown between 2 and 3 as suspected. By 6.30pm the new gasket was fitted, the head replaced and the car started. It was back to its normal self. Job done. We celebrated in style that night with a fantastic crab supper beautifully prepared by David and Nadine. The following morning we headed back to Boulogne where we stayed the night. Sunday morning saw us catch the ferry back to Dover.

Alas the story doesn't end there however. Whilst my Midget was running really well, as we were approaching the M4, Paul and Vanessa's began to display very similar symptoms to mine. Having spent half an hour or so going through the same diagnostics as my car had undergone, Paul summoned the assistance of the AA. They were unable to find the problem and so Paul and Vanessa ended up being relayed home on a tow truck. Their problem transpired to have simply been a timing problem, the distributor having slipped. We were surprised the AA hadn't discovered that with their diagnostic thingymejig! By way of a postscript I must stress that the Midgets are not known for blown head gaskets. This was the first I had experienced in 27 years of ownership of this car. The reason it had blown was my own fault, but that is another story! The support provided by Andrew was first



class and the delivery problem absolutely nothing to do with him.

Despite our little setbacks we had a cracking holiday with our friends Paul and Vanessa, the success of which was made all the more possible by the generosity of David and Nadine. I'm off to Classic Le Mans again in 2008. I wonder what excitement that will bring?

**Neil Thomas, 3617**



# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF ABINGDON

By John Sprinzel

The MG Factory at Abingdon was nothing like one would expect a car plant to be. First of all, it was so small, so everyone knew everyone else – sons followed fathers into jobs, and that legendary MG boss, John Thornley, seemed to know each worker's first name, as well as much of his family. There was such a sense of "family" that even in those terrible strike-ridden times of the sixties, the Abingdon plant just didn't have stoppages.

Secondly, the factory was built right into the edge of a country market town. The unimposing front entrance was at the end of a narrow, leafy lane with the main offices on one side and a churchyard on the other! Most of the "works" team drivers used the back entrance where the gatekeepers recognized every face, and waved you though with a grin. We also used the same washrooms as the assembly workers – most would recognize us, nod a

greeting and comment on the results of the last rally. After all, it was the cars they built that we were driving!

After the second World War, production recommenced with the MG TC slowly at first, but within seven years and the introduction of the TD, over 10,000 cars were being produced annually. Three years later the MGA was introduced and production doubled: Abingdon was mostly an assembly plant, and only the MGA chassis was actually welded together at the factory. Bodywork, fully trimmed and painted for the A, and later for the MGB, Sprite and "big" Healey arrived in a steady flow from the various BMC plants as did engines and transmissions. The bodies arrived on car transporters and were held in a large car park waiting for the color coded traffic signals, which told the driver he was next in line to approach the "A" Block assembly area.

Assembly was very much a dedicated hand work affair, even to the "conveyor" lines themselves, which

were merely tracks made of cement blocks, with gullies in which the wheels would run. These were sized to accept differing width vehicles, but it did mean the wheels and axles had to be fitted correctly at the start, as the cars had to be pushed down the line. It also meant that each team could finish their job properly before passing the car onto the next station – not always the case with the pressures of a powered line!

The mix of models on the assembly lines was quite difficult to understand – but it seemed to work. Perhaps the most unusual aspect in my day was the final testing, where every car was driven around a seven-mile circuit along Oxfordshire's delightful country lanes. The experienced testers were very proud of their product and few – if any – of those nagging new car faults passed scrutiny, and any car with a problem was driven straight back to the factory and the rectifications department. Halfway around the route was the Dog House pub, far away



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from even the mini-bustle of Abingdon town. They served a decent lunch and a good local ale, so most of the Competitions Department's team meetings seemed to be held in its old English, rural atmosphere. Over lunch, a constant stream of MGs and Healeys barbled past the windows, to remind us that there really was a commercial reason for the meeting!

I first became familiar with the works during 1956, when Marcus Chambers invited me to join the team on the Sestriere Rally, with my own car, which the works would prepare. Marcus was not only the competitions manager, but had set up the department just two years earlier, under the guidance of John Thornley. At that time they were still producing that delightful MG saloon, the Magnette, but not long afterwards this range was moved to the Morris plant at Cowley, in order to accommodate the Sprites and Midgets and also the increased demand for the big Healey.

I was not just one of the team drivers but was also fortunate enough to own dealerships for both MG and Austin-Healey, so my contacts were on both sides of the organisation! Perhaps the most important man in the entire plant after John and Marcus, and of course, Syd Enever who headed the design office, was Charlie Martin. As boss of the planning department it was his job to translate the orders from around the world into a coherent and efficient production schedule. I have never found a more patient or more able executive in all my dealing with the "motor trade," and while one obviously didn't abuse the friendship, a discreet telephone call to Charlie would result in the car for a particularly difficult customer arriving, more or less, when it had been promised! When you imagine all the different specifications, colors and models which could be selected, it's a miracle that so many automobiles were produced and delivered, all of which matched the very individual orders of sports

MG workers take a morning break outside "A" Block.



car enthusiasts, and for all those Abingdon years, Charlie was mostly the reason.

Syd Enever too, was one of a kind being responsible for the design of the MGB among other outstanding achievements. I always remember discussing a fault with the front stub axles of the Sprites and Austin A35's while sitting next to Syd at a BMC Competitions lunch. In no time, an empty cigarette packet had been opened out, and a sketch of the problem part appeared together with the possible reason for failure. That the same part still failed ten years later was certainly not the designers' fault, but the rather unwieldy system at BMC, where parts were designed here, made there and assembled somewhere else. This often caused a lack of communication and led to frustration, which eventually led to the downfall of what had been a giant in the British motor industry.

One memory is indelibly etched in my mind and it was on a Saturday afternoon, near both the end of my the end of my career as a competitor, and Abingdon as a car plant. I had driven up to the factory to collect a special close-ratio gearbox to fit one of my rally Sprites. Neville Johnson, the dedicated stores



The former main office block of the MG Car Company.

manager, had arranged to leave the gearbox in the competitions department, and the keys had been left at the main gate #3. I collected the keys and drove through the deserted factory, opened up the competition stores and there I was, totally alone, amid an enthusiast's dream! Every single type of special part from camshafts and crankshafts to special seats, lightweight body panels, rally intercom systems and much more lay in serried ranks of shelving. What a temptation! But I can't think of any better way to remember the personal relationships, the trust and the dedication of all those wonderful people who made Abingdon products the stuff of dreams for enthusiasts all around the globe.

*Pictures for this article are from Ken Smith's book, Aspects of Abingdon on the MG factory and the production of the MGB and Midget. See us on page 27.*

# To the Pyrenees with an Austin-Healey Sprite – Part Two

## Tuesday May 22nd

This was one of the really great days of driving and sight-seeing. We decided to go to Andorra, a little principality set in two high valleys in the eastern Pyrenees. We drove through the Gorges of St. Georges and de L'Aude: a gorge in the Pyrenees consists of a narrow road, possibly a stream, and not much more, set between vertical walls of rock which may be as high as 1000ft. As these roads are used by lorries as well as cars, care is required, but someone forgot to tell the locals! Onward to Escouloubre, driving the switch-back road over the Col du Pradel and down to Ax-les-Thermes. What a road and at 6000ft. what a view over stunning scenery. We arrived in Andorra at the town of Pas de la Casa, full of duty-free shops and tourist arcades; not quite what we had expected, but a small restaurant with an outdoor eating area provided an excellent lunch, with the added bonus of watching the world go by. The return journey to Ax-les-Thermes and then to Quillan through the Gorge du Rebenty was every bit as good and breathtaking as the outward had been. Great roads and great scenery – what a day!

## Wednesday May 23rd

The weather was getting hotter, so a trip to the seaside seemed a good idea, and St. Cyprien about 10 miles south of Perpignan, looked to be a good place. And so it turned out to be, with a large marina and sea-front with a long sandy beach. After the activity of yesterday, to sit on the shore of the Mediterranean and enjoy a cool on-shore breeze was great and very relaxing. Another excellent lunch at a local restaurant (we do pick 'em!) was followed by something of a disaster of a return journey. I chose a road that was difficult to find and then went on forever and ever over a mountain that failed to provide us with one decent view-point. Some consolation was taken from a visit to our local 'Champion' supermarket and the purchase of some rather good chocolate desserts.



## Thursday May 24th

Once again, what a day. We decided to take in some more mountain roads and gorges and ended up finding something completely different. The road to St. Paul de Fenouillet and from Axat to Escouloubre were known to us from previous outings, but the road south was new to us. From Escouloubre we headed towards Puyvalador and the area known as Capcir, which is a high-altitude plateau. In the middle of this vast plateau is a large reservoir near the town of Les Angles which provided some scenery that would have been more at home in Switzerland. Another excellent lunch; quiche, salad, and a rather good red wine at Mont-Louis was, again, eaten outside watching the world go by, before setting off down the N116 towards Olette and Villefranche-de-Conflent. This is one of the great roads of the region, approx. 22 miles of switch-back, occasionally following a railway line, and in an area of wonderful scenery, high mountains and deep valleys. There was a bonus when we reached Villefranche, as it was a walled town, a sort of miniature Carcassonne, but deep in a valley rather than on a hill. Very spectacular, full of Spanish school-children, but a nice end to a great day.

## **Friday May 25th**

A quiet day by comparison to yesterday. We went to a very good market in Limoux, a nice town and a very colourful and noisy market – all very French! The rest of the day was spent back at the Gîte, Management doing some washing and ironing and me washing two weeks of dirt and dust off the car. Rainfall in this part of the world is strange; it consists of two parts water and one part fine dust. The water goes away but the dust stays, covering everything and getting everywhere. A month after getting back home we are still finding some in the car.

## **Saturday May 26th. Moulin de Perle to Ales**

Time to say 'goodbye' to our hosts at the Gîte and hit the road. We took a route through the Gorges de Galamus, more wonderful roads and scenery. The weather caught up with us at St. Pons and the hood went up (the first time in a week). This was a shame as we were going to see what has been described by many as the Eighth Wonder of the World, the Millau Viaduct. It may seem strange to say that something made of steel and concrete is beautiful, but it really is. Very long and very high, it is something to be seen from the ground as well as being driven over. Sadly, the latter was not possible due to the weather (our choice) but it will be there next time. On to Ales by which time the weather had improved and the hood was down and to our hotel, close to the town-centre, but with secure underground parking. This hotel did not have a restaurant, so a foray into the town was made. Now, French eating establishments do not open in the evenings until 19-00 or even 19-30, and I cannot wait that long for my evening meal! So, McDonalds it was, and very good it was, and very adequate, and followed by a refreshing walk through the town.

## **Sunday May 27th. Ales to Gap**

We got lost coming out of Ales (surprise!) but the weather was good to us and, with the hood down, we enjoyed the open countryside. The Gorge of the Ardeche was spectacular and heavily infested with tourists; let me make a point here – WE are not tourists, WE are visitors! The Gorge and the river running through it provides some wonderful scenery and views as the road climbs to the top. This

is a great area for anyone interested in water sports of a small boating nature; canoes, kayaks, and rowing boats being very popular. Lunch came out of a very nice 'boulangerie' and was eaten in a picnic area next to a wine-bottling factory in the company of a German gentleman, with a classic Mercedes, and a very good bottle of red wine! The weather let us down in the afternoon and we arrived in Gap in a rain-storm, not too bothered by this, such was the quality of the red wine. The hotel was rather good too.

## **Monday May 28th. Gap to Roanne**

In fact, the hotel was very good, the best to date. Good food, good service, and very friendly staff. Gap is an interesting town, a 'browsing' town of alleyways and narrow streets with small shops. The drive out of Gap, heading north, is very spectacular over the Col Bayard and following the 'Route Napoleon' towards Grenoble. Now we are in the French Alps; it's cold but the hood stayed down (don't say anything) and we enjoyed a different kind of mountain scenery to the Pyrenees. Here the peaks are higher and the gorges and valleys have a more gradual slope to them. The roads are in a better condition and are 2- or 3-lane wide. Lunch at a roadside 'Grillage', very busy, was very good, which is more than can be said for the weather. It was a wet and windy journey round, firstly, Grenoble and then St-Etienne to our hotel in Roanne (which had a swimming pool).

## **Tuesday May 29th. Roanne to Marchaux**

Weather-wise, a much better day, hood down, warm and sunny, oh, this is good. We are heading north-east towards the Vosges mountains, which we should pass over tomorrow. Today was a day of surprises; coming across small towns and villages, each with something to offer. La Clayette, off the main road, has a chateau with a lake, close to the town-centre, in which was a street market, all waiting to be explored and very good. In the afternoon, we found ourselves in Arbois and stopped to buy a sticky-bun. Further examination of the town revealed it to be the birth-place of Louis Pasteur; time for another walkabout. The countryside has changed from the ruggedness of the Alps to the gently rolling type, very neat, very French, and a nice change. The hotel at Marchaux was next to a



motorway service area, so the dining-room that evening was busy and noisy.

### **Wednesday May 30th. Marchaux to Chateau Thierry**

Sunshine and blue sky greeted us this morning and we set off for the Vosges mountains. Due to getting lost several times, we saw more of the Vosges than was intended, but it was worth it. Very different to the Pyrenees and the Alpes, more rolling and wall-to-wall trees. By the time we had got ourselves back on route, we had only covered about 70 miles and it was lunch time. So, after an uncharacteristically quick snack, we set off on a long afternoon's drive, heading north. The scenery changed yet again, this time to mainly flat countryside with long straight roads and no large towns for us to get lost in. The fine weather held up until tea-time, when the hood had to go up and the last forty miles were covered in drips and drizzle until we arrived at our hotel. The hotel was next to a large chemical works; fortunately the wind was in the right direction!

### **Thursday May 31st. Chateau Thierry to Calais**

After yesterday's long drive, we were glad of two things; one, the hotel was superb and two, today's drive was planned as a short one. As we approached the Pas-de-Calais region we found ourselves having a lesson in military history; towns like Arras and St. Omer, once famous landmarks for the pilots of the First World War, and the many military cemeteries, of all nationalities along the road to Calais. We

stopped in St. Omer, where we had spent a night on a holiday many years ago. It had changed a bit, or our memories had faded (I think I will change the subject). As we got closer to Calais, so the traffic got heavier and we eventually booked into the hotel that we had used on our first night in France, and the Receptionist remembered us. The weather which had stayed good for the whole day allowed us to take an evening walk after a very good meal.

### **Friday June 1st. Calais to Worcester**

An early start to the ferry terminal for the 9.35 crossing, which was very smooth and arrived in Dover on time. Then a quick dash up the A2, M2, and M26 to Westerham to visit Chartwell, the private home of Sir Winston Churchill. This is a wonderful place; beautiful gardens with a fine view over the Sussex Downs, and a grand house full of memories and artifacts of the great man. By the time we had left Chartwell and joined the M25, the Friday rush-hour had started (why do they call it the rush 'hour' – it goes on for ever!) So it was stop/go all the way round until we could turn off and head up the M40. The evening meal was a rather good fish and chips, eaten in Thame town square, and then a gentle drive into the sunset towards Worcester.

### **Postscript**

So, after three weeks and 3,300 miles, what have we got. The car performed perfectly, never letting us down, and was actually the right car for the roads that we had planned to use. It was big enough for all of our luggage and the sights, sounds, and occasional smells of the mountains are best enjoyed in an open-top car. We have five hours of DVD footage, un-edited, which will give us many an evening's entertainment, particularly Management's comments on cars and tractors passing close by on HER side, as she kept reminding me. We saw some wonderful scenery and places and met some interesting people, and, yes, despite the weather and the mileage, it was a very relaxing holiday. Would we do it again? Yes, next year we are going to the Italian Lakes and the Dolomite Mountains. In a Healey? – of course. Watch this space.

**Adrian Turley**  
3745

# Cold War, Warm Sun

## The second Birmingham Tunnels Run – October 21 2007



**W**e got the weather I'd prayed for. When I woke up the sun was climbing over the far trees in Sutton Park. After a light breakfast I set off to the meeting place at Frankie and Bennies in Erdington to meet the gang. As the car park was empty at 9.30 I went on a "reccé" trip into Brum to make sure the tunnels were open and not closed for maintenance, which sometimes happens to these roads which carry huge numbers of cars during the week. Hooray, all clear except for a single lane closed on the Aston Expressway, with cone collection on-going.

So after a solo dash through the tunnels and back out to the start point I arrived to find that Gary Lazarus had arrived on F&B's car park in "Gaps", his Frogeye along with Andy in his 1500 with a recently fitted Triumph overdrive gearbox. The car park soon started getting popular with local Spridget owners including Mark and his mate from Walsall who had heard of the run via the MG BBS, Mark's car has a marvellous walnut dash which can be seen on Spritespot ([http://www.spritespot.com/gallery/Mark1/Picture\\_010](http://www.spritespot.com/gallery/Mark1/Picture_010)). John C and Pom, Geoff and John W were joined by Bill2, Trevor and his better half and Steve with his co-pilot son, Matt.

Fantastic, ten cars at the virtual end of a busy year. I was thrilled. To make things better yet, although it was only just after ten o'clock the manager of F&B's offered to open up early and

serve coffee to the throngs as he saw us lining up for our photo session in his car-park.

After coffee and a comfort break we all set off from my favourite (now) Italian-American café and drove off in convoy along to the Aston Expressway to start the day's fun. As we came off the Expressway down into the first of the tunnels we had managed to stay together and the sounds from behind me were all I'd hoped for. Through the three Brum tunnels and out onto the "old Brum Grand Prix circuit" on Bristol St and round onto Belgrave Rd and its tunnel the ten cars managed to stay together but as we ran uphill to the Five Ways island we began to lose stragglers.

At the roundabout it seems some went off down the Broad Street exit and had to make a U turn to catch up with me. I waited in a bus lay-by until we were ten again then we moved off back down to the tunnels. For some reason the cars made a fantastic and really quite juvenile amount of noise as *for some reason* all of the Spridgets needed lower gears than usual to negotiate the Queensway. From the first car in the convoy inside the tunnel it sounded as if the road was full of high-speed racecars behind me. I could see children in the family cars I was alongside excitedly crowding against their windows to see what was coming. Amusing really as the convoy never passed them all because there was no speeding in the tunnels at all from our crowd, simply a rather amazing sound. I do wish I could have recorded a wave file of it, maybe next time.

Now we'd finished part one of the plan for the day I led the group out down the Expressway again to drive north west up the M6 to the M54 near Walsall. Passing the "usual" Sunday queue to exit the motorway at IKEA we motored on to junction 10A. Leaving the motorway at the Cosford exit I took Gary to the nearest petrol station for a much needed top-up followed by John C and Pom in their rather nice recently acquired Sprite MkIV (?) and then drove to our final destination at the RAF Museum at RAF Cosford. The others had

reserved parking spaces for us in the car park near the Bristol Britannia that is being repainted near the entry road. We took several more pictures and then wandered into the Museum which occupied us all for the next three or four hours. Many years ago I used to be a model maker and I was quite proud to see the two models I had donated to the museum back in the eighties were still on display.

Boys, did you ever hang Airfix kits from the ceiling in your bedroom? My first impression when Gary and I walked into the Cold War Warriors Museum was that we had wandered into a giant kid's bedroom. Right in front of me there was an English Electric Lightning pointing straight up into the roof, hanging from several cables. Amazing and evocative of the performance these wonderful aircraft were capable of in flight.

As this is a spectacular new display in a brand new display facility (far too posh to call it a hangar) I won't spoil the exhibit for any future visitors, but suffice it for me to say, please pay the museum (or its other branch in Hendon) a visit. It's a grand day out for free, courtesy of the RAF and the generosity of the Lottery fund.

We had a late lunch in the fine restaurant in the visitor centre then after fond farewells split up and made our way home in various directions still bathed in warm (for October



rather amazingly warm) sunshine. A run this late in the October Sun paid off big-time.

I wish to thank all who came along and participated, we just might do it all again next year now we know it worked out so well.

And this weekend SS&NB supported our friends from Warwickshire who did another outstanding job manning the Club Stand at the Classic Cars show. A great show and I have to say the most stunning car this year wasn't Stuart's V8FWD Midget but the amazing Bugatti Royale that greeted everyone on entry to the show, with that in one's face all the others were simply "less amazing".

**Bill**  
SS&NB Area

## May Run 3rd-6th 2008 – Early Bank Holiday

Next year looks like becoming a bumper year with many events to attend.

The May Tour 2008, organised by Chris and Jacqui Harding; Sue and Jim Judd assisted by Colin Aldridge, takes us to the New Forest area of Hampshire.

The Midget and Sprite Club have the entire Hotel. That is 20 Double rooms (+ if we want them there are 3 singles (only one single now left)) £195 per person for three nights Dinner B&B. Chris Harding will be taking bookings from August Surrey club night £50/person The hotel is 'The Watersplash' in Brockenhurst, this is in the middle of the New Forest. It has secure parking plus the use of a garage if required and a swimming pool.

Hotel can be viewed on [www.watersplash.co.uk](http://www.watersplash.co.uk)

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Details/Deposits [harding.c@btconnect.com](mailto:harding.c@btconnect.com)





## Euro Auto Festival – October '07



*A Mk. 1 Sprite and a rare Big Healey 100S at the Euro Auto Festival on October 20, 2007, at the BMW Zentrum in Greer, South Carolina.*

*Austin-Healey was the featured marque at the annual event at BMW's manufacturing facility in South Carolina. Gerry Coker, the designer of the Big Healey and the Mk. 1, spoke at a banquet during the three-day event.*

*Part of the Sprite line up at Euro Auto Festival. There were also a number of Midgets on display.*

**Words and photos: Glenn Surette, US**

## Emails to the Editor

### Brabhams

Hi Barry

I am trying to research the Brabham Sprite/Midget cars, the Climax engine ones that were converted during the early '60s. I have a copy of the original road test published in *Sports Car* and also in *Autosport* in '61. I have searched the web but without success. I think some Mk1 Sprites were converted in addition to the Mk1 Midgets. Any leads or information would be much appreciated. Thanking you in anticipation.

**David** #3923, davidbuzas@tiscali.co.uk

### Congratulations

Hi Barry

Congratulations on winning the best club magazine category at the Classic and Sports Car awards at the Classic Car Show today, very well deserved. Regards

**Paul Webb**

# Dorset Area

Midget & Sprite Club



## Sunday 8th June 2008



Lewis-Manning  
Hospice



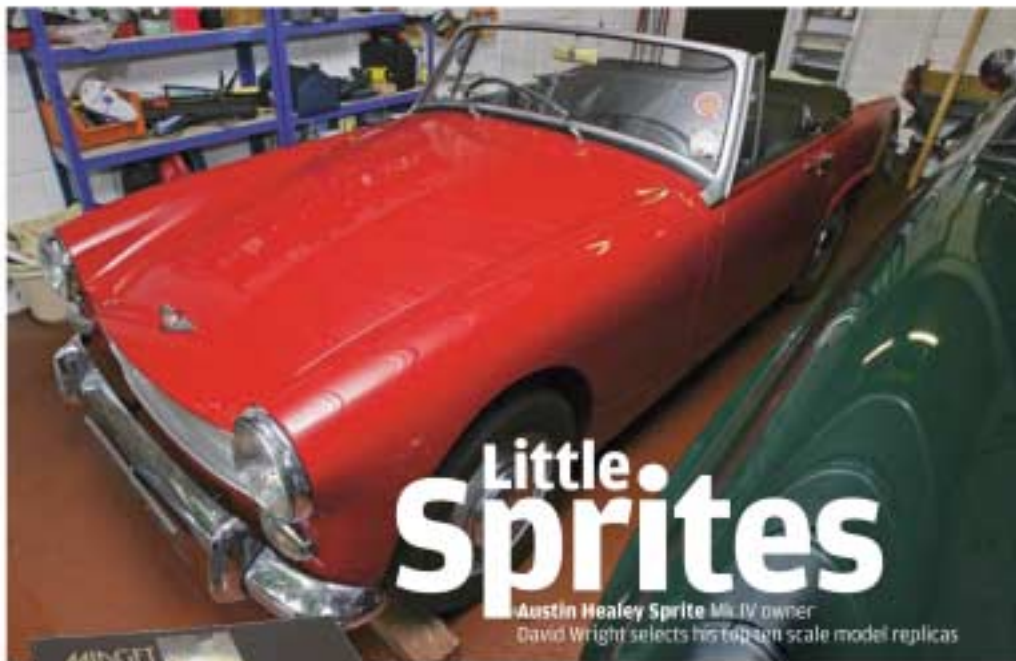
Kingston Lacy House  
Nr Wimborne, Dorset  
(10.am - 4.00pm)

# Gary Lazarus' Early Cars Photo Collection

“At top right is a picture of a Frogeye that I bought in Coventry in 1964 and sold a couple of years later. The engine was built by Downton and the car was raced prior to my ownership in the 1000cc class. I was told it was one of a team of six cars that raced in endurance type races. The registration number was 6TMT, I traded the car for a 65 MG Midget. As you can see in the picture a Walker type fibreglass front was fitted to the car. I am currently rebuilding a '59 Sprite to similar specifications, reliving my youth so to speak. The photo was taken at the back of The Queen's Hotel in Hertford St., Coventry where I lived with my parents who ran the hotel. The place was demolished years ago.

Best regards, Paul Brown, Ramona, California (hot, smelly, smokey and very sooty at present).”





# Little Sprites

Austin Healey Sprite Mk IV owner David Wright selects his top ten scale model replicas

I have collected models for over 40 years, but in 1992 a friend and I decided that together we had the 'bards' to restore a real sports car, so we jointly bought BOG 420G, a 1969 (named Austin Healey Sprite Mk IV). Although the haul hasn't been a seven-year non-stop, we restored her. She became my pride and joy, and we followed this project by working on a later MG Midget for my friend John.

Like many other collectors, more than I had a real sports car, my model hunting focused on scale replicas of Austin Healeys, and in particular Sprites. These now form a small part of my collection of British sports car models. Surprisingly, I've found that there are not as many models of Sprites, or Midgets, as you might think. They do, however, come in all shapes, sizes, scales and materials, and although I love them all, there is one particular favourite – see if you can identify it!

**above** Announcing the dawn of the 'Spridgeteers'!

**1. Revell's Frogeye Sprite Mk I**  
Revell has been known for high-quality 1/18th-scale die-cast models for a while now, and when its Frogeye Sprite Mk I was listed two years ago, I had to have it. It was initially released as open tops in dark green, with steel wheels that had realistic chrome 'AF' hubcaps, or in a rather bright and not-prototypical yellow with fixed hardtop. The green model was less fitted with wire wheels; those were never provided as standard, and I don't think Revell realised it had 'strayed' from the true path!

**2. Lansdowne's Frogeye**  
I was enjoying a small but serious assemblage at the Brooklands Museum some years ago when I spied two Lansdowne model boxes.

## the models



**Showing off its realistic chrome 'AF' hubcaps** is Revell's initial 1/18th-scale Frogeye Sprite Mk I release. A later version inexcusably sported wire wheels.

**Lansdowne's 1/43rd scale** white metal Frogeye is a really well-proportional model, with correct chrome hubcaps.



and soon enough my hub was in, they were both Froggy Sprint! Lancelotti made its machine in red, with a black hood in some positions. It's a really well proportioned model, with similar rear chrome hubcaps.

**3. Gama Sangyo Sprite kit**

Japanese plastic kit maker, Gama Sangyo, produced a spin-off plastic Sprite kit in 1/24th scale, with detailed wheel rims and tyres, chrome parts, fenders, and even possible steering. This kit was part of a small range that included the TR3 and Lotus Elan.

**4. EFE's Froggy**

EFE is known best for its 1/77th scale ("88" gauge) models of buses and trucks designed to complement model railway layouts. However, in 1991 and 1992, it produced two sets of "88" gauge cars, one of which comprised of an MG8 roadster and a Froggy. Your production runs has stated that the Frog model has so far been released in yellow, white, leaf green, and red. It's a cheeky representation of a Frog, with separate windscreen, seats and even a correct steering wheel. Both body and base are die-cast metal.

**5. Johnny Lightning's Froggy**

From across the Atlantic, the American company of Johnny Lightning, who make Matchbox-size models, mostly of US muscle cars, error cars and NASCAR racers, recently introduced a new series called British Invasion, and it includes our little Froggy. However, not just any old Frog, it's modelled on a car owned by a Saucy member of the Midge & Spruce Club – a car which took the Concours Trophy from starting his holidays in the Santa Holey annual event a few years ago.

**6. Dinky Toys' Sprite Mk II**

Dinky Toys No. 112 Austin Healey Sprite is a one-piece die-cast Mk II Sprite, modelled to approximately 1/48th scale. Its production between 1961 and 1963 in the factory at Brite Road, Liverpool, it was only ever made in England in Cherry red and sold as a red and yellow. However, in the 1960s some castings and parts were sent out to South Africa as knock-down kits, to get around the import tax on complete cars and to assist the local labour market. The Dinky Sprite was thus produced in South Africa, and finished in either a pale turquoise blue or a darker blue. This model is now almost unobtainable and is likely to cost well over £500 if found

**the models**



Built from a Japanese plastic kit by Gama Sangyo, this 1/24th scale Sprite features detailed wheel rims and tyres, chrome parts, fenders and even possible steering.



In 1991 and 1992 EFE produced two sets of 1/77th scale cars, one of which comprised of an MG8 roadster and a Froggy. Your production runs offer Froggy collectors a choice of colours.

"It's a cheeky representation of a Frog, with separate windscreen, seats and even a correct steering wheel"



**Johnny Lightning's**

**Little** Matchbox-size model of the Froggy is based on a car owned by a member of the M & S Club.



in water and heated conditions! This including both in English and a South African version in my Top Ten. Hope that's not cheating!

#### T. Spot-On's Sprite Mk II

To compare with Dinky and Gooch Toys, Tri-ang, better known for its trains, Pullage dolls and larger Minic die-cast toys, set up a factory in Billesley in 1950 to make its Spot-On range of die-cast cars and commercial vehicles. These models were built, usually to 1/43rd scale, as opposed to the 1/48th scale of Dinky and Gooch. This was so that alongside Tri-ang's trains in the toy shop windows, the Spot-On models would appear notably larger. They were characterised by accurate cast bodies, car patterned bumpers with added aesthetically detail, and 'Made in Great Britain' (plus the vehicle's details and underwork). Indeed the Spot-On range included a draughtsman's compass, symbolising accuracy. Each model came with a picture card, and these are now collectable in their own right.

The Spot-On range included both the Austin Healey Sprite Mk II, dating from 1963, and MG Midget Mk II.

No. 219 Austin Healey Sprite Mk II is a very good likeness of the pre-facelift, single rear bumper Sprite. It features the correct wheelcovers and square lights and includes a free fix driver, looking like Ross Gibson in 'Buggles' with scarf flying stiff to the frame behind him. Screen colours are a pale tan blue, tan and old English white. The baseplate shows 'Austin Healey Sprite', produced between 1963 and 1962, the model was based in a 'window' box and is now quite difficult to find. In most conditions you'll be looking at something as much as £40, and some limited examples may cost up to £110.

**Extra:** Period Austin Healey brochure paints out the Sprite's attributes.

## the models

**Dinky's Mk II Sports** modelled in approx 1/48th scale, was only ever issued in Dinky red in the UK. However, the casting and parts were later used for a very rare South African release (finished in either turquoise or a darker blue).



**Spot-On's No. 219** Austin Healey Sprite Mk II is a very good likeness of the pre-facelift, single rear bumper Sprite. Each Spot-On model comes with a picture card, and these are now collectable in their own right.

**K&B Replica's handbuilt** white metal Mk II Sprite modelled an David's own car is nicely detailed – pity about those let down overcast windows though.



## the lowdown

**THE SPRITE WILL** be 50 years old in 2018, and a birthday celebration is to be held at the Gaydon Heritage Motor Centre on May 18.

**THE NAME SPRITE** was first used on Riley cars, but when BMC incorporated Riley into its portfolio, it acquired the name. The Pogue was launched in 1958, as a smaller and cheaper version of the established Austin Healey, and was later used.

**MOST PEOPLE ARE** familiar with the MG Sprite, but it isn't the Healey Sprite that first, in 1958, with the cheery 800cc Pogue. In 1962, the Sprite PB-1 was updated and along came the badge (required) MG Sprite. Sprites continued until 1972, although the last few were known as Austin Sprites, as BMC's Healey's contract with BMC had expired.

**ALL BUT 800** cars were made in the MG Factory at Abingdon. When production was halted temporarily, some were then built at the Austin factory at Cowley. **SPRITES HAD JUST** three different engines in their lifetime: 800cc, 950cc, and the 1175cc – a detuned Mini-Lancer 5 that proved the best of all.

**CUSTOMISED AND OWNED** Sprites however, include some fitted with 6-seater Rover engines, and even a 3.5 litre Rover V8!

**JOHN SPINDEL AND** his long Moss are amongst the legendary racing drivers that competed in Sprites in the 1960s.

**OWNERS OF MIDGETS** and Sprites are often known as 'Spritesters' and there is a great club for them: The Midget & Sprite Club [www.spriteclub.co.uk](http://www.spriteclub.co.uk)

Sadly a fire at the factory in 1967 brought a permanent halt to the production in Northants Ireland. The moulding, however, was set up in New Zealand, where some of the huge quantities in production for just two more seasons. These rare New Zealand issues were painted in different colours, packaged in different boxes and had captioned captions with the 'Made in Otago' label.

**8. K&R Roplicas range**  
Moving on to the relative model handbook range, K&R Roplicas

right Original brochures are now highly collectable in their own right.

60 [www.modelcollector.com](http://www.modelcollector.com) | thestrans 2017

## the models

### The Lindberg Austin

Healey Sprite is a simple 1:12nd scale plastic kit, made in the USA in the 1960s. Interestingly although obviously a Sprite, its car bodywork is reminiscent of the Pogue.



"The Innocenti 950 Spider is a rare car to find today"

offer representations of everything from the Mk II Sprite to the rubber bumper Midget. These are made available in kit form or handbuilt to order. My example is of the Mk IV Sprite. I have to say that although the detail is good, the creative washdown does somewhat spoil the overall effect. But if you really want a personalised model of your car, complete with your own number plates, this is the way to get it. Be sure to specify wheel type, seat colour, etc, when ordering.

### 9. Lindberg's plastic kit

This simple 1:12nd scale plastic kit, made in the USA in the 60s, comprises body, seats, front valance/ headlights, chassis, wheels and axles. Although obviously a Sprite, and judging by the struts a Mk II, its car bodywork is more reminiscent of the Pogue's. One could claim that mechanically it's a model of Healey's early Pogue design, or the prototype 'Type 117' that evolved when both BMC and Healey Motor Company were asked to produce designs for a successor for the Porg. The kit comes in single colour

plastic, complete with 'go-faster' stripes, but

Innocenti's 950 Spider from Italian manufacturer Innocenti makes an interesting addition to the collection, although early it doesn't quite capture the proportion or prototypical styling of the real thing.

given an authentic paint finish looks a reasonably pleasing model.

### 10. Mercury's Innocenti Sprite

The real car was built from knock-down kits in the early 60s in Italy by Innocenti. It was powered by a 948cc or 1098cc engine box, compared to the Pogue's and Mk II Sprite, was of advanced styling, with steel up windows, quarterlights, and a body reminiscent of a small Lancia.

Italian manufacturer Mercury opted to model the Innocenti 950 Spider, a rare car to find today. The model, with its one piece body and cast bumper, is considerably an improvement, but a little too square and chunky. At least three colour finishes, green, blue and red, are known.

### My all-time favourite!

Although I'm still finding of some versions I had to bite my tongue, my favourite will always be RSC 4300!





## Cambridgeshire Report

The month's events started with the treasure hunt which was accompanied by the usual Cambs MASC sunny weather, we had arranged to meet up at Cambridge services on the A14 and after a quick bite of breakfast we set off on our staggered start. Pat and I were commanded to go first, since we were not expected to be first back (something to do with our tendency to get a bit carried away and enjoy the run a little too much and even stop for refreshment if the mood takes us). As always Nigel and Diane had done us proud and come up with a brilliant run mainly on small country roads and through some picturesque little villages that took us to some interesting buildings and quirky things to see (and answer questions on), I was particularly impressed by the brilliant post mill at Gransden (worth a visit in its own right). Treasure hunts always seem to unearth gems, known only to the locals and hidden away in obscure little corners of the countryside that you just would have no reason to visit on the normal day to day journeys (I guess that's what off the beaten track is all about).

Another important ingredient in the treasure hunt is the need to interface with the locals in order to obtain the treasure (and cut bits off their brushes while they are distracted) or to find key landmarks. The thrill of the chase and the slightly competitive nature of these events tends to overcome one's natural instinct not to ask complete strangers daft questions, and it is to their credit that in most cases, faced with this mad couple in the nice old car, they even

try to help (I suspect it is appreciation of our little cars that persuades them to be kind to us). I have to say that the quality of the information or help given does vary immensely though, from the nice lady in the village shop who will ransack her shop and cottage next door to find treasure items for you, to the man working in his garden who doesn't know the name of the village he lives in, or the guy who tells you the vital clue you are scouring his village for was dismantled and taken away last month. Despite all of this after a couple of very pleasant hours (or so) in the sunshine we reached the finishing point, and since nobody had overtaken us we had to be in with a chance. Nigel informed us that we had suffered a slight time penalty, (having made no allowance for our 1098cc engine, although mainly I put it down to negotiating those bumpy and aptly named B roads) however with our huge collection of genuine treasure items (no bits of vandalised brush Graham) and correct answers we had done quite well (I think I detected a note of surprise in his voice though)

After a short while (a little too short if you ask me) we saw Mick and Trish flash past the pub car park entrance at breakneck speed and for one delicious moment we thought they had overshot and failed to spot the finishing point and would maybe not return for half an hour or so, but it was not to be and they parked in front of the pub and soon joined us. Next to arrive were Hubie and Sally who had actually managed to lap Graham and Maggie. Eventually all the pigeons came home to roost

(or were they albino sea pheasants), or at least to eat a very pleasant reasonably priced lunch while Nigel and Diane waded through the paperwork and fended off the hecklers and conducted steward's enquiries, while they did their sums before arriving at a result. In the end it came to light that Hubie had managed to pip us at the post (by just a few points) to come in first, Pat and I were delighted to take second place (it would have been unseemly to win wouldn't it ) closely followed by Mick and Trish, and Graham and Maggie took the last of the podium places in fourth position. Lunch was followed by the presentation of the silverware and the customary *MASCOT* photo of our winners in front of the placed cars.

After the normal ceremonials it was still quite early and the weather was still shining on us so Nigel led us on a little bonus run to the American cemetery. I have to say this is not really a place I would have normally thought of



visiting on a car club run, but as it happens proved to be architecturally interesting, set in a magnificent position and had a fascinating visitors centre. This also provided a brilliant location for yet another *MASCOT* photo, and a very pleasant way to round off the event before heading for home.

Next up was the Mad Cat night, which was a very autumnal dark night with a decided nip in the air and so only tempted out a few proper cars (sadly it's getting to that time of year again) but well done to those who did make it. The evening was the usual blend of chat, banter, beer (in moderation), food, information and event details. The highlight of the evening was however the gift of the first pre-release copies of HTJs Midget movie (at least I think it was the highlight for John). John was very excited about his newly discovered creative streak, and has promised to launch us all to movie stardom with his next epic production. I have to admit though that having watched HTJs movie it was very smoothly constructed, with lots of Spridget content, a great choice of locations, typical Cambridgeshire MASC weather and an appropriately quirky and very well timed soundtrack, but best of all the very attractive star remained completely topless throughout the whole thing.

**Dave Dixon**

## Bristol Area Report

The Bristol area members were united for our November meeting – none of us arrived in our Spridgley things. A freezing cold and dark evening precluded any car park inspections so we sat in the warm and talked Spridgley things instead. I should mention that our furthest travelling member, Colin Gayle, arrived in his Morris Minor convertible – but with soft top firmly in place. Nice try but no points for that Colin. It was good to welcome some new members, Paul and Carolyn who own the ex George Cooke Frogeye. This Sprite won a major concours trophy a few years ago and is still in tip top condition. With a registration number of OFF, it was well photographed in times gone by when parked alongside David and Jenny Smith's Frogeye, registration number PEE.

Most of the Bristol contingent made its way, one way or another, to the National Classic Car Show at the NEC. What a ritzy glitzy show it was too. The clubs are obviously all hell bent on trying to out 'glam' one another but coming out on top for being the most welcoming – The Midget and Sprite Club of course. No chain link fencing, no 'Do not touch' signs. The visitors were welcome to take a close look at the 4 cars on display and to talk to the team of club representatives that were always on hand. With little more than the display cars, a gazebo, a table and a few chairs, our Warwickshire branch did a cracking job of representing the club at this major show. They even managed to sell me a quantity of *MASCOT* Binders.

Nearer to home, a couple of us visited the Restoration Show at Shepton Mallet the previous weekend. This was the first run I had made in my Sprite MkIV for a couple of months and will no doubt be the last for another couple of months. Amazingly, its temperamental charging system produced normal ammeter readings, but then, I didn't use the lights, blower or wipers!

Back to our November meeting, Philip Sellen brought along the before and after results of having his Midget MkII's distributor rebuilt by The Distributor Doctor. A graph of the advance curve taken throughout the rev range clearly illustrated how far off the plot a worn distributor can be. No surprise that Phil was

having difficulty in trying to tune his Midget's engine. The rebuilt item produced an advance curve right up the centre line of the original Lucas tolerance compared with the 'before' plot that looked like the route of a Navigational scatter event!

All being well, we shall try for the Tintern gathering on the first Sunday of December, if you are interested, please give Alan or Terry a ring to find out times and meeting place. Otherwise, we shall meet again at the Rose and Crown at Pucklechurch on the second Wednesday of December.

Happy Christmas from the Bristol branch

**Terry Horler**

## Dorset Area Report

### CCOTP (Classic Cars on the Prom) Heather Run, Sunday 30 September 2007

Chris and I set off from Salisbury, hood up, at just after 10:00 in heavy rain for the journey down to Highcliffe Castle on the coast. The weather improved on the way at Fordingbridge where we started meeting lots of classic cars going to the last 'Steam Up' at Breamore House. We arrived at Highcliffe after an hour's drive where it was nice and dry but slightly overcast.

Included in the £5 entry fee was entrance to the Castle, so whilst waiting to rendezvous with other Club members we had a look inside, which seems to be an endless programme of restoration in progress, followed by a couple of miles walk along the beach.

Departure for the Road Run was between 13:45 and 15:00 for a very scenic route via



Barton on Sea, Milford on Sea, Keyhaven then inland to the New Forest and down lots of small country lanes that we never knew existed. On exiting the forest we then headed for the coast again and headed to Bournemouth Prom via Hengistbury, Southbourne, Boscombe Pier and the Overcliffe Drive arriving just after 16:00. It was a really enjoyable route that was much appreciated by our members.

By 17:00 it was starting to rain again so we made a topless dash back to Salisbury after a great day out.

**Ian Beaver**

# Dutch Report

Wow, this has been a very active year for the Midget, so many great events and runs, weekend trips and hollidays.

Last weekend trip was the Dutch Spridget Run at the Dutch/German border. With over 30 Spridgets this event is getting more

popular every year with this year's first English equipe Anita and Mark from Yorkshire! They sure made a great impression on the Dutchies by being 4th at the overall prize winning at the Saturday roadrun. Well done Anita for driving your Midget on the right side of the road and navigating at the same time while Mark was busy waving to all female Spridget equipes, just kidding. Thanks to Sipke, Richard and Tom for organising this brilliant Spridget weekend and we all are looking forward for next years special (5th year) Jubilee Run!

In October my friend in speedcrime Arjan and I joined in the Annual Nightrun organised by the Dutch MGCC in our area. As tradition we arrived late, too late, as the briefing had already taken place and equipes were already starting at the point of us arriving. Check in, get the road book and some hot coffee and apple pie before we get back in the car again. It was a clear sky which means it was cold and it will take you several hours (if you dont get lost on the dark country roads) before you finish so it's logical to fuel the car and yourself before you enter the run. We had to drive as if



we were hunted by "male hating feminists" to make up for our lost time and so we did. It took us 1 hour driving/navigating on small and dark dyke/dune-roads with Tulip-instructions, map-navigating and more unususal instructions methods to finally catch up with an MGB, passing them, and giving them the honour of being last in line. By the time we passed half the competition field, the navigating got tougher and us not wanting to give away the right route we occasionally drove without lights (also means no braking) at crucial roadsplits and take off until safe to get the lights on again, great for an adrenalin rush! At 23.00hrs these small roads were all abandoned and Holland being flat you can see oncoming vehicles from a safe distance at which we turned our lights on again for safety.

When we finished we joined the other already finished 4 equipes at the bar to wait for the other 30ish cars to arrive. It seemed we were the only Spridget on the run and got second prize overall which really is the best prize, because winning 1st means you'll have to organise next years Night-Run.

Even more fun were the reactions we got from an MGB V8 and TR6 equipe on how the hell it was possible that while they were having their trafficlight race-fun, we came out of nowhere, overtook them and drove them out of sight. Sorry boys, size isn't every thing, it's the way you handle it! Respect to the Spridgets!

Coming up: a Historical Car Rally for starters and experienced drivers/navigators in the Westland-Zuid Holland area on 22 December.

For more info on Dutch Spridget activities or just meeting for a beer: [ariedebest@planet.nl](mailto:ariedebest@planet.nl)

**Arie**



# Home Counties North West



In the absence of any group activity to recount in this column I was going to fill the space with a report on Pat and Zara's participation in the Norwich Union MSA Classic.

I was ... but to coin a phrase from a certain Mr F Howard "Woe, woe and twice woe."

The Frogeye, as entered for the event and as seen in the HCNW wet pic of October declared, "No, no and thrice no." and did what several of our mob have recently had to suffer, it decided to stand stock still for an undisclosed reason. All that came out of it were Nov. 5th sound effects from its rear. Pat's years of experience as a F1 Mechanic failed to make it see reason. (Is it another cheap condenser?)

So to plan B. The MGB was quickly entered as substitute. Loaded and fuelled they left for the Norwich starting point in high anticipation and in improving weather. Forty miles on the MGB said "No, no etc" and went on to part time working. A holy piston was the likely cause. So home they went.

Inspection of the B revealed a disintegrating clutch as well as the engine sickness. Plus other maladies. Oh b... other. So, a winter project but a new car for next year.

However, despite Pat and Zara's woes, it turned out that one of our number made it to the event! Maurice and Sharon took part in their Frogeye and had a jolly good time. More info may follow next month...

There, I've filled the column, just made it a smaller column.

There may be an end-of-season run in November, perhaps, possibly. There will be a Christmas lunch in January. There are plans afoot for 2008.

Thank you Ed. for the generous amount of colour in October's excellent issue and again last month. It must be Mark's excellent photography.

A few words of thanks here for Terry H. There is a feel good factor in realising that one is not cast out because of a few scuffs and bumps on the car. I know that Lily and Vic get comfort from parking alongside "Gaps", which puts their old faithful in a good light. So here is more encouragement to you all who are 'pas de concours'... Also, I hope, Terry, that you have overcome your frustration at being unable to solve my problem at Castle Combe but I feel relieved that my bafflement is understood.

Thank you Ed. Thank you all who power this good ship MASC. And a happy Christmas to all who sail in her.

**Chris Jackson**



## NW Area Report

At October club night we had our, now annual, quiz night. Once again this was hosted by Ian who produced an excellent set of questions; he even brought pencils for everyone, all nicely sharpened. After a very close competition the eventual winners were newcomers Mike and Karen – the rumour that we let them win so they would come back next month is totally unfounded!

On 28 October we went on a Halloween run. This is an idea we initially had last year but, as usual, left it too late. A route was devised that would take us around Pendle, the home of the famous Pendle witches.

There was a good turn out of 5 cars. We all met at our house for a brew and bacon butties before setting off. Neil and Shelly got into the spirit of things with Shelly dressing as a witch. The weather first thing that morning was horrendous and I was thinking about cancelling the run, however the skies eventually cleared and it turned out to be a nice day.

I planned a route using an OS map but never actually got round to driving it before the day. So off we set, through Hoghton, Waddington,

*Halloween run*

*Neil and Shelly*



on to Bolton-by-Boland and then through Gisburn. This is the point that I wished I'd done a dry run first. According to my directions we should have turned right at a crossroads which we missed (sorry, that I missed!). Turning back it transpired that this road was actually only a dirt track. At this point I decided to ignore the directions and use my highly toned sense of direction to guide us on – I eventually lost track of the number of

u-turns we made. Nevertheless we completed our run, stopping off in Newchurch at Witches Galore shop for those who wanted to buy a spell or two.

We eventually stopped at The Myerscough at Samlesbury for lunch before setting off home. Despite getting lost once or twice I think we all enjoyed the day. Will do the same next year but will definitely have a dry run first!

The deadline for this report is before we have our November meeting so will report on this in January.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** December club night is Christmas meal. If you would like to come then please ring me a.s.a.p. We will **NOT** be at the Kilton that night.



*Pendle Hill*

So, that's it for now and may I wish you all a merry Christmas.

**Les**

## Linc'slot

The landlord of the White Hart at Lissington very kindly reserved us a couple of tables complete with window seats and sundry chairs and until ten past eight there were only the two of us, Sue and I. Then Lizzie turned up, followed shortly by Pete and Mary. No Spridgets tonight, but who can blame us. It's cold, dark and damp, and only the good company and the welcoming pub atmosphere to warm us up.

We discussed our TV star Lizzie's appearance on Mark Evan's programme, on which she rebuilt Freddie The Frogeye. I have now seen the show and was very impressed. I was



particularly struck by the Harley in the hall and the living room full of parts. We also talked about the Classic Motor Show at the N.E.C. which we were all going to on various day, but I have had to cry off due to an illness in the family. Hope the others still enjoy the day and tell me all about it.

Hope to see all the Lincolnshire area's new members, and the old ones, at the next get together on Thursday 6 December at the usual time at the usual place.

**Brian Jeffery**



## Surrey – October at the Blue Ball

**P**hew! I dashed back from several days in Paris, with my wife Lisa, to be at October's Surrey Meeting so that I was able to prove to many that a wife is not a figment of my imagination for she is rarely seen other than on the May runs or at the Christmas meal.

The May Run next year. Colin and Jude, Chris Harding, Sue and Jim Judd were huddled together like conspirators, whispering, whilst arranging for next year's run. As Area Rep' I am only privy to the fact that it will take place in the New Forest, Hants, there are only three double bedrooms remaining at the Hotel, and that Colin and Jude are about to 'recce' the route. Would any of Hants group care to join us whilst we are touring their area next year?

Dave and Chris Wright were able to report that thirty nine people have 'deposited' for our Christmas Meal, in December, at the Kingswood Arms.

Peter Gardiner was getting excited at the prospect of having a 'back to the metal' respray started on his car on 3rd November. Even though this will stop him from using the car to come to club nights he has still brought his car more times than any other this year.

Non-member Mike Lay, Sue and Jim, Nay and Col, and Nigel Saynor brought their cars on this occasion whilst Chris Banton, Ashley Hinton, Mike Gorman, Linda and David Southcott did not.

Hilary and Peter Stevens were forced to use a tin top bringing a gearbox for me to pass on to John Clark. Unfortunately being appraised of the arrangement late, and being without my own car, the transfer was deferred until another time.

Several People have expressed interest in a twelve day tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy taking in the French National Motor Museum, Stelvio Pass and Mille Miglia Museum (Brescia Italy) so I will proceed with planning for September 2009. There was concern expressed that I have not yet posted details of our 2008 Battlefields Tour. Don't worry folks as soon as the Hotels post their 2008 details I shall circulate to all. This Tour is definitely on. May I take this opportunity to welcome Devon members Simon and Joanna Tennant who will be joining us, on this tour, in their Frogeye.

On a general note. Several Surrey/Sussex/Kent members have failed to respond to my e-mails. If you are not in receipt of my monthly Notices or have changed your e-mail address then please get in touch with me as you may be missing out on a lot occurring locally in those three counties. I may not have a current telephone number to contact you either.

**Alan Anstead**

*Area Representative: Surrey (Sussex?) & Kent*

*Mail to: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com*

*Telephone (answer phone) 01322-384050*

## Sussex Team Challenges the Establishment

**W**hen word got around in Sussex that there was a quiz taking place at the Amberley Working Museum, the South East Region's Sussex members had to break into the cosy world of Friends of Amberley working Museum, and a 6 person team was assembled by David and Chris.

Linda, David, Sandra and Trevor formed the Spridgeteers team, and on 8th October they took up their positions in the Limeburners Restaurant. Questions ranged from

engineering to biology to musical intros, and Sandra, scribe and main motivator for the team, soon had us all really stressed, and pretty challenged too. Do you know where your Hallux is, well we didn't, but we did know what the Falkirk wheel is, and a few more besides. A ploughman's supper rounded off a brilliant evening, and we'll be ready for the next challenge, when we must do better!

**David**



# Warwickshire Report

## All Steamed up at Toddington

The GWR Steam and Vintage Gala at Toddington on Sunday 14 October welcomed twelve cars from the Warwickshire group and two visiting members. Nice to see Bob Clarkson from South Staffs in his Frog MkII, who went on to be singled out by the compere when the Midget and Sprite Owners took a drive around the main Show Arena. Secondly, Shaun Walsh from Gloucs. joined the line up in his MkIII Midget. Sadly, not many people were watching our little car parade but we enjoyed the line up.

An early start had launched the day. The hoods were down but the coats were fastened up. It began with a nip in the air. Andy Bourne recommended that we gather for cake in the Station Café; the service was slow and the eating was quick. We recharged batteries with hot drinks and then enjoyed the exhibits. Throughout the day the hoot of the steam train, the smell of Castrol R from the old bikes and the belching of the smoke from the traction engines reminded us that transport looks good, smells good and brings good friends together. Our thanks go to John Platt, who negotiated our entry as a Club Stand, oversaw the erection of our banner and organised.

The scenic run, which started at the Little Chef at Alcester with 9 cars and travelled South via Wixford and Ardens Grafton and the road repaired by "Top Gear" earlier this year to Bidford-On-Avon. A long run followed along the old Roman Road Watling Street to Broadway and then via Snowhill and an old "unsuitable for motors" rally road of John's along Stanway Plantation to the rally field at Toddington to meet up with others who had arrived direct. Mechanically all went well except for Geoff and Janet's Frog who began

guzzling water... is it the head gasket we wonder? Find out when we meet again.

## Mo Wood, HFA 151E

## The Classic Car Show at the NEC



Once again, the Warwickshire group led by John Platt supported the MASC stand, which proved very popular with over 45 membership forms being distributed at this stage with 5 new members joining on the spot. John is writing up a full report however, with this "half-time" (Saturday evening) score it looks like being a highly successful event. We were visited not only by our retiring chairperson Bill but also by John Canning who held the chair for many years previously. As the picture shows Chris's Frogeye was for sale, and has subsequently been sold, which will take some adjusting to after 14 years of ownership!!

Many thanks to all those who staffed the stand over the three days and it provided a forum for the representatives from many areas to get together to discuss club matters.

Sheila has been accumulating the orders for the Wark's Christmas dinner and it looks as if we have managed to fill all the spaces at the Green Dragon yet again. Attendance will be confirmed at the next meeting and discussions into the events that we are planning to take place in 2008, will also be on the agenda.

**Chris and Sheila**



# Yorkshire Report

## Monthly Meeting

We had an amazingly beautiful sunny day for our meeting on Saturday 3 November. This must be the reason why so many of us turned up to enjoy an excellent lunch at The Three Hares at Bilbrough near York. The pub's address is Main Street but the car park, and access to the building, turned out to be on Back Lane. This caused a bit of confusion and, through the front windows, we did see one Spridget going past a couple of times. Sorry we missed whoever it was. The turn out in the car park consisted of 13 Spridgets, an Ital and a Norton Commando. Mark W and Pat had come with the Norton and another bike and left their Sprite at home. Mark E from York joined us for the first time. Mark B and I realised we met Mark E 3 years ago at the York Knavesmire Show held in September. His Midget is a green MKIII that he's had for 8 years. Mike Y was across from Manchester. It was Maggie and him that discovered this pub a few months ago. Frank had the shortest journey as he only lives in Tadcaster. His Midget has gained a hardtop and Tim and Sarah's Sabrina had her W&P hardtop on too. Tim has produced another Yorkshire Spridgets calendar for 2008 and had brought some with him. Arthur brought his Stag owner friend Lionel with him again in his Frogeye. Andrew H, home on leave, was there in his Frogeye. The pub owner sneaked out to take some photos, as MKI Sprites are his favourite classic car. John and Rachel's Midget is in storage for the winter so they came in the Ital. Rob lives near them and it was good to see him in his Turbo Midget again. Last time we saw him was at Croft in May when the gearbox decided to pack up. Mike N managed to get a pass out for a couple of hours to enjoy some top down driving. Adrian and Sandra popped in for a short while too. They have been using their Midget regularly during the summer. Ken H

managed to escape from work in time for him and son Mark H to make the meeting. Ian and Claire brought some visiting friends with them. Ray and Sue came down from Darlington to join us. I think their Midget may be getting a respray this winter. Nick C put in a rare appearance in his Midget. He and Josie were actually having a weekend at home for a change. Nick has also been doing a number of rallies with Nigel during the year. Carlo couldn't make it as he was moving flat, Matt was busy working and Andy B was putting in some hours on the Frogeye.

We set off from the pub and took the quick route along the A64 to Stockton on the Forest to visit the Craven Collection where we were joined by Nick M and his Dad Richard and Martin and Gail. Dick Craven had opened his Museum of Classic Motorcycles especially for us. Dick provides motorcycles for film and television work. He has a long and varied association with bikes including competition success with sidecars and sprinting. There are more details on his website (see [www.cravencollection.co.uk](http://www.cravencollection.co.uk)). Dick has an autojumble area and a few of us found some interesting bits and pieces to buy.

## Rally News

Simon and Trevor took part in The Rally of the Tests coming 18th overall out of a field of 80 and 2nd in their class. This year the 4-day event started in Scarborough before heading across to Cumbria up into Scotland and then down to the finish in Blackpool. Nick and Josie are planning on doing Le Jog at the beginning of December.

## January 2008 meeting

Saturday 5th in North Yorkshire contact me for details.

**Anita**

Dear Spridgetfriends

In 2008 the German Midget and Sprite register will arrange its 3rd meeting; which this time will take place in Pfronten/Allgäu. Pfronten is a town in the south of Germany, on the border to Austria. Together with like-minded drivers you will discover beautiful roads and a dreamlike mountain landscape. So you will have plenty of possibilities to drive your car along the curvaceous alpine passes and you will be able to enjoy the fascinating sight of some wonderful castles. Anyway it's worth the trip. And you can also get to know some of the Bavarian tradition.

So let us surprise you.... In case you have some time to spare after the meeting, it might be a good idea to spend some more days in the area for holidays. You'll find more interesting information about the meeting on the following home pages:



# Spridget Treffen

13th-15th June 2008  
Pfronten, Germany



[www.spridgets.net](http://www.spridgets.net) Invitation and registration  
[www.Pfronten.de](http://www.Pfronten.de) Information about the venue and trips  
[www.Schwangau.de](http://www.Schwangau.de) King Ludwig II castles

**Marcus Pieper**  
Spridgetregister Germany

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**M.G. Midget Mk IV** 1969 G reg White (or nearly so) and rust. The going round bits are evidently sound but the standy up bits not nearly so. The asking price is around £500 so it might be worth a look. Call me and I will pass you onto the owner. Near Hertford.

**Chris Jackson – 01707 261567**

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Look at page 33 in August 2007 MASCOT for a preview!

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