

March 2008

£2 No. 288

# Mascot



25  
YEARS

MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB  
1983 SILVER JUBILEE 2008



The Magazine  
of the  
Midget & Sprite  
Club

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

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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**

## © Midget & Sprite Club

# WHEELNUT

So January arrived and that meant further work on Jill's white Coupe to get it re-engined and registered for May, of course! We bought the rebuilt engine some 18 months ago. With the 1098 engines in the Coupes being a little underpowered, the plan for all these Innocentis is to insert larger engines - 1275 and above. The 1330 in the Spider certainly gave it a significant power hike. So we're expecting similar enlivened performance in the Tin-Tops.

With the white Coupe being genuine low mileage (62k kilometres), it appeared that the engine and gearbox had never been out of the car in 40 years, judging from the amount of grime in the engine compartment and gearbox tunnel!

However, many applications of Autoglym Motorcycle Degreaser (the only thing strong enough really) later, the results can be seen in the photograph. To the right of the tunnel, under the steering column, you will notice some additional unique sheet metalwork which appears to be some sort of heatshield, peculiar only to the Coupe and not found on the Spider. Why the design engineers at Innocenti thought this extra superstructure was necessary is a mystery.

In this month's issue we have a couple of techy-bits from the SE Corner on 5-speed installation and sill removal; Overseas Members' cars; a further update on Early Twin-Bore Master Cylinders; T.H. takes us into the 2nd Part of the official History of MASC; and again, a strong selection of Area Reports.

From the time you receive this March issue, it will only be around 12 weeks to Spridget50 - so much to do and so little time!

Good Luck everyone!

PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for April issue is MIDDAY SUNDAY 9 MARCH

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: Hils and Pete Stevens (SE AREA – Surrey Section) in their Mk1 Sprite on the South Downs Run last year.*



# MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB

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1983 SILVER JUBILEE 2008



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# Club Nights

1st Monday	<b>London Area</b> (Congestion Zone) – NEW VENUE, Meet at <b>The Plumbers Arms</b> , 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	<b>Wiltshire</b> – Meet at <b>The Forresters</b> , Leigh, near Cricklade.
1st Wednesday	<b>South Staffs &amp; Birmingham</b> – Meet at the <b>The Green Man</b> , Middleton Village, 8.30-8.45pm
1st Thursday	<b>Lincolnshire Area</b> – Meet at <b>The White Hart</b> , Lissington, nr. Wragby. 8pm. Contact Brian Jeffery, Tel: 01522 531425 or mobile, 07952 969514
1st Thursday	<b>Notts/Derby border Area</b> (note change of day) at the <b>Sitwell Arms</b> 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	<b>Yorkshire Area</b> – Contact me, Anita 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email spridget.girl@ntlworld.com for details of the March meeting.
2nd Wednesday	<b>Warwickshire</b> – Meet at <b>The Green Dragon</b> , The Green, Sambourne, Reddich, B96 6NU, at 8.30pm as usual.
2nd Wednesday	<b>North West Area</b> – meet at <b>The Kilton</b> , turn off M6 at Jct 20 onto A50 towards Macclesfield. Pub 4 miles on left. Please note new venue.
2nd Wednesday	<b>Bristol Area</b> will meet at <b>The Rose and Crown</b> , Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact Terry Horler on 01454 881770
2nd Thursday	<b>Cambridgeshire</b> – Meet at <b>The Mad Cat</b> pub in Pidley Village, midway between Huntingdon and Chatteris, 8pm
3rd Monday	<b>Dorset</b> – Meet at <b>St. Peter's Finger</b> , Lytchett Minster, Poole 7.30pm
3rd Tuesday	<b>Central Scotland</b> – Meet at <b>The Garfield Hotel</b> , Stepps, East Dunbartonshire. 7:30pm in the Lounge. Check first with Carson on 0141-245-6327 day or 013606-22334 evening.
3rd Tuesday	<b>Surrey</b> – Meet at <b>The Blue Ball</b> , Walton-on-the-Hill, 7.00pm onwards. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
4th Thursday	<b>Sussex</b> – Location varies but from 19:00. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
4th Thursday	<b>Hampshire</b> – Meet at <b>The Poacher</b> , South Warnborough. Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.
4th Sunday	<b>Kent Area</b> . Meet at <b>The Moat</b> , Wrotham Heath at 12:00 for lunch. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
Last Thursday	<b>Somerset</b> – Meet at <b>The Lord Nelson</b> , Norton-sub-Hamdon. 8.00pm
Occasional Meetings	<b>Home Counties North West</b> for members in Herts, Bucks, Berks, N. London or anyone interested! Please contact Chris Jackson Tel: 01707 261567 or Mark Hall, Tel: 01296 660103

# Club Website

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



# Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

## Events organised for 2008 so far

### March

- Friday 14th  
to Sunday 16th South East Area (Surrey, Sussex and Kent) will be going to the Retro Race Event at Stonleigh Park. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- Sunday 23rd Kent Area are going to the Medway Festival of Steam and Transport at Chatham Dockyard. Application forms must be returned by 29th February. Details from Bill Fowler 01634 823800
- Good Friday 21st Hot Cross Run. Scenic tour of the Abbeys of North Yorkshire. Closing date for entries Sunday 9 March, limited to 20 cars. More details from Tim Saunders, mothysaunders@hotmail.com/07968 2619990.

### April

- Sunday 20th Kent meeting brought forward to coincide with "Drive it Day"
- Monday 21st A Gathering at the Lamb Inn, Iron Acton, near Bristol, to mark the 25th anniversary of the very first meeting that led to the formation of the MASC. More info in this MASCOT.
- Saturday 26th  
& Sunday 27th Warwickshire Area's Green Dragon Run. Details from Chris and Sheila Yates, 01608 665066, email: chrishe@tiscali.co.uk

### May

- Saturday 3rd  
to Tuesday 6th Surrey Area Annual Tour. New Forest. Details from Sue Judd. suej001@btinternet.com or Chris Harding, harding.c@btconnect.com
- Saturday 10th Droitwich Motor Festival. Warwickshire Area will be there, details from Roy Cole, 01562 885766 email: roy@geraldineandroy.co.uk
- Friday 16th  
To Sunday 18th International Healey Weekend at Goodwood.
- Saturday 24th Spridget 50 at Gaydon – The Big Party. To register an expression of interest and receive priority booking, please contact Jeremy Cogman on 07702 958450 or email: organiser@spridget50.com
- Sunday 25th Kent Meeting cancelled due to Spridget 50

### June

- Thursday 12th  
To Sunday 15th Surrey Area's D-Day Beaches Tour.
- Saturday 14th Castle Combe's Classic and Sportscar Action Day. See MASCOT or contact Terry Horler. 01454 881770
- Friday 13th  
To Sunday 15th Spridget Treffen (MASC Germany), Pfronten, Germany. Contact Jim Willis on 01527 402804 or email: jim.willis@tiscali.co.uk if you are interested to go.

### July

- Sunday 6th Warwickshire Area's Worcester/Shropshire Run. Details from Roy Cole, 01562 885766 or email: roy@geraldineandroy.co.uk
- Tuesday 8th  
To Tuesday 15th Surrey Area's Le Mans Tour. Sorry, now fully booked.
- Friday 11th  
To Sunday 13th Goodwood Festival of Speed. www.goodwood.co.uk
- Sunday 20th Warwickshire Area's Hereford Hop. Details from Phil and Mo Wood, 01905 456303 or email: philipwood@btinternet.com

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Friday 25th  
To Sunday 27th  
Sunday 27th

Cambridgeshire Area are going to Silverstone Classic Meeting. Details from Hubie Albany on 01733 265548

Kent meeting at Cliftonville Car Show, Margate, Kent. Needs to be prebooked. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

### August

Saturday 9th  
& Sunday 10th

Warwickshire Area's Ireland Trip. Details from Alan Couch, 01564 773302 or email: roalan@talktalk.net

Thursday 21st  
To Sunday 24th

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

### September

Saturday 6th

Warwickshire's Mike and Benita's Fun Day. Details from Mike and Benita Vann, 01455 292440 or email: Michael@mvann.wanadoo.co.uk

Sunday 7th

Coventry Motoring Festival. Warwickshire Area will be there. Details from Dave Colclough, 02476 677897 or email: david@colcloughsonline.co.uk

Friday 19th  
To Sunday 21st

Goodwood Revival Meeting. www.goodwood.co.uk

### November

Tuesday 4th  
To Sunday 16th

Classic Car Show at the NEC.

### December

Wednesday 10th

Warwickshire Area's Christmas Dinner at The Green Dragon. Details from Sheila Yates, 01608 665066 or email: chrishe@tiscali.co.uk

Tuesday 16th

Kent/Surrey/Sussex Area's Christmas Meal. No other area meetings this month.

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

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

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

## Mutual Assistance Directory

The weather of late has been fantastic. Clear blue skies and quite warm sun. The trouble is, the nights have been below freezing which means that the gritters are out spreading salt everywhere. Now, when you have stripped your pride and joy down to bare metal and spent hours putting coat after coat of paint on it, you are loath (or at least I am) to get any salt on it. Even though the roads look dry in the afternoon sun, there is loads of salt there, Bit sad really as I should be out enjoying the Midget and getting my monies' worth out of the road tax. As my car was made a month AFTER the deadline, I have to pay £115 (or whatever it is these

days) and it is a pity not to make use of the roads. Still, the weather can only get better now, can't it?

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**



# New Members

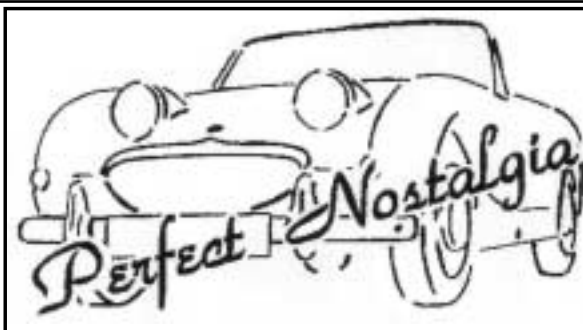
**We extend a warm welcome to the following new and rejoined members**

792	Michael & Julia Tolton	Avon	Midget Mk 3 RWA
2222	Clive Allen	West Midlands	Frogeye
2819	Dave Owen	Essex	Sebring Sprite
3958	Peter Duncan	London	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3959	Chris Kenny	Hertfordshire	Frogeye
3960	Neil Gofton	Kent	Midget 1500
3961	Jeff Taylor	Derbyshire	Austin Sprite
3962	Reuben Phillips	Ayrshire	Midget 1500
3963	anon	Norfolk	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3964	Greg Needham	Hertfordshire	Midget Mk 3
3965	Christopher & Elizabeth Anderson	Kent	Frogeye
3966	Mark Preece	Herefordshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3967	Paul Coates	Yorkshire	Frogeye
3968	Mark Chadbourne	Staffordshire	Midget 1500
3969	Kazuhisa Watanabe	Japan	Sprite Mk 2
3970	Gary Rouse	West Midlands	Midget 1500
3971	Jean-Paul & Gaetana Tourn	Monaco	Frogeye
3972	Ron Corry	Irish Republic	Frogeye
3973	Michael Lay	Surrey	Midget Mk 3 RWA
3974	Nigel Baker & Heidi Beech	East Sussex	Midget Mk 3
3975	anon	Derbyshire	none
3976	anon	Oxfordshire	Frogeye

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# John Clark's 5-speed Frogeye



I've known my '58 Frog since 1972. It was a Christmas baby and was just 14 and I was just 25 when we met. The Frog with at least 9 previous owners had lived in Kent for its entire life but had not carried the years too well and was lying at the back of a garage workshop where they had given up on rust and accident damage repairs. A local student owner had driven it into a fence post and it was a little cross-eyed. It was love at first sight though and only a few months previously I had contemplated buying a brand new Midget. A transfer fee of just £30 was paid plus a fiver for delivery and he was adopted. Obviously this was in the days prior to "Classic Car" restoration as it is now and I rebuilt the body from an 8' x 4' sheet of steel, using the old damaged bonnet as a source of more metal. First mistake though – I had turned down the opportunity of a brand new bonnet from the local BMC Dealer for £72! Was that really how much they cost in the '70s? It was gone when I went back later – what a mistake. I did buy a nice new grill wrapped in tissue paper and a cardboard box though for just £13.

The car did sort of remain standard although it didn't actually hit the road again until 1999 following my own expiration and rebuild – that's another story but now we're equal. He wasn't now quite as Mr Healey had perhaps originally intended being flame red as opposed to cherry and fitted with wire wheels. At one time I had come by part of an original Healey wire wheel/disc brake conversion kit I gave up this idea and used freely available Spridget parts and in fact converted a ½ elliptic wire wheel rear axle using the original brackets and mountings from the original ¼ elliptic version. Yet another story but I am contemplating another axle for another car. I had also felt that

the dashboard layout left something to be desired in the '70s and I obtained all the necessary switches, all matching the Tudor washer pump already fitted and laid these neatly out on the refurbished dash. Not original but I liked it then and I like it now. I still have all the original parts but remember throwing the original steering wheel in the bin!

After 1999 we did a few miles together each year the 948 dragging us around the lanes of East Kent quite satisfactorily with modern traffic queuing behind and we even took part in the MGOC South Downs Run one weekend – 300miles round trip with tent, sleeping bag and Gaz stove in the boot and picnic basket on the boot rack!

During all these years I had belonged to the AH Club but got very little out of it. Then I met Members of MASC and joined up! I haven't been the same since and have been changed (for the better) I think and so has the Frog although he has not exactly been well behaved despite all my loving care and attention.

Time went by and the little SU carbs were worn out, the engine kept overheating and at one stage the unleaded head blew its gasket. Whilst I wanted to maintain originality a little more performance was desired. A very rough late 1275 engine with square cam lobes and lacking many parts came my way and I was sold. With the help of various MASC members who contributed parts (thanks Gary) and a not insignificant amount of extra cash I restored the engine and cunningly disguised it as a 948 (well it is green with an Austin/Westlake labelled rocker cover). It now has a set of 1¼" SU's to match albeit without the brass tops. A 3.9 diff was sourced and proved highly satisfactory being somewhat quieter than the old 4.22. The speedo recalibration was imminent but I did know it was 10% out.

That's when me and the Frog fell out. If you are based in the South East, Alan Anstead has a large influence on your life. Where would we be without him? I was booked to take the car on an AA (Alan Anstead) Battlefields Tour to Arnhem. It was a bridge too far though as the hydraulics of my new Sebring look-alike pedal box conversion were proving difficult; I had

spent weeks trying to sort it out and despite the further attention of Alan at 8am and just two hours before the booked Channel crossing the Frog still refused to play. So it stayed at home and I experienced the AA Sebring replica for the next few days. As far as the Frog was concerned the problem was traced to a faulty (although brand new) master cylinder which later completely failed during the MOT. And what's more the Frog refused to play again just hours before the next planned trip to Angouleme – a faulty but fairly new coil later proved to be cause of that problem – they don't seem to last very long and I now carry a spare. Another trip in the Sebring was more than adequate compensation and the trip was fantastic. My car is still reasonably standard but now sports a brake servo and an Alan Anstead inspired tool box built into the pedal box blanking plate on the nearside to carry the ever increasing supply of necessary spares.

The ultimate and most drastic change was near however as I was more than influenced by the improved running of cars fitted with 5-speed gearboxes. I was unable to find a Toyota box to disguise the conversion and went for a Ford. Using a Morris Minor Centre (Birmingham) kit, the conversion following initial preparation was made in I understand record time in AA's garage early this New Year. Both of us were a little weary at the end of each day though. I would agree with opinions that this is a 4 spanner degree of difficulty job, but as the engine and the bonnet have been removed so often, the Frog can almost do it on its own now. I drove the car the 50 plus miles home and it almost purred down the motorway. Very satisfactory. Dare I mention Classic Le Mans within its hearing?



I had been supplied with a fibreglass tunnel with gaiter (£37 + vat) by MM Centre, Birmingham to disguise the carved up tunnel but I had an idea of re-using the original gear lever dome. I had initially operated on the dome in a cut and shut operation with the intention of installing it in its original position in memory of what had been, lined for use as a coin tray/cup holder. It looked more than naff though so it was back to the drawing board. The Ford gearlever remote is a lot lower in the tunnel and positioned near to the join between the square and curved sections. A removable extended panel was fashioned from sheet steel to cover the original gear remote hole and shaped with the aid of cutter and welder to fit around the new remote. The already cut down dome was re-tailored to fit the square and curved sections at the appropriate level and then marked up to the sides using card templates to fit the tunnel exactly. The card was then replaced with more metal welded back on to replace that originally removed and shaped accordingly. This method was probably easier on the pilot version than trying to fit an uncut whole item to the tunnel. Flanges were welded to the front and back to enable it to be simply attached or removed from the car. I was then faced with replacing the original rubber grommet with something able to accept the extra movement of the Ford lever. The answer proved to be an MGB rubber gaiter costing about £10 new. The gaiter minus its leather cover was shortened and secured to the dome with metal rings (alloy on the outside in my case). All one has to do, as advised by MM Birmingham in any conversion of this type is to ensure that all gears can be selected so position the dome with care. All I now have to do is to get the carpet fitted. More templates I think.

My car is the prototype for this mod as far as I'm aware and in my eyes it looks the part – view the photo to see what you think. I can provide details based on my conversion if you wish, which is likely to be fairly standard, but I could with a bit of persuasion produce one for you at reasonable cost provided raw materials are available.

And by the way the speedo is now away being recalibrated (honestly Officer).

**John Clark (3583)**  
Kent, SE Area

# Sill Removal



I think it will be a long winded restoration, as we seem to have plenty of new panels stacked up in the garage ready to be fitted – Thank goodness for Ashley Hinton and his fantastic supply.)

Will keep you posted as to Ada's progress!

**Nay**



**H**ere is an update on our latest project! ADA 1275 cc Midget, now starting restoration, Col has just started to cut out the bodywork as you can see from the photo: (Thank goodness for plasma cutters!!

## New Part From Ashley Hinton

Here's a new part from Ashley Hinton: Austin Healey Mk1, Mk2, and Mk3 from 1958 to June 1966 and MG Midget Mk1, Mk2 1961

to June 1966 part number 2A5538 brake pedal box assembly. Currently 50 in stock  
[adsanhinton@aol.co.uk](mailto:adsanhinton@aol.co.uk)



# SPRIDGET 50



## THE BIG PARTY

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

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

Entry £12 per car  
Call the ticket hotline on: 01954 231125  
or visit: [www.spridget50.com](http://www.spridget50.com) for more details



## Overseas Members' Cars



Good morning Barry

Here are 2 pictures of my Froggy AN510262 coming from the USA. Pictures dating from June 2006 when I bought the car. As the interior was rusted, I decided to go through a full inside body restoration. As you surely know, we are always optimistic when starting a restoration programme, planning for 6 months work MAXIMUM!!! and now it comes to a year and a half working on the beauty. She will hopefully be ready for this summer? Naturally I am making a full report and plenty of pictures during the process.

I am flying to Tanzania Friday and will not have time to go to the mechanic to double check the chassis number but will do as soon as I am back, in first week of March.

Yes I do live in Monaco, and yesterday was arrival day for the classic Monte Carlo Rally. Weather and conditions were tough and



about 50% of the cars (at least 160 out of 330) had some contacts with environment, mostly on the left front ! All sorts of cars from Fiat 500 or Citroen Ami 6 to Porsches 356, 914/6, 911, Etype Jag and MK2, Alfas, MGB a few Healeys etc ... etc but No Frogeyes.

A bientôt

**Jean-Claude Tourn**



Dear Barry,

Enclosed please find some photos of my lovely SPRITE MK-II. BMIHT says she was born on 25th September 1961 painted in good old Iris Blue. I have no idea why she is now wearing Almond Green (MINI COLOUR!) dress – so so agreeable to me. She had been travelling around Japan since 1993 then dropped in my home last December.

Now she became one of my family. WE will keep running next 20-30years, I really hope.

Best wishes,

**Kazuhisa Watanabe**



**Do You Have Anything Else Exciting in your Garage?**



Supplied by Alan Lo

# Early Twin Bore Master Cylinders



## Challenge to John E Davies, Member 3443

On Tuesday 29th January I received at work a package from PASTPARTS containing my twin bore master cylinder which had just been re-sleeved to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " dia brake bore and  $\frac{7}{8}$ " dia clutch bore. I therefore claim a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " dia piston from John's 'expensive doorstep'. (MASCOT 283 Oct 2007)

On arriving home that evening MASCOT 287 Jan 2008 had been delivered containing part 3 of this saga, again very useful information.

This information has come to me at the right time as I am restoring 'POFROG' a 1959 July Frogeye, (reg. PO 4061) from the ground up. It came to me as a part dismantled rolling chassis and a trailer load of parts and spares, about 3 years ago, having been stored in this state for the previous 27 years. Work alternates between body and mechanicals to keep up the interest and momentum.

**Pete Drewett**

Member 3310 Dorset MASC  
e-mail [pete-sandie@supanet.com](mailto:pete-sandie@supanet.com)

PS Has anyone got a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " dia brake bore spring going spare?

## Update 11/02/08

Barry, Just to let you know that John Davies kept his word and I have received a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " piston and spring from him. Thanks John.

## The Bluebell Run Saturday, 3rd May 2008



- A Scenic Tour through the Royal Forest of Dean, picturesque Wye Valley and the Welsh Marches.
- Open to vehicles of twenty years old and over.
- No competition licence required.
- Easy to follow road book for the entire route.
- Rigid Rally plate supplied, for you to keep.
- Start from The Heritage Centre deep in the Forest of Dean.
- A ploughman's lunch at a Traditional Inn en route.
- Finish in Ross-on-Wye for a meal at the finest hotel in Ross and the Finisher's Awards presentation.
- A round of the HRCR UK Scenic Tours series.

Check our website for more information  
[www.rossmotorsports.co.uk](http://www.rossmotorsports.co.uk)

Contact Simon on 01531 820761  
or [simonharris@lineone.net](mailto:simonharris@lineone.net)

**MASC code for  
ordering SILVERSTONE tickets  
is SCMSC**



# SILVERSTONE CLASSIC 25/26/27 JULY 2008

## ATTENTION ALL CLASSIC CAR CLUBS

One of Europe's largest classic motor sport events, the Silverstone Classic, known in the 1990s as the Days International Historic Festival, brings together a unique gathering of classic road and racing cars, to the home of the British Grand Prix and this year celebrates the Circuit's 50th Anniversary.



### AN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER FESTIVAL OF CLASSIC MOTOR RACING AND MOTORING FOR ENTHUSIASTS AND ALL THE FAMILY

#### THE SILVERSTONE CLASSIC IS A FESTIVAL FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY WITH AS MUCH HAPPENING OFF THE TRACK AS ON IT -

A weekend of action packed entertainment for as little as £20 a day and free if you are an accompanied u18!

#### 8 DECADES OF CLASSIC MOTOR RACING ENTERTAINMENT IN 3 DAYS -

Cars from the 1950s to the 1990s racing on the full historic GP circuit. Over 600 race cars expected in the Paddock. Europe's largest gathering of Classic Racing cars, from Formula One to world sports cars, Classic Saloons to Le Mans Prototypes - cars driven by some of the sport's most famous drivers.

#### ACCESS ALL AREAS -

See the cars close up, chat to the drivers, see ticket gas you everywhere, pit barriers - grandstands, paddock, circuit centre, displays - all within the price of entry

Over 4,000 classic road cars expected on display representing 80 owners clubs from all over the world including Lotus, Porsche, Ferrari, Maserati, Lamborghini, De Tomaso, etc, Aston Martin, Jaguar and many, many more.

Event presented by Motor Weeks (UK) Limited on behalf of Classic Automobile Events

#### HUGE TRADE MALL -

Something to interest everyone from automobile to autograph, automotive toys to books, paintings to photographs and picnic seats to workshop tools!

#### ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY -

Period funfair, live jazz at the Golf & Cragg, period air displays, antique fair, hot air balloons, large food and drink variety and much more.

#### 15 PRACTICE SESSIONS AND 21 RACES...

- 1990s to 90s Grand Prix F1
- 1980/1990s Group C/GTP Le Mans
- 1950s/60s Touring Saloons
- 1950s/70s Racing Sports/Prototypes
- 1990s to 90s Aston Martin
- 1950s to 90s Porsche
- 1990s to 70s Ford Roadsports/GT
- 1980s Formula Junior
- 1950s/60s Sports and GT
- 1950s Front-engined Sports
- 1950s/30s Pre-war Sports

#### SPECIAL ADVANCED BOOKING PRICES

Free and exclusive Club Display Area including signage and site dressing for a minimum of 10 genuine classic club member display cars. Prime centre of circuit location.

Save up to £15 on day tickets & £80 on 3-day passes with unique club code for reduced member prices.

AND BUY-ONE-TICKET-GET-ONE-FREE  
with car display booking (inc. vehicle pass for display area access)

	Advanced Special Club Member Prices £11 (incl. GST)	Standard £16 (incl. GST)	On the Day Peak Prices
<b>Fri 25 July</b>	<b>£15.00</b>	<b>£20.00</b>	<b>£30.00</b>
<b>Sat 26 July</b>	<b>£20.00</b>	<b>£25.00</b>	<b>£35.00</b>
<b>Sun 27 July</b>	<b>£20.00</b>	<b>£25.00</b>	<b>£35.00</b>
<b>3-day Pass</b>	<b>£35.00</b>	<b>£45.00</b>	<b>£65.00</b>

Accompanied Children (u18) go FREE!

All public car parks, grandstand seating and centre paddock transfers are FREE!

All tickets as required to be ordered by the closing date of 21 July

+ Four FREE daytickets per day to Club Organisers displaying 20 cars plus per day

Order now to gain maximum savings and avoid disappointment!

# GET IN THE RIGHT GEAR

for

# SPRIDGET 50



## THE BIG PARTY

To celebrate 50 years of the Austin Healey Sprite and the MG Midget, and to coincide with SPRIDGET 50 - THE BIG PARTY, a range of regalia items have been specially produced for this unique event.

All items listed feature the logo shown below and include:



<b>Tee Shirts</b>	<b>£ 8.00</b>
<b>Men's Sweat Shirts</b>	<b>£16.00</b>
<b>Ladies' Sweat Shirts</b>	<b>£17.00</b>
<b>Polo Shirt</b>	<b>£11.00</b>

Choice of garment colours (please state): White, Orange and Light Blue, with the logo reproduced in Black on the left breast.

Sizes (please state): **S** (36"), **M** (38"), **L** (40"), **XL** (42-44"), **XXL** (46")

#### Other items available:

<b>Caps</b> - White with Black piping and logo .....	<b>£ 8.50</b>
<b>Windscreen Stickers</b> - 85mm x 85mm .....	<b>£ 2.50</b>
<b>Dashboard Badges</b> - White alloy, self adhesive .....	<b>£ 3.00</b>
<b>*Grille Badges</b> - Cast alloy, white enamel - 75mm x 75mm .....	<b>£20.00</b>

#### All Prices are Inclusive of Post and Packaging.

\*If you wish to purchase a Grille Badge, please e-mail: [chrispat@holwell8.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:chrispat@holwell8.freeserve.co.uk) immediately to confirm your order, including your telephone number.

**IMPORTANT:** To receive your items by post prior to the SPRIDGET 50 event, all orders **MUST** be submitted no later than **31st March 2008**.

SPRIDGET 50 regalia will also be available to order at the event or by post from: **Chris Jackson, 2 Edgell Cottages, Holwell, Hatfield, Herts. AL9 5RF**

Payment by cheque only please, payable to: 'SPRIDGET 50'



You are invited to attend



## SPRIDGET 50 THE BIG PARTY

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

### Entry fee of £12 includes:

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

### Activities to include:

- Historic and Racing Car display
  - Demonstrations and forums
  - Limited edition regalia and trade stands
  - Concours and Pride of Ownership competitions
  - Fun activities including 'Rocker Box Racing'
- Plus much more... visit: [www.spridget50.com](http://www.spridget50.com) for further details.

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

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

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

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Spridget Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter my vehicle in the following: Concours Competition

(Please tick one box only) Pride of Ownership Competition

### If paying by card please complete the following:

Card type (Visa/Mastercard etc.): \_\_\_\_\_ Card no: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Issue (where applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

# 25 Years of the Midget and Sprite Club (PART 2)



## We Spread Our Wings

In early 1983, Nigel Williams and Terry Horler may have thought that the idea of a club dedicated to just Spridgley things was an original idea. Unbeknown to each, the SOUTHERN COUNTIES SPRITE OWNERS CLUB and the SCOTTISH SPRITE DRIVERS CLUB had both come and gone some time before. Indeed, the Southern Counties Sprite Owners Club was formed some time prior to 1960 when only the Frogeye was available – leave alone Midgets. This club was later merged into the AUSTIN-HEALEY CLUB. On the other side of the World, THE SPRITE CAR CLUB OF AUSTRALIA formed in June 1960 followed by THE AUSTIN-HEALEY SPRITE DRIVER'S CLUB of Victoria in 1966. As Australia is a big place, a third club, SPRITE CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA began in September 1972. All we did know at that time was that in late 1982 or early 1983, the SPRITE AND MIDGET OWNERS GROUP had been launched in the UK from the parent US based club of that title. Pete Dicks, the ex-Sprite Registrar from the Austin-Healey Club was the man spearheading SMOG UK. Although Nigel and I were aware of the existence of SMOG UK, our first meeting with other Sprite and Midget enthusiasts in April 1983, came to the decision that we would form our own club. Both SMOG and MASC rubbed along for a few years but by March 1988, SMOG was in trouble. Pete handed over SMOG to Jonathan Whitehouse Bird and Warren Cox. Jonathan and Warren decided to suspend operations to sort out affairs with the idea to re-launch the club around October 1988. Aware of this, the SMOG representatives were invited to meet MASC on a club outing to Bourton on the Water in the Cotswolds in September 1988. With a SMOG membership of 50 and MASC membership of around 160, was there really a need for 2 clubs after 5 years of operation? As SMOG was predominately a Midlands based club, and as MASC also had a growing Midlands membership by this stage, we put the following proposal to SMOG.

Should SMOG decide not to re-launch then?

To transfer by agreement, any SMOG members into MASC using SMOG funds to pay the membership for those transferring into MASC. To reimburse, using SMOG funds, any SMOG memberships by those not wishing to be a member of either club.

Should any SMOG members decide to continue with the club, then they retain the surplus funds and stock of SMOG.

We asked for this proposal to be put to SMOG members believing that this would be an attractive alternative to continuing membership with a club that was effectively, not happening. Not only was MASC growing, we had a Midlands representation, a monthly magazine and a busy calendar of events. The proposal was placed and a ballot of the SMOG membership produced the following result in November 1988.

To transfer into MASC – 25 in favour with 4 not in favour.

21 of SMOG members did not return their ballot forms.

25 SMOG members had their subscription transferred to MASC in December 1988, the 4 members not agreeing to the proposal were left with the surplus of SMOG funds and stock. The 29 SMOG members who did not respond were deemed to be no longer interested in either club. In 1988, Spridgley thing ownership was still quite a short term affair to many so we can only assume that these had moved onto other things that did not fill up with water and rust away! As for the 4 SMOG members who wished to continue with the club, nothing more has been heard.

MASC now had the advantage of a considerably larger Midlands branch and the knowledge and skills of Jonathan Whitehouse Bird. Jonathan is a Graphic Designer and soon got to work with the clubs graphic presentations. Our original logo was designed

by Steve Lloyd, a fellow Toolmaker at Rolls-Royce, 25 years on, Steve and I still work together. Although Steve designed our logo, this was drawn up properly in our drawing offices, which 25 years on, has long gone! The Windscreen sticker was produced from the master drawing along with that which appeared in *MASCOT* and our promotional material. Jonathan subtly redesigned this and incorporated this in a completely new *MASCOT* cover. Needless to say, any graphics we needed from this time on, Jonathan could be relied on for a top quality job. Indeed, the club's 2008 calendar is much to the credit of Jonathan.

We realised very early on that if we were to be serious about the club, then it had to be a national affair and not just a local thing. We formed on the strength of a good local support in the Bristol area, just as SMOG had done in the Midlands. Surely, this could be repeated elsewhere? Through *Practical Classics* Magazine, enquiries were received from around the country; we kept a close scrutiny of where members outside of the Bristol area were. Whenever we identified the close proximity of more than one of our distant members, we encouraged them to get together to form a new branch of the club. We had a number of promising early contacts, but all too often, these failed to get off the ground.

Our very first AREA ORGANISERS, as we so titled them, were announced in the February 1984 edition of *MASCOT*. In Berkshire, Nigel Coston and in Oxfordshire, Nigel Hudson were the first to offer their services to promote the club. Whether this was too many Nigels too early on I know not, but neither 'Branch' of the club managed to get off the ground – which rather dampened our initial optimism. Obviously, it would not be easy for any members in isolation to get something started, particularly if they had absolutely no other contact with the club other than *MASCOT*. It was with renewed optimism that Tim Palmer, one of the very first Bristol members, moved to the Surrey and Hampshire border and offered to become an Area Organiser. Tim had first hand experience of the formation of the club and would have at least this to his advantage in establishing interest in his new area. At this point, you may be thinking that this was the

embryo of the highly active and long running Surrey and Hampshire branches, but no, Tim didn't have much success either! Other Bristol based members also moved during the early months of the club to similarly represent the club in their new regions. Stuart Clarke in Welwyn Garden City and Steve ('Arry) Raggett in Birmingham. However, our first active branch was formed by Craig Large in Hereford in September 1984, meeting at the Buckingham, Whitecross. Craig arranged a club visit to Bulmers Cider Museum in Hereford and invited the Bristol contingent along. Hence, on Saturday the 27 of October 1984, the very first meeting of two branches of the Midget and Sprite Club took place. Craig followed this up by a surprise appearance at the next Bristol club night at the Bull at Hinton, the Bristol branch having moved here from the Lamb at Iron Acton. In later years, Craig moved to Yate near Bristol (and near to T.H for that matter!). Many other names came and went from our list of Area Organisers but other than Hereford, it was not until November 1985 that we thought we may have cracked the big one. Paul Artiss from Worcester and Roger Cockcroft in Birmingham announced their intention to jointly organise the West Midlands. We knew this to be a prime area from both our own membership list and the fact that SMOG had got established thereabouts. Paul and Roger announced a meeting for Saturday the 18th of January 1986 at the Shakespeare in deepest Birmingham. A goodly number of Bristol branch members headed North to help things along but yet again, our hopes were dashed. The branch struggled on for a little while but never really happened. Different story in 2008 I am very happy to say.

Also in November 1985, Midget Mk11 owner, Iona McLennan in Totnes, South Devon offered to be an Area Organiser for her region. Iona's boyfriend, Iain Grafton had a very nice Frogeye, so straight away, we had an active branch! Things quickly got under way in the area with meetings and events soon being published in *MASCOT*. As the members from Bristol had visited the Hereford branch, a similar visit was soon arranged with our new South Devon group. Bristol members met at Easton in Gordano services on Sunday the 8 December for a trip to Paignton pier to meet

our new South Devon members. This was followed by a leisurely drive along the South Devon coast to a meal at the Swans Nest at Exminster. As well as being a very pleasant day, this was also a huge morale boost to both branches. Now things were starting to look promising. One of the most popular events that the club held up to this time was Autotests (driving tests). The Bristol group used both a local Industrial estate car park and Motorway services car park – with permission I hasten to add – for these exciting tyre and gearbox destroying events. The thought of running an Autotest on grass was much favoured as not only would this be much less stressful for our poor Spridgley things, but far more slippery too. Finding such a venue proved difficult until I received a letter from Robert Pusey, the Landlord of the Paddock Inn at Whimple in Devon. Robert was an MGB owner and kindly offered the use of his large grass paddock alongside the Inn. After much correspondence to check out the suitability of the paddock, a date was set for Sunday the 1 June 1986. This would be an ideal opportunity to have an Autotest on grass and for our South Devon members to come along as well. Organising an event that far away did present some logistical problems with our driving test equipment. No large vehicles were available to carry all our road cones and poles so somehow, it all had to go in my small trailer. I had made up a tow bar for my Frogeye so with Steve Proud aboard, we set off to Whimple. Arriving at the Paddock Inn, the paddock was the generous area it was described to be, however, it was on a hill and covered in long grass. The grass was so long that none of our road cones could be seen and according to Steve, he could just about see the top of my head as I attempted to drive around the route. The gradient was such that the Frogeye soon lost grip, the radiator matrix filled up with dandelion heads, as did the interior, and it looked like we were in trouble. It would be bad enough when the Bristol members turned up to see our predicament, but this would hardly set a good first impression with our South Devon members either. Compounding this, the local MG specialists, London Road Garage were supporting the event. After a frantic time trying to flatten enough grass to show the way, the Autotest

was re-classed as a Production Car Trial instead. It was simply follow the trail for as far as traction and rising water temperature would allow! We did set up a few skill tests in the car park so at least we had something to make up an event with.

Sadly, only 4 South Devon members turned up and our overall entry was just 9 cars. This was starting to set a pattern, the Bristol membership was very good at supporting events and visits to other regions where we knew we had a number of members. All too often, we didn't get to meet very many of them on these occasions.

Unfortunately, the Hereford branch fizzled, and then the South Devon branch folded as suddenly as it started. However, Craig did attempt to re-launch the Hereford branch in February 1988 but later decided it might be better to go and live in Yate!

It is interesting to note that several of the current and long standing branches of the club have had previous representations. As with Tim Palmer's presence in the Surrey/Hamps area, areas such as Wiltshire, London, Birmingham and Dorset have all had a club presence largely unconnected with today's membership and level of activities. Most of our Area Organisers of the 1980s were unsuccessful in maintaining an active branch for any length of time, all that was to change in the 1990s as the attitude to ownership of our Spridgley things began to change.

Although the setting up of active branches throughout the country was a slow and uncertain process, it certainly did not mean that recruiting members throughout the country was. Thanks to our campaigning of the then, fairly recently introduced, Classic Car magazines, our presence was widely broadcast. Contra advertising agreements with some of the magazines ensured that we had a listing in their pages each month without having to spend a bean on advertising. Indeed, our beans were scarce in those days. Oddly enough, although we spread the word through the Classic Car magazines, we really did not see ourselves as a 'Classic Car' club then. The 1500 Midget had only been out of production for a little over 3 years when we had our very first meeting. The Spridgley

things gathered outside the Lamb at Iron Acton could scarcely be described as 'Classics' either. In truth, most of our Spridgley things were very well past their best and certainly not worth spending the thousands on that became common place in the 1990s. Most of our cars were in the twilight of their lives and with their very last owners before recycling. It was that final summer of fun before the winter set in and the plastic padding fell out. This probably explains why so many of our early members are no longer with the club and their Spridgley things have similarly vanished without a trace.

Initially, we were more interested in getting the club started and getting people involved, but what about their Spridgley things? It was not until 1984 that we thought we ought to compile a register of Spridgley things to find out exactly what was out there. In the early days, we had good support from the owners of early Spridgley things; the more commonly seen Midget 1500s seemed surprisingly few amongst our number. The 1500s seemed to appeal to a slightly different sort of enthusiast in those days, if I dare, the Hairdressers rather than the Dirty fingernails that we seemed to attract! Our Membership application form was supplemented a Car Register Form so at last, we knew both our members and their Spridgley variants. We first published the sum total of our register breakdown in the September 1984 edition of *MASCOT* which yielded the rather unimpressive figures of -

AN5	19
HAN6/7	5
HAN8	1
HAN9	2
HAN10	0
AAN10	0
GAN1/2	1
GAN3	3
GAN4	6
GAN5	11
GAN6	7

Well, at least this was a start. Yours truly acted as registrar which gave members the wrong idea that I might be knowledgeable on the subject. Although I had most of the books that were then available on Spridgley things, the information was sometimes conflicting or just plain missing. It was my questioning mind that made me doubt the starting point of the Round

rear wheel arch Midget and hence the register did not differentiate between square or round rear wheel arches for the GAN5 Car Number prefix at this time. This led me to prove to all my ignorance when I launched a quest to find the true starting point of the round arch Midget. The following appeared in the November 1987 edition of *MASCOT*. Much to my embarrassment both then and now!

### **Getting Closer**

*In our September edition we raised the question of finding the exact changeover point from square to round shaped rear wheel arches on the GAN5 MK111 Midgets. We had already discounted the nos GAN5-105500 which has appeared in at least one book as being the last square arched Midget as we have absolute proof that square arches continued until at least GAN5-115576. Our earliest round arch Midget at the time of writing that article was confirmed as GAN5-119894, a gap of some 4318 cars, any of which could be the first round arch Midget.*

*Thanks to our appeal for further information and a bit of detective work by yours truly we can narrow this gap down to 450 cars. The earliest confirmed round arched Midget on our files is that of Dennis Colley's GAN5-116026. Thanks to members who have assisted in the search, are there any others out there between 115576 and 116026 that we don't know about? Please write in if yours is within this range of numbers. Finally – we have altered our register form to include this information so in the future we shall know what shape your GAN5 Midget's rear arches are.*

### **Back to the present**

Well, that demonstrated my lack of knowledge and how far I would stir the membership up in search of the truth. Of course the book was correct. So what led me to question this? I had some evidence, false as it turned out. I was looking after a very nice square arch Midget for a member at the time, the Car number being GAN5 -115576. Hence, I thought that this number would be appropriate to what seemed to be a perfectly genuine square arch Midget. Subsequently, other members came forward with their round arch Midgets having lower Car numbers to the extent that

GAN5-105501 would appear to be the starting point after all. I later related this to our square rear wheel arch owning member, first sitting her down as the shock that her beloved Midget might have been a “ringer”. Once she came too, she said “Oh, I must tell my husband, he will be most interested.” On asking why, she replied “He is the Assistant Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police.” The Square/Round arch Midget was sold soon afterwards. It was replaced by a chrome bumpered MGB GT with a ‘T’ registration (that is 1979 to save you working it out) And when did Rubber bumpers first appear? All together – October 1974. I kept quiet after this!

Is this Midget still around? As I write this, I have just completed a written valuation for a member with a nice round arch Midget, well, so the photographs depict. The Car number however is that of a square arch Midget. The owner was quite unaware of this and is certain that it is not a BMH replacement shell. This time though, I will spare a club wide appeal for such erroneous details. And spare myself any further embarrassment too!

Sorry about that, back to the plot. Despite our shaky start with the creation of new active branches, we thought that the contents of *MASCOT* were giving the wrong impression. The Bristol branch was highly active and hence most of the activities reported in *MASCOT* were very heavily Bristol based. On the one hand, we thought that this might give others the inspiration and ideas to get something similar going in their region. A sort of Come on, look what you are missing out on, you could be enjoying this. More to the point, members saw it as a Bristol based club and at worst, a club that they were financing from afar. Clearly, the content of *MASCOT* had to be of National interest to Spridgley thing owners. Rather than have all the Bristol branch comings and goings reported in *MASCOT*, we produced our own local newssheet, entitled AVON ‘APPENINGS in February 1986. I make no apology for reprinting the opening paragraph, what I wrote then seems just as appropriate today in 2008. It’s written in broadest ‘Bristol’ as that was the audience it was aimed at!



### **No. 1 February 1986 Newsletter for MASC Avon Members**

*Yur, waz dis den, you may wonder, but then again, you may not. Anyway, yer bist the first edition of AVON ‘APPENINGS, the MASC Avon local newsheet for all us lot wot lives in dis ‘ere area like.*

*The ideal – oops sorry, idea behind this is to relieve MASCOT from blowing its covers off with the ever increasing amount of local news items that we receive each month. Not only that but if the print was to get any smaller we would have to issue a magnifying glass with every copy! So then, with the arrival of A ‘A we can now ramble on all we like about local news and events without the risk of boring members to death in the non-Avon areas, yes, we can now concentrate fully on being even more boring to all sixty odd (some more than others) members that A ‘A will hopefully be read by.*

*Avon ‘Appenings will appear as and when the situation demands so please don’t expect to see it monthly, well, not just yet anyway. So, now you know waz dis is all about like, on with the news.*

T.H.

### **Back to the present**

Really, if someone farted at the November Bristol Club night, does the whole club need telling about it? We could keep our local banterings to ourselves and free up *MASCOT* for the general interest articles. Hence our Area Reports for *MASCOT* could be kept concise.

Jumping way ahead, the Dorset branch followed the same path and have now produced over 100 editions of their local newsletter whilst more modern technology has seen the Surrey, Hampshire and Somerset branches, all producing their own website information pages.

Our standing in the Austin-Healey and MG world initially had us on our guard, how would the established clubs view our presence. Were we nibbling away at their territory and how might they react? Roche Bentley of the MGOC was the first to make contact and seemed very friendly toward us. He probably knew that MG Midgets alone would not threaten the existence of the MGOC which at that time boasted some 30000 members. It was the MG Car Club. Or at least, one official representing it, that offered to make life much easier for us. Quite simply, pack up and join the MGCC. We declined – and told him so! The Austin-Healey, as far as I can recall, made no official contact with us until we passed the 10 year test. They may have thought that we would have followed SMOG UK out of existence, as we passed the 10 year mark, they must have realised that we were more than just a flash in the pan. They invited us to their International Healey Weekend at Cirencester Park in 1994 and a jolly good event it was too. Moving on again to 2008, all our clubs are now co-operating toward 50 Years of the Sprite so now that young upstart MASC, is seen as part of the establishment.

I kicked off by mentioning the clubs that had the idea before Nigel and I did, and my thanks here to Eriks Skinkis of the Sprite Car Club of Australia for the information on these, but

there are a couple of other organisations that must not go unmentioned. I refer here to the “one man” operations that are not clubs but more so registers that produce a newsletter. In the USA, Rick Moses is the man behind the GLOBAL SPRITE REGISTER whilst in Australia (yet again); Ray English is the man behind the world famous “SPRITE ROOM” and quarterly magazine, “MARQUE ONE”. The first edition of which appeared in 1994.

The 1980s got us started but it was not until the 1990s that we really took off. Now the Classic Car movement really recognised the worth of our little cars, they were worth spending money on after all. The Frogeye always had a popular following but many of the other examples had been totally overlooked. Our register proved that Sprite MkII and Midget MkI versions had all but vanished, Austin Sprites too were very rare and had anyone ever thought of restoring a 1500? The value of our Spridgley things had been at rock bottom in the formative years of the club, the 1990s brought new interest and perhaps, a new attitude to ownership and being a member of the appropriate club. Next month, I will look at how the 1990s reshaped the club and set us on course to where we are today.

**Terry Horler**

## **Email to the Editor**

Hi Barry

I am led to believe from a friend that you ran the Classics Monthly article on my Sebring Sprite restoration in *MASCOT* recently. If so I was wondering if any of your members have information/photos relating to its race history at Silverstone between 1963 and 1968. Would it be possible to publish on the Webpage/*MASCOT* a request for any info to be forwarded to me? You may publish my E-mail address if you wish. Many thanks, and hope to see you at the 50th anniversary events.

**Dave Owen**

Sebring sprite 366 FBD

E-mail [lumbertub@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lumbertub@yahoo.co.uk)

## **The Sprite Psalm**

The Sprite is our car,  
I shall not want another,  
It maketh me to lie down in wet places,  
It soileth my coat,  
It leadeth me in the paths of ridicule,  
It leadeth me in many garages,  
It prepareth a breakdown for me in the  
presence of mine enemies,  
Yea, though I run down the valleys  
I am towed up the hills,  
I fear much evil whilst it is with me,  
Its rods and its sprockets discomfort me,  
It anointeth my face with oil,  
Its water runneth over,  
Surely to goodness the thing won't follow  
me all the days of my life,  
Or I shall dwell in the house of the poor  
and insane forever.  
Amen.

# 11th Atlantic Coast Express Run 27th April 2008



Sunday 27th April, sees the 11th Atlantic Coast Express Run start from the Old Okehampton Railway Station, now owned by the Dartmoor Railway, where light refreshments will be available prior to the start.

The tour will travel via Exeter to Exmouth, along the South East Devon coast or as it is known now as the Jurassic Coast as far as Bridport, before heading inland to finish for a Devonshire Cream Tea at the delightful Fishponds House Country Hotel at Dankeswell, just north of Honiton.

Some of the roads used will be unclassified, narrow and steep hills will be encountered, together with a ford and hopefully present you with a flavour of motoring in the 20's & 30's.

Entry forms may be downloaded from this website together with details of accommodation prior to the start, or direct from the event organiser :-

Colin Lennox-Jones, on 01752- 892434 or (cglj@tesco.net)



## Bristol Area Report

It is one of those awkward months when the deadline date for copy for *MASCOT* is before the second Wednesday of the month, the time the Bristol group meet at the Rose and Crown and Pucklechurch. Hence no up to the minute, hot off the press report this month. Awkward it may be, but also a very good excuse for me as I won't be at the February meeting anyway. As recently appointed Area Organiser, my first job is to send my apologies to the first meeting that I am expected to keep some semblance of control over. No doubt we shall be looking for a new venue next month!

So sorry guys, I trust you will all behave yourselves and have plenty to talk about in my absence!! Not to be one down on area meetings, we have a bonus meeting on Monday the 21st of April at the LAMB, Iron Acton. This is to mark 25 years of the very first meeting that led to the formation of the Midget and Sprite Club. All are welcome so please try and come along and see where it all kicked off in 1983. Hopefully, we will have some of the very earliest members (and oldest) there too.

**Terry Horler**

## Cambridgeshire Report

As I write this it is truly the low point of the Spridgeting season (early February), but with deadlines and lead times being what they are as you read this it will be early March, yes almost spring. The nights are pulling out (or is it in) and the days are getting noticeably longer and milder, it will soon be time to catch up with those winter jobs none of us have got around to yet, now that it is no longer freezing and dark in the Sprite cave. I have quite a lot of bodywork jobs to do (if possible) including new bonnet and boot lid to paint and fit, front wing to refurbish and a bit of bubbling in the lower 'A' post to sort out before Spridget 50. I suppose it is too damp and cold to paint anything yet so I may be forced to attend meetings in a work in progress Sprite.

Talking of meetings and getting back to the plot, the Mad Cat night was the only Cambridgeshire MASC activity this month. Pat and I arrived early for the pre-meeting eating only to find that Mick and Trish had beaten us to it, and after an excellent meal we moved through in to the bar to find a meeting in full swing with a good group of stalwarts and a couple of new members (the only ones in a proper car) well done guys. Various topics were discussed including plans for this years events and the rumbings in the MASC committee. Regarding the events, clearly a Cambridgeshire group visit to Spridget 50 will be our first major Spridget event of the year,

with others at the planning stage, namely two treasure hunts courtesy of Hubie and Mick, an evening run to the Ace café, a joint event with the Home counties mob, Kimbolton charity classic on 20 July, Silverstone 25-27 July and the BMC Rally.

HTJ provided us with a mini fumble bag and copies of his latest movie, which turned out to be a record of the London to Brighton run shot from the back of one of the participating vehicles. No cleverly dubbed in musical sound track this time, just the fabulous sounds of those wonderful old machines giving a real taste of what it must have felt like to be taking part in this great event and best of all not a hard top (or even a soft top) anywhere to be seen. HTJ seems to be getting really enthused with this movie making business and has acquired all sorts of equipment and brackets for hanging cameras on cars and so on, so watch out there may be a Spridget in a cinema near you sometime soon.

Unfortunately the deadline has beaten me again (apologies to Barry for yet another eleventh hour submission) so I will curtail my ramblings for this month except to mention that there were too few area reports with photos in last month's *MASCOT* (I expect all the Spridgets are in hibernation) so I have included a sunny shot from my files to get us in the mood for the season ahead (go on get that top off John).

**Dave Dixon**

# Dutch Report



**B**y the time of writing I haven't done anything to my car yet because I'm waiting for parts from the UK (what a great excuse isn't it?).

Although there is still enough time for Spridget 50 at the end of May, I do need to start the necessary work by now. Plans for Spridget 50 have been made and B&B is sorted and from when to when is now sorted too. Just need to book the ferries and everything is ready (except for a minor detail: the car!).

The Midgets in the picture are from (left to right) Olaf, Bas, Rolf and mine. I already know I'm travelling with Bas at the same dates and ferries so I fear things will get busy in the pub onboard the ferry. Rumours are he and some Yorkshire Spridget-hooligans are staying in a B&B very close by so there goes my quiet/relaxing weekend...

To our Dutch and Belgian readers: I'm not organising convoys of Spridgets to Gaydon but if you are going too and would like to travel in company then let me know and I might be able to connect you with somebody local to you who also likes to travel in company.

Coming events: The 5th All Sprite run (Midgets invited too) on the 1st of June in the Betuwe. The 5th Spridgetrun at the end of August/beginning September at the Dutch/German border. For any Spridgetinfo or our next Dutch "drive to the pub" meeting contact: [ariedebest@planet.nl](mailto:ariedebest@planet.nl)

**Arie**

# Home Counties North West

**S**o, 2008 is here! What a year ahead; Spridget 50, 25 years of the club and the weather forecasters say we may have a good summer to get out and about in our cars; but I am sure they said that this time last year! The HCNW year started with our traditional after Christmas dinner and this year Mike Gahan was volunteered to organise things. Well he came up trumps and we all enjoyed a marvellous meal at The Hollybush in Redbourn. What a popular event it turned out to be! This year we had a 19 of us around the table, most of the usual faces, but a couple of new ones as well.

It was good to meet Barry and Jenny Green who definitely came the furthest, all the way from Berkshire in Barry's Frogeye (Jenny left the Midget at home), it made some of us Frogeye drivers who only came a few miles feel bad for leaving our cars at home. Also new to a HCNW event were Keith and Ann Warner who have just got their Midget back on

the road. It was good to see them and we hope that they will be out and about with us during the warmer months. Thanks for organising Mike.

Our first road run of the year is set for March 16 with a 10am start at the Tesco store in Hatfield. If you are reading this and fancy joining us then give Chris Jackson a shout, details in the area reps section. A road run followed by a pub lunch is the schedule.

Planning for the year is well under way and we hope to have key events finalised and on the calendar in the next couple of weeks. Keep an eye on the events section in *MASCOT* and don't forget the club website too. New for this year we are planning to have a regular monthly, mid week, pub meet somewhere central in the Home Counties. Keep an eye out for details.

**Mark**

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**COMPLETE RANGE OF GEAR BOXES & DIFFERENTIAL UNITS  
FOR ALL SPRITE & MIDGETS FROM FROGEYE TO  
RUBBER BUMPER HELD IN STOCK.  
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# South East Area Report



*Kent – Pete Gardiner’s respray-fresh Midget showing off the engine compartment*

## Kent Section

Sunday lunchtime and the weather was fine. Sunshine – although a little cold. Too cold to sit outside and eat at The Moat, Wrotham Heath. The cold did not deter car usage as all, beside Pete Gardiner, arrived with tops stowed. Pete was showing off his fresh, bare metal, re-spray and a fine job it looked too. All, that is, except Gavin Rowles (blown clutch) and Martin Bird (non starting temperamental Frogeye). John Clark, John Larrington, Ralph Whitmarsh, and I were in

Frogeyes, in varying states of tune. John Clark, and I, had recently fitted a Sierra 5 speed box to his car and John had gone on to modify the gearbox turret in order for it to fit the new gear lever location (see photo) It looked good but will look even better with carpet surrounding it.

Neville and Pam Plummer came in an I.O.W. Frogeye while Mike Pearson and Mel Collins were in Midgets whilst Paul and Jane Coveney were in an Austin Sprite. The usual banter went on, about forthcoming events and cars, whilst we ate.



*Home converted bell housing*



*Modified Sierra remote*

## Surrey Section

Heavy rain, flood warnings, it seems that nothing deters some people from attending a Surrey Section, Midget and Sprite Club, night at the Blue Ball, Walton on the Hill, Surrey.

On a night like this no one was expected to arrive in a Spridget so the car park remained the domain of boring 'Euro boxes'. No primrose yellow, leaf green, or Nevada beige, to decorate, but all seemingly boring silver.

Peter Gardner was pleased to have his M.G. Midget back from a professional rebuild that included a bare metal respray. The car was wrapped up in cotton wool, at home, on such a foul night as this but promises to debut at the coming Kent meet when I shall attempt some photographs.

John Clark, making an effort in coming from Herne Bay, had stopped by at my place to chauffeur me in his estate, loaded with Frogeye, and other bits for machining but Nay and Col failed to show and it was Col, our resident engine machinist (Southern Rebores, Sussex), that I needed to discuss the items with. A modified type 9 gearbox remote, awaiting Tig welding, was passed around for all to see.

Chris Harding was able to report that only one room remains 'up for grabs' for our May run in the New Forest on 3rd – 6th May. If you hurry you may be able to secure a place if you have not done so already. Chris' Frogeye progresses slowly. He awaits warmer weather so that he can paint the body shell. Colin Aldridge, attending with Jude, and I have offered to assist with assembly, after the painting, in order that he may have the car ready for this years packed calendar. Maybe others would like to volunteer to assist as 'many hands make light work' as Grandma used to say.

Mike Lay, who has been a regular attendant for several months, has promised to actually join the Midget and Sprite Club to the extent that he even asked for a membership form. This will not be the first time that he has been given a form. We forever live in hope!

With an eye toward Gaydon, and Spridget 50, Nigel Saynor volunteered (and I use the word volunteered in its broadest sense) to research a route to Gaydon for a convoy, R.V.Ps, probably starting with a Kent RVP at Clackets Lane Services M25. It would be nice to know

who wants to join our convoy so I invite expressions of interest.

Mike Gorman was seeking advice on wiring a tachometer into his Austin Sprite. This was duly given. Mike will be in France when our Battlefield Tour (Normandy Beaches 12th – 15th June) is taking place and expressed an intention to meet with us there. So far eleven cars, from various centres, are booked on this Tour. Anyone else care to join us?

David and Chris Wright, David and Linda Southcott, and Chris Banton, who completed our regulars, together with others, were discussing topics ranging from 'roles and responsibilities' to *MASCOT* content unaware that the same issues had been raised at A.G.M. back in November. I was only recently aware as it had taken this long to obtain a copy of the minutes of that meeting. Should the minutes of the AGM be made available to all by being published immediately after the event in *MASCOT*?

We welcomed new member, and Frogeye owner, Bob Wallis to our group and hope to see him out and about with us, in his car, when the weather improves.

In receiving 'Apologies', from several persons, including Ashley Hinton, whom most will know is a manufacturer of body panels for 'our' cars, at his Gt Bookham factory Ashley suggested that once Spridget 50 has passed we should have another visit, in our cars, to his factory as in years gone by. Expressions of interest (to me please) are invited. I shall submit details, for inclusion in *MASCOT*, nearer the time.

### A request for information

To complete research for his new Frogeye book, Kent Member, John Baggott is desperate to contact the following:

- (1) Peter Preston, historic racer of Speedwell Sprite GT 5755 MM 1989 -1992, last heard of Surrey, England.
- (2) Jack Mathe, racer of Speedwell Sprite GTs XYU 383 and 7140 RO, 1961-62, last heard of South Africa.
- (3) Neil Woods who re-imported an early 1958 Frogeye from Canada in 1990, last heard of Yorkshire, England.

If any member can assist then please contact John Baggott on 01892-862656.

## Sussex Section

Seventeen people attended the Sussex meet, at the Friars Oak, Hassocks. First time visitors Jamie, Tony, and April Wright and Lindi and Don Galloway were a welcome addition to the group meeting. Lindi and Don brought along there Frogeye top up for the cold weather. Jamie is restoring an early Austin Healey Sprite Mk2 with dad's help. It's good to see, and encourage, some 'young blood'.

The other, top down, Frogeye gracing the car park was that of Julie and John Harle. A brave effort – with temperatures down to 4 degrees! John was showing some illuminated string that he is fitting into the car's instruments to increase their brightness. I am sure that isn't the technical term for it but he promises to submit an article, for all to read, for inclusion in a later edition of *MASCOT*.

Jason Alexander was planning a romantic weekend in Paris with Sue. Ah! Holding hands as they walk in the moonlight along the banks of the Seine. A stolen kiss? Get real this is a car club! The romance is the motor car and they are heading to the Paris retro in two weeks time (whilst others amongst us contemplate a coach trip to a Classic car show at Antwerp in March (see [www.miamimotorsltd.com](http://www.miamimotorsltd.com))). Now there's a man who knows how to treat his lady. Tim and Elaine Thorndale came in not far behind Jason and Sue. David and Linda Southcott, John Larrington, Trevor and Sandra Bignall and I completed the assembly.

**Alan Anstead**

*S.E. Area Rep*

*Mail to: [alan.anstead@btopenworld.com](mailto:alan.anstead@btopenworld.com)*

*Telephone (answer phone) 01322-384050*

# After the Winter Break from SS&NB

## News time in our quarter century year

<http://ssnbmasc.freezoka.com/index.html>

Those of you with the internet straining at your computers will recognise the above as a Web Address. If you enter it into your browser it will take you to our all singing all dancing South Staffs and North Birmingham Area Web Site.

Our old website died the death of the unattended some time ago and as it seemed a shame for us to only have links on the MASC site to Hampshire and London's colourful sites I asked Trevor, our tame webguru if he could build us another. The result is proudly displayed here. All of our area members can put as much or as little as they like in here about their cars. As a work in progress feel free to visit often.

One car I hope to have proudly displayed within it is Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird's beautiful Sprinzel Sebring Sprite (one of the 6 Williams and Pritchard alloy coupes), which is rapidly approaching the final stages of its loving restoration. I sneaked into its garage the other night and snaffled a taster photo while the guards were looking the other way. This car is well on the way to being ready for Spridget 50 at Gaydon, but Jonathan's time working on the car is being eroded away with much of the design and organisation for the

event, he has designed the posters and flyers you should be able to find at many MG and Austin-Healey spares dealers near you. And, with Barry, he designed the layout for the Club's smashing calendar. It is hoped he can finish in time or I will be feeling very guilty...

We have a couple of new members at SS&NB and most of our project cars should be ready for the big day. For information there is a Classic car event at Ragley Hall on the day after the Spridget 50 Big Party and several SS&NB members are planning to make a Big Weekend of it by attending Ragley Hall on Sunday. It would be nice to meet up with some of you there, at the very least the other show can help make a visit to the Midlands for the Saturday into a great weekend. See you there?

As one of the organisers (How DID that happen?) I am helping to sort out the event parking on the day at Gaydon and would welcome any offers of an hour or two as marshals on the day. My email and telephone details are in the front of the mag.

A couple of folks have asked why the area report has been missing on occasion, it's quite simple. Unless I have anything more than a pub report I will not be posting one, space is money now the mag is in colour!

**Bill Mohan 1067**

# Yorkshire Report

## Monthly Meeting

A big "Thank You" to Nick and Richard Morley for organising the February meeting on Saturday 2nd. A snowy morning prevented those attending from turning up in their Spridgets but Bob did come along in his smart MGA. The venue was Nick's house in Snaith. Dad (Richard) has a large room set up as a Toy Museum that provided everyone with memories of their younger days. Nick proudly took everyone to the garage to look at his Frogeye project and his Caterham. After a superb buffet lunch laid on by Nick's Mum, Rosemary, most ventured out on a 2 hour road run taking a circular route on mostly country lanes south of the M62. Hopefully more on this run in next month's report.

## Dates

Sat 1 March – West Yorkshire – Windy Hill on the Yorkshire/Lancashire border

Fri 21 March – Good Friday – Hot Cross Run. Scenic tour of the Abbeys of North Yorkshire. Closing date for entries Sunday 9 March, limited to 20 cars. More details from Tim Saunders, mothysaunders@hotmail.com / 07968 2619990.

Sat 5 April – South Yorkshire – Need a volunteer to find a venue!

Sun 20 April – Drive It Day – I'm hoping to organise runs from each area converging for another picnic and static display on The Stray in Harrogate. All classics welcome. Book your place with me please.

Thurs 1 May – Our monthly meetings will revert to Thursday evening for the lighter months. This one will be in North Yorkshire somewhere.

## Other Matters

Many of you know about the car crash in which I suffered five fractures of my pelvis. I am now home after spending nearly five weeks in hospital. I'm on the mend but am hopping about on crutches at the moment. I have been helped in my recovery so far by the tremendous amount of kind messages, cards, flowers, visits, books and other gifts from Spridget enthusiasts from literally all over the world. Your support and concern has been very much appreciated. I hope it won't be too long before I'm able to get in and out of my Spridgets again.

**Anita**

# Market Place

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

## For Sale

**IOW Frogeye** Very good condition, based on MK I Midget, new silver wire wheels with new Michelin XAS FF, dark green, new MOT, hood and tonneau cover, original transferable pre-suffix number. £6750.

**Jean-Pierre 02380-890123**  
**hotsun75@hotmail.com**

**Parts for sale:** From a Austin Healey Sprite Mk III, 1966. Rear Axle complete with LSD, 3.9 ratio £500 ono. Rear Suspension including, springs, lowering blocks, shackles, telescopic adjustable shocks, poly bushings, anti tramp bars, £150. Prop Shaft £30.

x4 Alloy Wheels, 4 spoke Revolutions 13" x 5.5", £150. Roof frame, 2 piece for easy stowage, £40. x2 Wind-up door window glasses (LH and RH) £40 ea. Contact details, **email: jh.walker@hotmail.co.uk**  
**Call mobile: 07751 452 349**

**1977 MG Midget 1500** for sale. It's British Racing Green and has 53,000 miles on the clock, it's in excellent condition with a complete rebuild with all the receipts. £4200 ono.

**Contact Gerry Eyres on 01287 637806 or mob. 07913655756.**

# Linc'slot



*Phil's Midget*

**H**i to all my regular readers. It's nice to think of you all reading my words, but it would be even nicer if you came out for a pint and a chat with us at the White Hart, first Thursday of the month. Well that's the commercial out of the way.

It was another well attended meeting on the 7th. Phil was there. The only one of us in a Spridget, he came in his good looking F reg. Midget. It's a good job he wears the seat belt as he tells me the door swings open at the most inopportune moments. Like just as you are accelerating off a roundabout and could really do without having to catch the door and slam it shut again. We'll have to have a look at that I think Phil.

Pete and Mary came in the green Moggy Van. They will be setting the route for our Rhapsody

in Blue. Sunday 4 May 2008, 10.30am at Wragby Market Place for this one. It will consist of our ubiquitous Wold Run, but this time to Rigsby Woods near Alford. A walk through the bluebells followed by a 'Bring Your Own' picnic at a location yet to be decided. All welcome. Donations to Woodlands Trust for the walk in the woods.



*Pete's Minor van*

Tim and Jill came in their Austin A35. They are looking into arranging a "Go Karting" trip for the group. When I know I'll let you know.

We will be arranging to go to East Kirkby, Aviation Heritage Centre, again this year, after last year's attempt was abandoned due to personal circumstances.

Next meeting Thursday 6 March. Come and join in.

**Brian Jeffery**



*Publicity photo of the Innocenti S at the Salon di Torino (Turin Motorshow) 1963*

# SPRIDGET 50



## THE BIG PARTY

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

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

Entry £12 per car

Call the ticket hotline on: 01954 231125

or visit: [www.spridget50.com](http://www.spridget50.com) for more details





**There just aren't enough seats in  
an Austin Healey Sprite to carry a crowd.  
Sometimes this can be an advantage.**

The Austin Healey Sprite is strictly a two-seater. This means you couldn't hope to take Mum and Dad along with you on your next trip to the Corniche.

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