

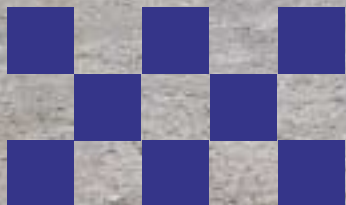
May 2008

£2 No. 290

Mascot



SPRIDGET 50 - The BIG Party
Saturday 24 May 2008, Gaydon



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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WILTSHIRE	Vacant
YORKSHIRE	Anita Lachowicz , Tel: 01423 862738 or mobile: 07720 725429 email: spridget.girl@ntlworld.com

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 May '08

Difficult to cram in all the material I'm being sent at the moment with the reduced page count – I do hope there's not too many disappointed contributors out there. If your material has not been used this time around, then there is a possibility it will be used later in a later issue. Still, glad to hear most of you are impressed by the full-colour now. So please do keep on sending your items and photos, particularly those for consideration for the front cover – portrait format, as opposed to landscape, please.

Incidentally, photos for *MASCOT* generally need only to be between 200 and 300kb even at low res; photos for the front cover, on the other hand, should be in portrait format and around 1.5 – 2 mb in size.

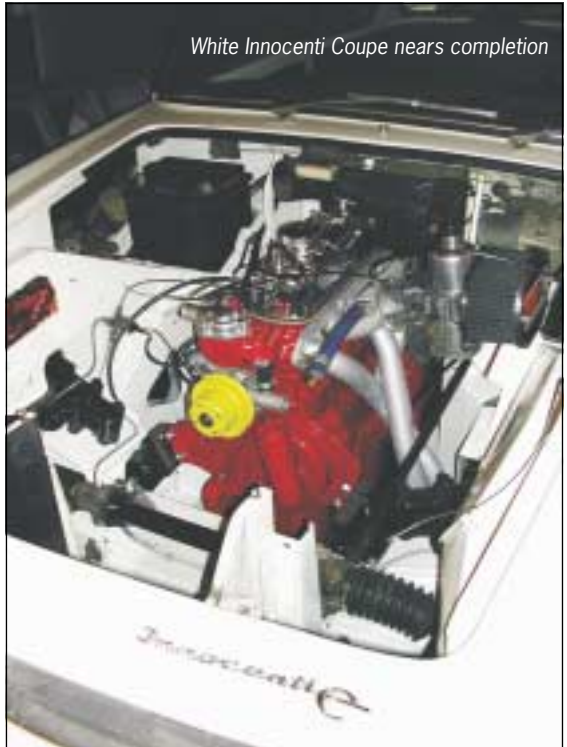
By the time you read this a lot of you will have ventured out on Drive-It Day ... I, unfortunately, will still be working on our white Innocenti Coupe – at least the new big engine is now in. And Spridget50 is only a few weeks off.

So what have we got in this Gaydon edition? ... Well, there's another really nice piece from John Sprinzel on his involvement with the Bugeye; dashboard refurbishment (Mk1) by John Unwins; a reprint, from our friends at *Enjoying MG*, of a detailed article written by John Baggott on the Recreation of SS1800 (thanks: Richard Ladds at MGOC); the all-important final update on Spridget50; Part 4 of Terry's History of Midget & Sprite Club; and of course, a great selection of Area Reports ... How do we fit so much in!

See you all on the 24th!

PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for June issue is MIDDAY SUNDAY 11 May.

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



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

Front cover picture:

Another front cover photo from a Bristol Area MASC member, this time a Mk1 Sprite from Colin Gale 3619

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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 of the May meeting.
- 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 Terry Horler on 01454 881770
- 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, 7.00pm onwards. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- 4th Thursday **Sussex** – Meet at **the Friar Oak**, Hassocks, from 19:00. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- 4th Thursday **Hampshire** – Meet at **The Poacher**, South Warnborough. 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. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- Last Thursday **Somerset** – Meet at **The Lord Nelson**, Norton-sub-Hamdon. 8.00pm
- Occasional Meetings **Home Counties North West** for members in Herts, Bucks, Berks, N. London or anyone interested! Please contact Chris Jackson Tel: 01707 261567 or Mark Hall, Tel: 01296 660103
- Most Sunday Lunchtimes **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Spotted Cow**, Marston Meysey

Club Website

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

Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Ancombe

Events organised for 2008 so far

May

- Friday 2nd "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for open top sports cars. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm
- Saturday 3rd Surrey Area Annual Tour. New Forest. Details from Sue Judd.
To Tuesday 6th 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 International Healey Weekend at Goodwood.
To Sunday 18th
- Friday 16th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for Best of British Classic cars pre 1983. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm
- Saturday 24th Spridget 50 at Gaydon – The Big Party. For further info contact Jeremy Cogman on 07702 958450 or email: organiser@spridget50.com. To book your place, call 01954 231125. www.spridget50.com
- Saturday 24th Cambridgeshire Area are meeting at Thrapston Services at 9am and will travel in style to the BIG event. Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810
- Sunday 25th Kent Meeting cancelled due to Spridget 50

June

- Sunday 1st Dorset Area are going on the 10th anniversary New Forest Run organised by MGOc 1009. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840
- Friday 6th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for open top sports cars. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm
- Sunday 8th Dorset Area are holding their annual gathering at Kingston Lacy. All makes and models welcome. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840
- Thursday 12th Surrey Area's D-Day Beaches Tour.
To Sunday 15th
- Saturday 14th Castle Combe's Classic and Sportscar Action Day. See *MASCOT* or contact Terry Horler. 01454 881770
- Friday 13th 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.
To Sunday 15th
- Friday 20th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for Best of British Classic cars pre 1983. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm.

Sunday 29th Dorset Area are having an Afternoon Mystery Run. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840

July

Friday 4th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for open top sports cars. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm

Sunday 6th Warwickshire Area's Worcester/Shropshire Run. Details from Roy Cole, 01562 885766 or email: roy@geraldineandroy.co.uk

Sunday 6th Cambridgeshire's Hubie's Horrible Hunt. Meet at the Mad Cat, Pidley from 10am for a staggered start ending in a pub meal. Details from Hubie Albany on 01733 265548

Sunday 6th South East Area are having a stand at The Classic Car and Transport Show at Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone. Details from Jason Alexander anglebox105@yahoo.co.uk

Tuesday 8th Surrey Area's Le Mans Tour. Sorry, now fully booked.

To Tuesday 15th

Friday 11th Goodwood Festival of Speed. www.goodwood.co.uk

To Sunday 13th

Friday 18th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for Best of British Classic cars pre 1983. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm

Sunday 20th Warwickshire Area's Hereford Hop. Details from Phil and Mo Wood, 01905 456303 or email: philipwood@btinternet.com

Sunday 20th Cambridgeshire Area will have a stand at the Kimbolton Charity Classic event. Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810

Sunday 20th Surrey Area's Bar-B-Q at Chez Chris, Laura and Theo Banton at Outwood, Surrey. Details from Chris banton, cyb1967@googlemail.com

Sunday 20th Dorset Area are attending the Motoring Extravaganza at Breamore House organised by Poole Bay Classics. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.

Friday 25th 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. Needs to be prebooked. Details from Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

Sunday 27th South East Area are going to the Amberley Museum Classic car. Details from David Wright, davidandchrisw@btinternet.com

Sunday 27th Dorset Area are attending Branscombe Air and Classic Car Show. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.

August

Friday 1st "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for open top sports cars. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm

Sunday 3rd Cambridgeshire Area are hosting a MASC stand at the BMC Rally at Ferry Meadows, Peterborough. Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810

Sunday 3rd South East Area's Treasure Hunt and Pub Lunch at Warnham, West Sussex. Details from David Wright, davidandchrisw@btinternet.com

Saturday 9th Warwickshire Area's Ireland Trip. Details from Alan Couch, & Sunday 10th 01564 773302 or email: roalan@talktalk.net

- Sunday 10th Cambridgeshire Area are joining Wisbech Car Club on their Wild Wisbech Run. Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810
- Sunday 10th South East Area are going to the Leeds Castle (Kent) Car Show.
- Tuesday 12th Cambridgeshire Area are going to the Ace Café. Meet at Knebworth at 6pm and travel in convoy or join us at the Ace. Details from Hubie Albany on 01733 265548
- Friday 15th "Quay for my car" at Poole Quay, Dorset. Today is for Best of British Classic cars pre 1983. Free parking and entry into the "car of the week" competition. From 6-9pm
- 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
- Sunday 24th Dorset Area are attending the Hampshire Pageant of Motoring at Broadlands, Romsey. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.

September

- Wednesday 3rd South East Area's visit to Fulching Manor, Sussex. Museum and House. To Be Confirmed. Details from David Wright, davidandchrisw@btinternet.com
- Saturday 6th Warwickshire's Mike and Benitas' 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
- Sunday 7th Dorset Area are attending the Classic Cars On The Prom event at Lulworth Castle. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.
- Sunday 14th Dorset Area are attending the Wessex Classic Car Show at Canford Park Arena, Poole. Details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.
- Sunday 14th Cambridgeshire's second Treasure Hunt of the year. Details from Dave Dixon on 01733 222810
- 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 events' list in this month's *MASCOT* is very extensive. There is a huge variety of things to do and places to go, so what is keeping you?

Our Midget is in the garage but will stay there for a while yet. Just noticed that the gritter has gone along our road tonight (April 15th) spreading that rust making stuff. I suppose that there is a frost forecast tonight. Pity because today was, and probably tomorrow will be, clear blue skies although really cold. Must be fantastic to have a Spridget in the

South of France or Spain or Italy or in fact anywhere warm and dry. Perhaps I'll emigrate.

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

1330	Neill Murphy	Essex	Sprite Mk 2
1952	Robin and Josephine Harwood	Kent	Frogeye
3632	James Hanson	Nairnshire	Frogeye
3984	Chris Playfoot	Kent	Midget Mk 3
3985	Helen and Jonathan Andrews	North Yorkshire	Midget Mk 3
3986	Tony Amos	Kent	RWA Midget Mk 2
3987	Andre Peynot	France	Looking for Midget Mk 3
3988	Robert and Eirwen Watson	Worcestershire	Midget Mk 3
3989	Lisa and Jerry Diccoc	Kent	Sprite Mk 2
3990	Matt Alexander	West Lothian	Midget Mk 3
3991	Peter Jacobson	East Yorkshire	RWA Frogeye
3992	Rob Kearley	North Yorkshire	Midget 1500
3993	Tom Coulthard	Oxfordshire	Midget Mk 1
3994	Andy Jardine	Highland	Sprite Mk 4

Classic and Sportscar Action Day

**Castle Combe Circuit – Saturday 14 June
Marking 50 Years of the Austin-Healey Sprite**

As we close for press, I have yet to receive written confirmation that the Midget and Sprite Club will be the featured club of this year's Action Day. The organisers recognise that 2008 is a major milestone in the history of the Austin-Healey Sprite and what better club to help make the point? As such, we may well be able to offer far more free Paddock passes than usual for this highly popular and exciting event.

As always, there will be an opportunity to actually drive on the famous Castle Combe circuit. In addition to the fast lapping sessions,

as the featured club, we may be able to get all of our cars around the circuit for some 'parade' laps. In the absence of further information at the present time, I ask all members who may be interested to contact me for full information and to be included on the list. Entries must be pre-booked via the club as on the day entries will find themselves having to pay! Please include an A5 size SAE when applying by post to –

Terry Horler, 63 Littledean, Yate, Bristol,
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SPRIDGET 50 - The BIG Party

Saturday 24 May 2008, Gaydon

GAYDON – 3 weeks to go!

By the time you read this Spridget 50 will be very close indeed. Everything is in place for a superb day. The best news of all is that at the time of writing we have over 650 cars booked to come. This will surely be the biggest gathering of Sprites and Midgets ever. We are presently trying to arrange a aerial photograph of this momentous occasion.

However, it's not too late to join the party; if you haven't booked by now you can pay to come in on the gate. The site is open from 10:00 'till 17:00 although formal activities will be finishing at 16:00.

We've got two excellent talks arranged for the day. In the morning we have Don Hayter talking to us about his leading role in readying the Mk1 Sprite for production. In the afternoon Mike Garton will be talking about his 60's racing activities.

We also have some comprehensive displays of historic cars including PBL 75 the original press car that features in so many period photographs (and some of our posters) and the Sebring Sprite PMO 200. There will also be a grid of racing Sprites and Midgets. You are also likely to bump into many historical figures from the early days of Sprite and Midget racing (hopefully identified by some badges) who will be happy to share their memories.

Our guest of honour will be Bic Healey, who will formally open the event and who has signed some souvenir posters that will be on sale. There will be a range of regalia on sale and a raffle with some excellent prizes, so do bring some extra cash along.

There will also be a selection of trade stands. If you would like a trade or autojumble stand they are very reasonably priced so please contact me on the phone number or email address below. All profits from Spridget 50 will

be going to Macmillan Cancer Support so do please spend generously.

At the moment we are busy getting the ticket packs ready to send out. Do please ensure you display your rally plate prominently as it is your entry ticket and you'll be delayed getting in if our marshals can't see them.

Talking of which, we need your help. We receive no marshalling help from Gaydon so our illustrious ex-chairman Bill Mohan has to direct and park 700+ cars in a couple of hours (maybe less if you all turn up at 10:00) and then help them all get out again. He's a very capable chap but doing this all on his own is beyond even his powers. In addition we'll need some help inside the museum and selling regalia. If you are coming along and would be able to give an hour or two of your time to help make Spridget 50 flow smoothly and be as safe as possible do get in touch via the number or email address below.

Please do consider giving up an hour or two of your day to us, without volunteers these events just can't happen.

We are also busy at work on a full colour programme that you'll be able to pick up free (courtesy of British Motor Heritage Limited) on the day. There is also going to be a Sprite shaped cake which will be more than large enough (I know, I've worked it out) for everyone there to have a piece.

Now all I need to do is put my Mk2 Sprite back together. As we speak it's at RMG Coachworks near Odiham having some rather nasty cracks in the front chassis members repaired. When I get it back I'll have about 4 weeks to get it reassembled.

See you on the 24th!

Jeremy Cogman
01730 893662
jeremy@cogman.co.uk

Bug-Eye

I think the most amazing thing about the Bug-Eye was that it was right from the very start. I always liked “loose” back ends of the cars I drove, and the quarter elliptic springs helped to provide this feature. In order to keep the rear wheels from lifting, our Speedwell cars added a front anti-roll bar from the beginning. When Pat Moss drove a Sprite on the Corsica rally, she chose not to have this bar fitted, but the shock from repeated wheels going from driven to undriven soon broke her transmission, and on the next event, the RAC Rally, she asked for one to be bolted on. Oddly enough, I didn't like the subsequent spring arrangement on all the later Spridgets nearly as much, though the car was probably a little stiffer as a result of the full-length springs. Handling in the rough was quite exceptional, and coupled with the light weight, made progress over the rocky, unmade tracks over which we usually rallied far easier on the arms and wrists. Another advantage we seem to have had was the lack of punctures which plagued most competitors on rough events such as the Alpine, RAC, Greek Acropolis and Liege. In over a hundred International rallies, I can only recall about five punctures, quite a contrast to today's contests, where full sets of tires are changed more than ten times a day, and flats are the rule and not the exception.

On the early Sprites we drove, there wasn't really the power we would have liked to hang

the tail out for the “pendulum” technique of cornering, but by the second year, we had tuned in enough horses to make gravel cornering a delight. The very quick and positive steering also helped, and oddly enough, in spite of a lack of knee room, there always seemed to be enough room for the rapid corrections and pedal dabbling which rallying on unknown roads always involved. The virtual monocoque design was very stiff and strong indeed, and I have no recollections of any bodywork weakness. I did find cracking up of the inner front wings on the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon, but that was on a ten thousand mile event on very rough roads indeed.

Braking was really no problem, even with the puny drums on the first Sprites. When we fitted discs and larger rear drums a couple of years later, the car was transformed, and one could out brake virtually everything on the track. Axle ratios too were virtually limitless, with the choice from the long legged 3.9 through to a 5.1, which came from the Morris Minor Post Office vans. We did break a few half shafts until the factory came out with a version made in special steel.

As for weaknesses, I have mentioned the stub axles, which just couldn't take the stress, but this had already been a fault on the Austin A 35. In 1958, at one of the annual BMC Competition Lunches, where everyone did a lot of patting on the back – I was sitting next to Syd Enever, leader of Abingdon's design team, when I casually mentioned the problem. After drawing the site of the fractures on the usual cigarette packet, Syd pointed to the drilled holes, which I had sensed as the origin of the breakages. “Those shouldn't be on the production axles,” he said “they were just there for extraction of the prototype castings!” Nevertheless, they were still being drilled in 1968 and cost me the Private entrants' award and a top placing on that London to Sydney, right on the last day, when the stub snapped near Broken Hill in New South Wales!

Transmissions too were never really up to the mark, especially in the early days with Mr. Issigonis's crash bottom gear. BMC's



eccentric Design Director felt you didn't need synchromesh on bottom gear, as it was only used for starting off, and would save money on every car built. As a result we had boxes and boxes of broken first-reverse clusters under our workshop benches, and it wasn't until decent straight cut gears were available that this carnage ceased. I recall finishing one Alpine Rally with just a very dodgy first and a top gear, plugging on to the end in order to help win the team prize for Healeys. No fun at all on those twisting and steep Alpine Passes, but as I always claimed, you had to drive back to the finish anyway, so why not try and stick to the route and time schedule! Nowadays they change transmissions in about ten minutes, but on the Sprite, the engine had to come out, so this was not an option with just five or six minutes of service time available a couple of times a day.

By and large, Geoff Healey got the little Bug-Eye very right, and all we did was to gild the lily.

John Sprinzel

Silverstone Classic

Please note the last date for tickets, including infield parking passes, is June 30.

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Saturday	July 26	£25.00
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rebuids, original
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modified race Sebring
construction
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TV filming

Frogeye Dashboard Refurbishment

I expect this has been done before – but here is a solution to returning a Frogeye dashboard to the original configuration. It is also a bit better and more permanent than the cling film and fibreglass method.

During the ongoing restoration of a 1959 Mark 1 Sprite and associated conversion to right hand drive, I was faced with the prospect of finding a sound and original right hand dashboard – two points that are not always that easy to satisfy. After some consideration it became clear that the effective working area of the dash was a flat plate with a number of holes in it! Therefore, logically, there was no reason why this could not be replaced with a handed version spot welded to the front.

The following procedure utilises current working practices such as CAD/CAM but there is no reason why the front plate cannot be made by hand cutting – it just takes a lot longer! However, spot welding is really the best way to fix the new front plate to the surround.

The original dash was stripped of the covering and cleaned up. A horizontal datum line was then plotted end to end. Due to the number of holes it is best to mark this on a strip of masking tape. Draw a vertical centre line in the middle and then mark 20mm increments along the datum line. As the dashboard profile is symmetrical, it is only necessary to do this on one side of the centre point. Vertical lines are then marked at right angles on the increments and careful dimensioning either side of the horizontal datum allows a drawing plot of the dashboard profile to be produced – just like a graph. The various instrument and switch holes etc are also plotted from the datum lines. For left/right hand drive conversions most holes are handed but watch out for some switch positions which remain in the same place. The usual reference books help in this respect. You can also include the original cut-outs for the radio position if so desired.

The outline was converted to an Auto-Cad drawing and a paper copy was printed full size to check. After a few slight adjustments necessary to ensure a good profile, the drawing file was sent to friendly sheet metal workshop and a blank was plasma cut in

1mm bright mild steel sheet. The blank included all main instrument and switchgear holes. All that was necessary was a slight bit of dressing and cleaning up with a file to achieve a very satisfactory match.



The unwanted centre section of the dashboard was then removed with snips leaving a flange of around 15mm wide all round. (Photo 1.)

The faces of this flange and the rear of the blank were bright polished with a wire wheel to a soldering standard. The blank was then positioned and clamped to the dashboard surround and a spot welded all round to the flange. Careful setting of the spot welder ensured that the indents were minimal. The perimeter lap joint was then tinned and soldered and then filed back to blend in with the edge curves. I use Bakers Fluid as the flux for the soldering and this ensures a good penetration on the lap joints providing, of course, that both metal surfaces are bright polished – solder will not take to rust. The only problem is that this flux is very aggressive and must be washed off immediately the soldering is completed. The spot welds were then filled with normal body filler and sanded back and after cleaning, the whole dashboard was etch primed. The result was a perfect right hand version and you couldn't see the join! (Photos 2 and 3). The dash is then vinyl covered as required.

If converting from left hand drive to right hand drive it is necessary to reposition the fixings and



cut-out in the surround for the speedometer trip and the instruments switch. A perfectionist will also fill in the original holes!

I may be able to help with further blanks and spot welding etc if it will help.

John Uwins 3551



Sprite Mkl – YFO 744

Like many others I'm sure, I fell in love with the Frogeye Sprite in 1963. A friend at the time had acquired one early in the year and after a few trips in his car I was smitten! In July 1963 a Sprite came up for sale at a local garage. At the time I was driving an A35. After a lot of persuasion and I'm sure against his better judgement, my father lent me the balance to purchase the Frogeye – cherry red with twin horns mounted on the bonnet between the "eyes". The registration number of the car was VJG 275 and if anyone knows the whereabouts of this car I would be pleased to hear from them. I owned and enjoyed the car for several years until lack of space became a problem and I traded the car in for a souped-up Ford Anglia – what ever persuaded me to do this?! Almost immediately I regretted the decision and I always promised myself that I would acquire another Frogeye – it took me almost 40 years to achieve this ambition.

Three years ago I had the opportunity to purchase another Frogeye through an acquaintance. I went to see the car which aesthetically looked in quite reasonable order bodily and had been fitted with new seats, carpets, etc. and was generally quite clean. I agreed a price (which I now know was too high) and having purchased the vehicle began to find the problems. The rev counter packed up on the drive home but I now know this was of the wrong type anyway. How it had been given an MOT certificate was somewhat of a mystery to me. Am I the first person to allow their heart to rule their head regarding the purchase of a Frogeye – I rather doubt it! One of the major problems I soon discovered was that the car would not hold in reverse gear. By a tit-for-tat arrangement with a friend who is a good mechanic, the engine and gearbox were removed and re-built incorporating a new clutch and unleaded head and I began to run the car in two years ago only to run out of

petrol on two occasions which I found to be the result of a very faulty petrol gauge or incorrectly fitted sender unit – another job still to do!

I had the good fortune to be put in touch with Club member John Clark who only lives about 10 miles from my home. John has been a great help in sorting out the many little (and some not so little) problems with the Frogeye. It was when I took the car for MOT last September that the major problem was discovered and that was that the rear suspension was "floating". John put me in touch with Alan Anstead who suggested sending the car to Brian Ward Engineering at Deptford and the car was duly delivered to them on 9 January this year. It quickly became apparent that major work to the chassis was required and a lot of rust was cut out and new suspension boxes welded in. Other panels were fabricated as necessary. After four weeks stay at Deptford the car was ready to return and on a cold and foggy day in February I drove the car back to Canterbury followed by John Clark as back-up as he had driven me up there. A curious rubbing sound and a smell of burning rubber when negotiating a sharp corner resulted in the car being driven back to Deptford to have the rear wheels adjusted centrally on the car, all under the watchful eyes of both John and Alan. Two new rear tyres of the correct size were also fitted. Back down the A2 on a cold Saturday morning saw the Frogeye home again.

I must thank both John and Alan for their continuing help and for pointing out and rectifying in many cases all the little things that required attention and some that still require attention on the Frogeye. Their knowledge and skill has been invaluable and the time given has been much appreciated. Hopefully Frogeye YFO 744 it will be fit for Gaydon on 24 May.

Chris Anderson (3965)

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Sunday 8th June 2008



Kingston Lacy House
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(10.am - 4.00pm)



This octagonal tale starts in 1963 when John Britten, proprietor of John Britten Garages of Arkley decided to go motor racing. After mulling over a couple of ideas to build a car of his own he purchased Paddy Gaston's famous Sprite RAM 35. The car came complete with an aluminium coupé top and a supercharged 1150cc long stroke engine. A Brands Hatch test day gave John food for thought and it was decided to carry out some improvements. The supercharged engine carried a 40% capacity handicap and meant that the Sprite had to move up a class and race against cars with larger engines. So this was discarded and replaced with a new unit based on a 998cc BMC Formula Junior engine.

Unhappy with the capacity, John went to Laystall Engineering with a 1071 Cooper S crank from a transverse engine and got them to convert it to take an in line clutch. The block was bored out to take a set of 73mm pistons sourced from a Swedish truck. The first

Britten's race debut eventually came at the BRSCC Midland Centre, Leicester Cup race meeting at Mallory Park on Sunday 8th May 1966, where he qualified in the middle of the grid. From the start he fought his way up through the field and by lap five was in fourth place and pushing to get into the top three. Taking a tight inside line, John braked for Shaws Hairpin. He did not appreciate that under such heavy braking, the rear end needed about 18 inches lateral movement. At the time, he was only 12 inches from the railway sleepers that lined the embankment.

The back went sideways and doused the sleepers, turning the car over. John recalls it rolling and rolling as he gripped the steering wheel and counted the number of times it went over, off in his head. The Sprite finally came to rest, upside down, in the middle of the track on the apex of the hairpin. The driver scrambled out, miraculously uninjured but as he climbed up the bank the car burst

The recreation of John Britten's Lenham GT Midget "SS 1800"

John Gaggott



John Britten's original racing Midget, incorrectly registered SS 1800 in action in the 1960s.



John Britten leading a gaggle of cars into Paddock Hill Bend at Brands Hatch in 1966.

1150 short stroke engine had been built. A Downton head with Weber carburettor completed it while the transmission comprised a race Formula 3 clutch, close ratio gearbox and a 2F limited slip differential. The wire wheels the car came on were changed for a set of 8-inch wide Minilites magnesium alloys.

The Sprite retained Gaston's original British Racing Green livery, which John amended slightly with the addition of a large gold star in the centre of the roof. Work was completed over the winter and early in 1966, John tested RAM 35 again at Silverstone. After achieving lap times close to the existing lap record for the class, he decided that the car was now ready to race. An entry for an early season meeting at Brands Hatch saw John in the programme as a reserve but having turned up, he failed to get a race.

into flames. The race was stopped and the fire swiftly doused by the ever-efficient marshals. The race was re-run over five laps with victory going to Gary Nigogosian, another Midget racer who would later become one of John's great rivals.

A rather sorry looking RAM 35 was trailed back to Arkley but John was determined to persevere. For £250 he acquired a damaged left hand drive Midget for him and Oliver Ball to build up another racer using some components salvaged from RAM 35. In 1966, the regulations allowed Marque Sports cars to race with modified bodywork, hence the ex Gaston Sprite had a fixed head coupé body. For the new car, John opted for a Lenham GT rear end, which again incorporated a coupé top. To go with this he chose an Ashley bonnet, the front of this had been moulded to take an MG



The front bulkhead and chassis under restoration



The rear of the chassis showing the space frame that carries the bodywork and fuel tank



The Lenham GT body in the mould



An original Ashley bumper that was repaired prior to a mould being taken from it

Midget slatted grill

Further suspension modifications were carried out and Oliver came up with a self-made anti-roll bar. Gaston's disc brake set up was sold, ironically to Brands Hatch, who would later become the author's motor racing partner in Team Ingott Racing. The new car was fitted with standard Midget front discs. It was painted primrose yellow and carried the registration SS 1800, from another Midget which John owned. It is interesting to note that whilst today people buy "personal number plates" to match their initials, John did things in reverse. He named his daughter Sophie Simone, when old enough to drive he gave her the SS 1800 plate that her initials had been taken from.

One amusing feature was to be found on the dashboard of John's original car. The usual red line on the rev counter to warn the driver of maximum revs was replaced with a large self adhesive Letraset £ sign at 7,500 rpm on the scale. This according to John was a timely reminder of the result of any over enthusiasm on the loud pedal.

The Lenham Midget GT, SS 1800, had its first outing at the July 1966, MGCC race meeting at Brands Hatch. John used the car to good effect and won the Sprite and Midget event, which he led from flag to flag. A definite sign of things to come.

This MG went on to attain legendary status. John raced it frequently during the second half of the 1966 season and took no less than 14 wins. At the end of the year, he was awarded The Peter Collins Memorial Trophy, presented annually to the most promising newcomer. For 1967, the regulations changed and cars had to retain the manufacturer's standard silhouette. To comply SS 1800 reverted to MG Midget shape, albeit with glass fibre bodywork. John fabricated his own glass fibre rear end and hardtop as a one-piece moulding.

Oliver Ball would go on to build Britten racing Midgets for Gabriel König, John Northcott and Irish competitor Archie Phillips. He also created another Midget that carried the number BR1 10, for Swiss driver Christian Favre. As it was completed whilst Favre was finishing his National Service, Britten briefly raced this example, again with great success before it passed to its new owner.

John gave up running the garage business in 1989 and went on to found Tacho Cameras before later moving into computers. He is now a director of Motor Sport Vision, the company that owns Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Oulton Park and Cadwell Park race circuits. Fellow Director Jonathan Palmer has known John for many years and like him started his motor racing in an Austin Healey Sprite. John still retains a hands-on interest in motor sport. He currently has a 1935 Jenson Sports Tourer, based on a Ford V8 engine and chassis, which he intends to sprint at Goodwood.

We now fast forward 40 years to November 2006 when Julius Thurgood, of Top HatMasters Series fame, was visiting Classic Cars of Kent and Sussex to discuss work they were doing on his Volvo-Amazon racer. The conversation turned to racing historic sports cars and Julius commented to boss Shaun Rainford that due to the recent resurgence of interest in special bodied Sprites and Midgets he was surprised he had not recreated one of the 1960s race cars for himself. This started Shaun thinking. As the company owns the rights and moulds of the Lenham body kits a Lenham GT was an obvious choice and having previously read about the exploits of John Britten in Mighty Midgets & Special Sprites, Shaun decided to recreate SS 1800.

Before any work was started, John Britten was contacted to approve the scheme, which he was happy to do. He in turn put the team in touch with Oliver Ball who built the original car in the Summer of 1966. Despite the passing of years, he was able to assist with a great deal of technical input, particularly in regard to the suspension. In the meantime they assembled as many photographs of the car as they could find and these were blown up and stuck on the workshop wall.

As it happened sourcing a body shell was not a problem. When the company moved from Tonbridge to its present premises at High Hurstwood in 2005, they had a major clear out and had nearly discarded a partly restored shell. This was in fact a project abandoned by a former apprentice. Fortunately, in view of the work already put in it was repaired and would now form the basis of the CCK Motorsport "SS 1800". A list of required panels were

drawn up and in fact most of them were found to be in stock.

Basically the originally corroded shell had been stripped right out and required the usual replacement of floors plus inner and outer sills. As a car with quarter springs it also needed attention to the spring hanger boxes strengtheners and bulkhead closing panels. Within days, workshop manager Graham Smeeton had started work and over a period of a month the body tub took shape as he worked on it between doing jobs on customers' cars.

To allow the engine to move forward unimpeded in the event of an impact, the front cross member was modified this will help to save the engine from internal damage if the unthinkable should happen. Crankshafts have been known to crack should the damper pulley hit the chassis. The boot floor was removed and replaced with a small space frame to carry the back of the glass fibre body and the fuel tank.

Meanwhile the Lenham GT rear body and roof mould was unearthed and cleaned ready for the glass fibre rear end to be made. Closer scrutiny of the photographs revealed that the original car appeared to have a bulge in the roof for the driver's helmet. A phone call to John confirmed this to be the case and further enlargements of the pictures revealed its exact shape. To maximise headroom, Graham had already welded the off side floor strengthener below the floor to enable the seat to be bolted direct to the panel.

The next step was to make a plug of the roof bulge in order to take a mould from it. Graham originally intended to stick a cardboard template to the roof, fill it with expanded foam and then carve it to final shape. Due to its thickness, the foam would not set, so he resorted to using paper masking tape and body filler. The mould and final bulge were then made and the latter bonded over the hole that had been cut in the roof section of the rear body, which by now had been made.

As we know, John had originally opted for an Ashley rather than a Lenham GT front. After a few phone calls, Shaun discovered that a customer had got a very tatty bonnet of the correct specification and was prepared to lend it to them. This was repaired by their glass fibre expert, Denis McCabe, who then took a mould and finally produced the finished article.

At this point, it was time to fit the Lenham rear end to the floor pan. Following a trial assembly and a few adjustments it was bonded and riveted in place using an extremely strong sealer. The boot floor was replaced in aluminium with a standard Midget fuel tank fitted in the standard position by bolting it up to the new space frame.

It was now time for the shell to move into the paint shop for resident body man Ian (Two Tone) Goodwright to do his stuff. After much rubbing down, priming and more rubbing down the two-pack, primrose yellow topcoat was finally applied. Meantime, John's old racing photographs were taken to the vehicle graphics firm who made replicas of all the sign writing that appeared on the original car including that magic 'SS 1800'. Once dry the decals were attached and the body looked stunning.

Peter Folbigg of Fabricage was commissioned to manufacture a bespoke roll cage for "SS 1800". He started with the component tubes of his standard Midget cage then cut them down to fit into the lower cockpit of the Lenham GT. Once everything was adjusted to allow for the lower top, seat and the driver's hands on the steering wheel, it was welded up and delivered back to CCK along with the matching door bars. The assembly was then painted in two-pack to match the car before being bolted to the shell.

Most of the running gear and parts of the suspension were sourced from another 1960s built competition Midget that Shaun had acquired some years back. The quarter elliptic back axle and period 15-leaf springs were retained with the second and fourth leaves removed. Along with telescopic absorbers, just as Britten used, this tweak provides more stable handling. The oil in the lever arms heats up with the constant movement which lessens the viscosity and hence the damping effect. To positively locate the axle an A frame was fabricated to the basic design conceived by Oliver Ball 40 years ago. Bars attached to brackets welded to the casing, tie it back to the shell to prevent lateral movement.

Recycled from the old racing Midget, the front suspension has original lower wishbones with shorter coil springs of up-rated poundage. At the top the lever arms, that allowed the suspension



The Lenham GT bodywork is attached to the repaired floor pan



The sub and rear bodywork in the shop bench



Components begin to be bolted onto the shell



Over the lightweight body, the car incorporates a substantial roll cage



The perforated disc and spring collars



The ledge or the roof for the driver's crash helmet was accurately copied from original 1960's photographs



1/2 view from front side, probably fractured down four-hole lines, with spring U-bolts collars



The vehicle during the final stages of the build



An "A" frame like the one Oliver had made for BRCC's original car (note: the back axle



The first barrier was built to completely cover the wheels so...



The Ashley's carnet, just after it had been taken out of the mould



Another run, made with small wheel with aluminium, the shape is low and extremely aerodynamic.

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Shaun took the completed car to John Brown for approval. He was delighted to see such an accurate copy of his former racing car.



John Brown and Shaun finished taking loads over a job well done.



The car lifts a wheel during preliminary testing, which revealed that the suspension required tweaking.

to move, with resultant wheel lifting are gone. They have been replaced with fabricated top wishbones linked to telescopic shock absorbers, which again provide much more positive wheel location on the track. An 1 1/2 inch anti-roll bar completes the set up.

Anyone who competes in Midgets will tell you that under race conditions, the rear brakes do little or nothing. It is therefore important to have excellent stopping power at the front. In S5 1800's case it is provided by a pair of 9 1/2-inch discs, probably machined down Vauxhall items, with Girling M16 callipers, more usually found on a Lotus Cortina.

The transmission has obviously been up-rated. The 3.7:1 back axle ratio is fitted with a limited slip differential with heavy-duty half shafts to take the extra load. The original Midget gearbox casing has been fitted with a straight cut close ratio, gear set. This utilises the standard internals, including first and reverse gears, which are straight cut anyway. The kit comprises straight cut second, third and laygear along with first motion shaft, which

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"SS 1800" in the paddock assembly area at Goodwood



The team at Goodwood (L to R John, Shaun, Les, Graham and Jack, with them is Adam Britton, who is busy checking his own digital images.



Head to head at Goodwood Lenthams La Mans GT (16) and Lenthams GT (17)

during the rebuild are substituted for the helical cut items that they replace. Competition clutch, naturally.

As you might expect, the engine is rather special. It takes a 1275cc Midget block as its starting point and this is then over bored to take a set of Omega pistons. These are then machined for deck height, which ensures the capacity in each of the four cylinders is identical. The con rods are lightened, polished for strength and then balanced end to end, before being fitted to the pistons and balanced again. The steel crankshaft, lightened flywheel, clutch assembly, timing and front pulleys are also balanced as an assembly. This reduces wear and allows the engine to rev more. The camshaft is a special profile unique to the firm and known as CCK 1.

Moving to the top end, the engine breathes through a Morspeed cylinder head, which has been ported and polished with big valves, competition springs and reproduction Speedwell 1 1/2 to 1 ratio rocker arms. A pair of Split Weber 45 carburetors supply the fuel. For those not familiar with this configuration just one venturi of each carburettor is used to feed the petrol in to each of the two A Series cylinder head inlet ports. This gives a better fuel flow than single 45, which to supply sufficient fuel to the inner two cylinders gives the outer two a mixture that is really too rich. Split Webers are reckoned to increase the power output by as much as 6bhp.

Following a test session at Goodwood on 10th March, the car had its first race outing at Silverstone in May. Owing to time factors, on both occasions it was running an engine and gearbox borrowed from a Sprite that had done 2 1/2 seasons in the MGCC Midget Challenge and the Heritage GT Series, driven by Tim Rhodes. At Silverstone the car enjoyed a good qualifying session but during the race when Shaun was climbing up through the field, the gearbox

finally cried enough and forced retirement.

In June, Shaun was delighted to receive an invitation from Lord March to compete at the Goodwood Revival Meeting. Another test day was booked at the circuit. The car was fettled and the new gearbox fitted but with the cylinder head for the new engine still on back order the original power unit was pressed into service once again. The team had booked in for the morning only. Initial runs were used to fine-tune the suspension settings before the driver went out to aim for a target lap time of 1 minute 35 seconds. He had set this realistic target given the spec and more importantly the number of races done by that borrowed engine, which was still in the car. He consistently clocked 1:35.5 laps. Job done, time to load it up on the transporter and head home.

The proper race engine was finally built up two weeks before the big day then dropped in the car. It was then run in on the firm's rolling road before being subjected to some serious power runs. The car qualified well for the Fordwater Trophy Race but come the race itself the transmission would prove to be the car's Achilles heel. Basically the sheer power off the line transmitted via a sintered bronze clutch, steel half shafts and the treaded Dunlops, which just do not spin under load, was too much and overstressed the gearbox.

Shaun is philosophical and points out that customer's cars come first and that development of his own racer can only be done in what time remains in the busy schedule. It seems the answer is likely to be to revert to an organic clutch, albeit a heavy duty one. This will allow release of excess friction off the start line. "SS 1800" will be back in 2008 so look out for the primrose yellow Lenthams GT at the next historic meeting at your local race circuit.



SS 1800 REPLICA SPECIFICATION

Body: MG Midget body tub with sections from original racer. Glas fibre Ashley bonnet and Lenthams GT back end incorporating coupe top with power bulge for the driver's crash helmet. Aluminium skinned doors. Fitted custom-built Fabricage bolt in, full roll cage with door bars.

Engine: BMC CCK Motorsport A Series, CCK 1 camshaft, steel crankshaft and lightened flywheel fully balanced. Morspeed big valve head and Split Weber 45 carburetors.

Transmission: Jack Knight, straight cut close ratio gear set, LSD with competition half shafts.

Suspension: Front wishbone and coil spring with telescopic shock absorbers. Rear 1/4 elliptic leaf springs with telescopic shock absorbers, and "A" frame, all as per original.

Brakes: Front 9 1/2 inch discs with period Ford callipers. Rear standard cast iron drums.

Wheels & Tyres: 6 inch X 13 K&N Minilite replica alloys with Dunlop S.25 M13 Racing tyres.

25 Years of the Midget and Sprite Club (Part 4)

Time to Celebrate



Outside the 1949 hangar where the prototype Sprites were built. Andrea Carroll's white Frogeye is most likely the last ever Sprite to emerge from this door.

On The 24th of May 2008, we celebrate 50 years of the Austin-Healey Sprite; however, this is not the first time that we have celebrated a milestone in the life of the Sprite. Certainly, other Clubs and Registers had celebrated much earlier milestones but for us, it was 40 years of the Sprite in 1998 that was our first attempt in marking a Sprite birthday.

But what to do? That was the question in early 1998 when we realised that we ought to do something in recognising the announcement of the Sprite on the 20th of May 1958 in Monaco. A run to Monaco seemed unlikely and then, an article in CLASSIC and SPORTSCAR magazine suddenly provided an idea. Journalist Mark Hughes borrowed the 'other' Austin-Healey model to do a run from the old Healey Motor Co factory at the Cape in Warwick to the ancestral home of Donald Healey in Perranporth in Cornwall. We had not realised that the Cape works still existed in 1998 as Donald Healey had moved his company from here in 1963 to Coten End in Warwick. It was at the Cape works that the Sprite prototypes were assembled in 1956/7 so what more appropriate place to visit for the 40th anniversary? Two of us arranged a visit to the Cape to see exactly what remained and whether a group visit would be possible. With the help of Geoffrey Healey's books we

managed to identify those buildings that were a part of the Companies' premises. Estate Agent signs were in abundance around the near derelict site of this ageing and rather ramshackle development. It was clear that these buildings would probably not stand for very much longer and this could be the last chance of seeing the still intact factory buildings where the Sprite was conceived.

A bit more research in the pages of CLASSIC and SPORTSCAR revealed a map of the test route used by the Healey Motor Company from the factory around the splendid roads of Warwickshire. Now, we had our event, meet at the Cape factory for a nostalgic look around. A drive around the old test route with a lunchtime stop part way to finish up at the Cape of Good Hope pub back at the Cape. This was the factory 'local' that stood alongside the Grand Union Canal. No doubt much of the life and times of the company were discussed within these walls.

The date for our 40 YEARS OF THE SPRITE celebration was Sunday the 24th of May, co-indecently the same date but not the same day for 50 YEARS OF THE SPRITE. The event was co organised by the committee and the Warwickshire branch of the club. Our only expenditure for 40 YEARS OF THE SPRITE was the production of a commemorative windscreen sticker, the sales of which hardly covered the cost but hey, we were not a profit making organisation then any more than we are now.

The Cape Works was situated in Lock Lane, off Millers Road in Warwick, 29 Spridgley things and their crews turned up early on the 24th of May 1998. 9 Frogeyes, a solitary Mk11 Sprite, 3 Mk111 Sprites and 5 Mk1V Sprites. Midgets too were well represented with 7 Mk111 examples and 3 1500s. The 29th Spridgley thing being Chris Eccles in his Innocenti Spyder. This example, imported from the USA by Chris, has now been exported to Germany, a fact that I am never allowed to forget from certain quarters of the club as I

introduced the Innocenti to its German owner! Members came from as far afield as West Yorkshire, Billericay, Fordingbridge, Leighton Buzzard, Bedford, Surrey, Bristol and of course, a good representation from the 'home' team. We were very fortunate to be allowed into the original Healey factory that Donald had built here in 1949. This was an ex RAF aircraft hanger. Prior to this, the fledgling company had used spare capacity within the BENFORD works, a company that builds construction site machines. Benfords were still present at the Cape in 1998 and indeed, were storing some of its products in the old hanger. It was in this hanger that the Sprite prototypes, Q1 and Q2 were built. It seemed a very dingy place to work, very little natural daylight and certainly none of the amenities that one would expect to see in a place of work even in 1998. No doubt the workforce were all kept far too busy to notice. Alongside the hanger, but then separated by another building of later construction, was the home of Healey Marine. As well as cars, Healey's also made boats, one model of which had the name SPRITE. How many customers were surprised when their new Sprite had a rudder and propeller instead of wheels, or vice versa I wonder? Some 1750 boats were built here to give you some idea of the size of their involvement in marine work. Opposite these 2 buildings was a much newer construction which served as a showroom with offices above at the front, and the experimental workshops and to the rear. This being relocated from the rear of the aircraft hanger. It was said that such was the security of the experimental workshop, that even certain members of the Healey family could not gain access. Sadly, the experimental workshop had suffered an arson attack and was now roofless and securely boarded up. We did hang the Club banner across the front of the showroom whilst very many cameras snapped away to record a scene that could probably never be repeated. With our inspection completed, we started on the 28 mile run of the old test route. We stopped at the WHITE HORSE INN at Ettington for lunch, although it is not recorded that this was something the Healey test drivers ever did here. The sight of 29 Spridgley things driving into and filling the car park was a delight to behold. It was probably the biggest convoy that the club had seen to this date. The Landlord was quite impressed too, but probably not for long as we had a few

bad oil spillers with us that day! Arriving back at the Cape we headed to the canal side and The Cape of Good Hope pub. It was here that the Factory workforce would unwind being just a short walk from the factory. Sadly, there was absolutely no reference in the pub in 1998 to the fact that the Healey factory was a near neighbour and provided regular customers. I must admit that I do not know the fate of the Cape works following our visit in 1998.

Perhaps our Warwickshire branch may be able to provide some enlightenment as to what happened next? Not on our itinerary that day was the place that the Healey Co moved to after vacating the Cape in 1963. This was an old cinema at Coten End in Warwick. This was to be a much smaller operation than at the Cape. The accent was now on retail sales with only a small experimental/competitions department to the rear. It was here that the special bodied Le-Mans and Targa Florio Sprites were built. As the 1960s wore on, more of Sprite and Midget development was contained within BMC. As far as I am aware, the last major Healey contribution to the Spridgley thing development was the folding hood arrangement of the Sprite Mk1V and Midget Mk111. Demolition of the Coten End site was begun on the 15th of January 1988, co-incidentally, on the same day that Donald Healey died in his native Cornwall.

By 1998, the Club had well established branches in Warwickshire, Surrey and Dorset. The original Bristol branch although still active, had slid over the peak somewhat. Other areas too were showing some promise



The Landlord of the White Horse Inn (left) discusses the best method of removing oil stains from his car park with John Canning and Terry Horler. We politely suggest he tries using his best ale.



Inside the Healey Motor Co hanger. The plastic wrappings contained brand new Sprite doors and wing pressings (Remember, I'm writing this on April the 1st)

Another view inside the factory, some of Benford's best stand where once Healey Silverstones were built.



but most frustratingly, Kent, which showed a goodly smattering of members, had no representation. We could see from our membership list and 15 years of existence, where the hot spots for Spridgley thing ownership was. Certainly, this supported the North/South divide that was a much used term at the time. Scotland had Eric Flack as the countries' sole Frogeye owner it seemed whilst Wales seemed to have repelled the invasion of Spridgley things any further West or North of Cardiff. As my Frogeye was originally owned by an inhabitant from a small and unpronounceable village from the North of Neath, it had a lucky escape back to England it seems!

Interestingly, the active branches of the club went about things in different ways, as each were obviously doing the right things for their own groups, it did appear that there was no basic template that could be guaranteed to work regardless of location.

It was very much a 'Suck it and see' policy whereby the members themselves guided the direction of their own particular group. As advantageous as this is on the one hand, it also had to be remembered that no matter how small the group, that anything that was organised or arranged under the banner of the



Members listen to a brief history lesson from TH before entering the Healey factory.

'MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB' carried certain responsibilities with it. Although we had both a proper Constitution (Club rules) and carried Public Liability Insurance from the outset, the club was always mindful of its responsibilities as an identifiable organisation. Although we never sought to become an RAC Motorsport affiliated Club (Now Motor Sport Association MSA), we endeavoured to run our events both responsibly and to maintain a good public image. As far as I am aware, only once did we fall foul of the latter.

This was an off road Driving Test organised by the Bristol group at the old Whitchurch aerodrome.

The event itself went well but several days later the local council were after our blood. Neighbours of the aerodrome complained of noise and loose behaviour to the council – we were astonished. In investigating the nature of the complaints, it seemed that youngsters on noisy motorcycles were having their own 'off road' event around the perimeter embankments between our event and the resident's properties. The youngsters could not be identified but MASC could, being the only identifiable organisation using the aerodrome with council permission. The residents expected the council to take action and they did, MASC was banned from using the aerodrome again! Although we were not directly to blame as being the cause of the complaint, we were responsible (it seemed) to ensure that every other activity going on within our allocated space was under control. These days, such things would all have to be properly 'Risk assessed' and we would have to sign for it, bit of a scary thought for the organisers of future events maybe! Other than this one unfortunate incident, the Club has always maintained a good public image – and long may that continue.

Next month – 25 years of MASCOT.

Terry Horler

Cambridgeshire Area Report



Mad Cat night arrived but unfortunately Pat had to work and Hubie and Sally had already said they would not be able to make it, and it really was not the sort of weather to tempt many Spridgets out of hibernation. As it turned out, even with a few of the stalwarts missing we had a remarkably good turn out for a cold dark winter's evening, I think I counted 14 and most came as individuals, now if the sun had been shining I reckon we would have had at least 10 Spridgets in the car park (roll on summer). It was great to see Roger our Arkley man again after quite a while (he has been up to his ears in another project) especially as he seemed quite interested in the planned summer events. It was also great to see Nigel and Diane safely back from the bright lights of Vegas, and Mick with his hand out of plaster after his battle with a stray Spridget engine.

We rearranged the pub a little and virtually took over the main bar, the landlord is very MASC friendly and tolerant (plying us with free food and so on), HTJ did however manage to get in to a fight with one of the locals (having taken over Graham's usual job of club hooligan for the night). You don't normally think of Cambridge University professors slapping people about do you, I expect it was all those years in Australia, however HTJ's opponent soon realised he was outclassed and outnumbered and left us to our fumble bag. I did think of putting my plastic bag containing Hubie's parcel shelf (that I was delivering to Fred on Hubie's behalf) on the table as a fumble bag but I am afraid it was a bit sticky, I suspect that at some time in its life a can of Fanta orange must have rolled around on it

under some enthusiastic cornering until it had exploded (I hope the top was down) since the air in my Volvo smelt of sugary oranges all the way to the Mad Cat. As it happened John had brought along a fumble bag and although I managed to identify about half of the items inside (surprisingly mainly master cylinder parts) Fred emerged as our new fumble bag champion.

The main thrust of the conversation apart from catching up with old friends and a bit of good natured banter and the odd non Spridget related topic or ten, was the summer events, most of which were advertised in April *MASCOT* (as diary dates) however there are still some details to hammer out and clarify. The only thin spot seems to be June however I think that Nigel was rash enough (or was it Diane on Nigel's behalf) to mention he had an idea for a run so maybe we are sorted. I managed to get some further details about the Cottenham run from Graham and Fred agreed to coordinate the Wisbech car club run (thanks guys). What else happened in March? Well that beautiful light blue frogeye you have all been looking at on your MASC calendar is none other than one of Cambridgeshire's premier Sprites belonging to Diane, although I personally don't think the photo does it justice, it is a stunning example.

The meeting broke up about closing time and I was off to pick Pat up from work before returning home to pack since we were off to France the following day, sadly not in the Sprite this time although I have managed to give it an outing or two this month. We did however see an interesting Jag parked outside the nautical bar at the fishing port end of Roscoff (on the spot I normally park the Sprite in) this seems to be a popular venue for classic cars. On our return, when I eventually managed to purchase and set up my new computer (the old one had died) I had an email from Rob with some nice photos of his new yellow Midget, it looks great can't wait to see it at some of our summer events.

Dave Dixon



Dutch Report

While writing the Dutch May report I'm still waiting for parts... Yes, the same parts I already ordered last year! It's frustrating to have the car ready to build in the new parts and then not have the new parts. I still need to do a lot and want to test drive it well before I set off to Gaydon. I think I'll try and please the car-Gods by sacrificing the neighbour's cat, bye bye kitty kitty!

Better news coming from Holland is I now know there will be quite some Spridgets from Holland coming over to Gaydon. We will be travelling with a group of 6 Spridgets and beside us there are plenty of Dutchmen travelling on other days/routes. Looking forward to the Spridget 50 party and the cooked breakfasts at our B&B!

The first rally was driven already on the 28 March and was a night-rally. There were 4 Spridgets and loads of Big Healeys. I navigated with Onno, whom I've never met before the rally, but got to know on the Midget & Sprite BBS, in his '67 white rhd Midget. We left home with rain which didn't stop until the next day we got back home again. The car was fuelled up and then... it wouldn't start anymore so I push started it and off we went again but still weird it didn't start. Just when we were on the

motorway the engine lost more and more power, now what? We still had 2 hours before we were at the start and do the rally and travel 2 hours home again. Checked every thing and couldn't find anything' so push started the Midget and it was running fine again??? We went on but before getting to the start (and our by now very much desired meal) it slowly started losing power again. Again nothing wrong in the engine bay but, wait a minute, the rotor cap is leaking sparks through a small crack. We unplugged the lead and went on driving to the start and do the rally on 3 cylinders! Our resoluteness to not give up was rewarded by getting the 2nd Prize – Hurrah! Even with a handicapped car we trashed all the big Healeys so what a great moment again for the Spridgets! On our way back we got some loud bangs from the exhaust and an occasional misfire from the front but got home safely.

Next Dutch Spridget event is a Run on the 1 June in Tiel and do not forget to mark the 5th Dutch Spridget weekend on the 6 and 7 September in your agendas. If you want more info on Dutch Spridgets then contact me on ariedebest@planet.nl

See you all soon in Gaydon! Cheers,

Arie

Home Counties North West

So after a couple of months of not much happening I have managed to get three reports in one! The first is a simple one though. Our run, planned for 16 March, was a wash out. Various reports of "feet" of water were told across the dinner table of the Lilley Arms, near Luton, as an excuse why we had only met for lunch rather than the planned run. Some amongst us were unsure if this was true, but it was a horrid day. We would have amassed 10 Spridgets if the weather had been kinder, however two managed the trip to the pub in something more interesting than a modern tin top. Roger Byford brought Maggie along in his Sebring and Pat and Zara came in the B GT. Roger's Sebring managed to draw us out of the pub for a look, my first close inspection of a Sebring, and rather nice it was too.

So today 13 April under much sunnier skies we revisited the Lilley Arms, but this time we managed to complete the run first. Five cars, including a first time HCNW trip for Keith and Ann Warner in their recently completed Midget with only 500 miles under its wheels. Keith has done a good job. The weather was kinder today, just a shower while we were in the pub and a downpour on the way home. The run was the usual well planned route, thanks to Chris and Pat, with a mix of lanes and fast roads with only horses and cyclists to cause any problems. We took in three counties Herts,





Beds and the edge of Cambridgeshire, and as always the scenery changes so much in this part of the world. My favourite road has to be "Wibbly Wobble Lane". Really.

Next to report was our first HCNW pub night on 26 April. After a last minute switch of venue, we managed a great turn out. Chris Jackson summarises:

Sixteen bodies foregathered at The Bull Public House, in Redbourn, for HCNW's first monthly evening gathering. This came from a suggestion by Maurice at the January Christmas do but somehow Mark was volunteered to organise it. We were to meet at The Hollybush which had provided so well in January. Fortunately Jen took a hand in the arrangements and, at the last minute, the venue was moved to The Bull which *does* serve food in the evening. 'Twas a convivial evening with the party growing as

time passed and extra tables added to the small room we had commandeered. The plaintive cry of "I hope I'm not the only lady here" was unnecessary. The distaff side of the group numbered six and they succeeded in keeping a lot of the conversation clear of *hand brake clicks* and *oil leaks*, although one could catch the odd mention of motor cars.

Two Spridgets graced the car park, Mark and Jen, with the top of the Frog UP, and Steve and Tom, in the MG, with the top DOWN. The rest of us had excuses like "it was raining when I left home". Honestly, I left in a downpour and drove through 9" flood water. Well done the brave, bold and resolute.

We tried to conduct a planning meeting but the company tended to disorderliness and things were not straightforward. But, nevertheless, some form of calendar for 2008 has been outlined. We shall be at Gaydon, Silverstone and other places, national and local, in between. Watch this space, the *MASCOT* calendar and the web for details.

If you are new to MASC and to HCNW we cater for members in Herts, Beds, Bucks and North London plus any passing Spridgeteers. We even accept other automobilists who have no home club to wander with. Our pub evening is the last Wednesday of the month.

Mark and Chris

Linc'slot

Frabjous day. Callooh, Callay. Four Spridgets all in a row. Hard top, soft top, no top. Phil, Tim and Jill, Pete and Mary and ourselves all turned up at the White Hart in shiny red low-slung chariots. The one disappointment at our monthly meeting was a call from Lizzie whose Frogeye had broken down en route. Oh! The hard top was on my RWA Midget. The reason? After I had replaced the nearside sill, and as a consequence corrected the door opening and adjusted the windscreen angle, I found that the hood no longer reached the top of the window. It was about two inches (50mm) short. Due to the vagaries of the British weather, we had to have a roof to rely on, so we fitted the hard top. Perfect.

Under discussion was a visit to Grimsthorpe Castle, Sunday 29 June. But more pressing is



the Rhapsody in Blue Wolds run (possibly near to our recent epicentre) followed by a bring your own picnic and a walk in Rigsby Woods near Alford. That's on Sunday 4 May. Meet at 10.30am at Wragby Market Place.

Next meeting Thursday 1 May at the White Hart, Lissington.

Brian Jeffery

Hot Cross Run 2008



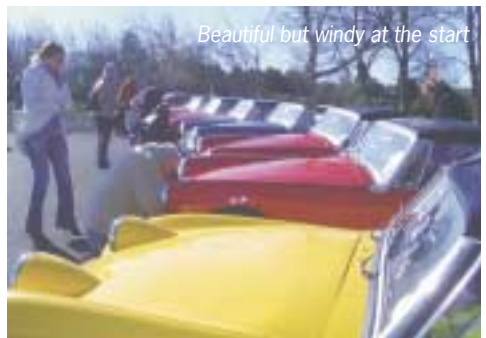
Coming up from Thruscross Reservoir

This was Yorkshire MASC's first big event of the year on Good Friday. After 3 months of route planning it was great for the final day to be here. It was well supported with 12 cars coming out to play – 11 Spridgets and Matt's 80's supercar in the form of a Porsche 928 (he's going soft in his old age). This was a particularly good turnout given the freak blizzards that were forecast for this late March weekend.

We started off with a jolly good breakfast at The Wellington at Darley Head (near Pateley Bridge), and ended the day with Speckled Hen and Cottage Pie at Ye Jolly Farmers in Dalton near Thirsk. En route we took in 6 abbeys of North Yorkshire, starting off in the Dales, crossing the Vale of York, coming down a little known part of the Cleveland Hills, and then finally through the Hambleton Hills ending up in the shadow of the White Horse – a route straddling both the Dales and North York Moors National Parks.

The weather was beautiful in the morning in the Dales, although there was a bracing wind, but with clear blue skies and some stunning scenery, all were happy. Even the local police stopped to enjoy the spectacle as the parade of little red cars (well, most were of a reddish hue) came up from Thruscross Reservoir. Over the course of the day it got darker and rain had started by the time of the compulsory stop at Easby Abbey near Richmond. This then slowly got worse and sleet kicked in by late afternoon. Coming over Great Arden Moor in the Cleveland Hills, the Chequers tea rooms near Osmotherley offered fantastic tea and

cakes and a roaring log fire, but outside it had turned to hail and snow – horizontal at times. Anita's attempts at doing the opposite of a rain dance sadly had little effect, although it was good to see her so mobile after recent events. Everyone made it safely to the end.



Beautiful but windy at the start

The treasure hunt (40 cryptic questions based on locations around the route) was won by the Bosomworths with a staggeringly good 38 out of 40, and they won the chocolate Hot X Bunny prize!

The return home from Ye Jolly Farmers for those who left after dark was very tricky given the blizzard conditions that had set in – we crawled home at 30 mph given visibility was down to about 10 feet, the roads were covered in ice, and snow was freezing to the windscreen. We were treated to thunder and lightening in the middle of the snow storm – really very extreme conditions, and we were glad to get home in one piece!

Sarah and Tim Saunders

NW Area Report

It was a good attendance again at our April club night. One of the main topics of discussion was planning what to do in terms of travelling to the 50th Anniversary and the Healey Goodwood weekend. There are a number of options so at the next club night we need to finalise what we are doing.

On 12 April we visited Leyland Classics car restorations which is situated at Whitestake near Preston. It is run by Mike Dodson, a friend of Neil's, who has been to a number of our club nights although he hasn't got a Spridget or at least not yet anyway! It was a bitterly cold day but we were welcomed with a nice hot brew. Mike had a number of restorations on the go including a very rare Austin A90 DHC which I believe was built in 1949. Apparently there are only about 3 or 4 of the DHC's in the UK. Built for the USA market these were very advanced for their day and included a hydraulically powered hood and windows. Unfortunately they were not a marketing success and production ended in 1952. The 2660cc engine was later used successfully in the Healey 100. Also in his workshop were a number of Triumphs including a racing Spitfire. As always there were lots of questions and Mike very kindly gave a demo on body and paint preparation. This was a thoroughly interesting morning and Mike was extremely helpful in answering the many questions we threw at him.



Austin A90 DHC



Racing Spitfire

Neil is planning to take his Frogeye off the road next year and have it painted at Mike's so I think a second visit will be on the cards.

Next meeting is on 14 May, same place at same time – see you there.

Les

Somerset Area Report

Well things are moving again following what seemed like a long winter, when we were in danger of becoming a Dining Club! It seems that a pint and a natter on Club nights is no longer enough for the "Gourmet Mob". Funny, I seem to recall another area's report saying something similar not so long ago.

Anyway the first day of Summer Time saw us head out from Taunton after coffee at Dave Bearn's across the Somerset Levels through



Langport on to Somerton before heading towards Castle Cary and then to Sparkford for lunch prior to a visit to the Haynes Motor Museum in the afternoon.

We were blessed with a wonderful sunny day and all the cars ran well or appeared to, especially the non-spridgetly ones; Cobra and Alpina to name but two.

So the 2008 season is off to a good start and only another couple of weeks to the 20th April's "Drive It Day" when we shall breakfast in Horton with the "Full Monty"; once again supporting their Village Hall's fund raising activities, before sampling the delights of Exmoor for the rest of the day. Of course lunch at a suitable hostelry will be compulsory and no doubt we shall find room for a cream tea later in the afternoon. Does any one out there have any tips for beefing up Spridget suspension!

Everyone is looking forward to the Big Party in May and though it will mean an early start for about a dozen of us in 6 cars, the trip to

Gaydon and the overnight stay nearby should give us a great weekend.

June sees a number of events competing for our support and Peter Young will no doubt ask that we support him on the 8th June when as a member of the Windwhistle Motor Club he has organised a Rally once again. A great chance to see the places other clubs don't reach!

El Niño willing we hope for a hot summer and some great days out so don't forget if you want to join us you are most welcome, just contact Dave Bearne for info and remember we continue to meet at The Lord Nelson, Norton sub Hamdon you don't have to be a gourmet to come along.

Ray Darch 3568

South East Area

Surrey Section (March 18)

Twenty six people attended the meeting of Surrey Section, S.E. Area, Midget and Sprite Club, at the Blue Ball, Walton on the Hill, Surrey on the night of 18 March. A really good turn out. The warmer weather has not yet descended upon us so it bodes well for meetings on more hospitable summer evenings.

Three people came in Spridgets. Peter Gardiner, no doubt wishing to re-establish himself as the person bringing a Spridget to the most Surrey meets, has to overcome an early lead for the title by Nigel Saynor who again attended, in his Frogeye, with hood stowed. Nigel was well wrapped from the cold in a leather flying jacket and helmet. Mike Lay completed the trio.

John Clark and I travelled up from Herne Bay where we had spent the day rectifying faults on a Kent Member's recently purchased Frogeye in order to have it 'roadable' for the forthcoming Medway Festival of Steam and Transport on 23 March. A good day's efforts still left much to do.

Alex Bowers was able, due to modern technology, to show not only pictures of his

soon to be completed Frogeye but also sounds of the engine running as well.

Ashley Hinton was displaying yet more new Spridget Parts. Fresh off his C.N.C. Machine was a Spridget footwell blanking plate. I have had a few enquiries regarding my mention, last month, of a visit to Ashley's factory. Do not fret as I will post a notice as soon as a date is set. If you are in dire need of panels then either contact Ashley at his factory (ah@mgcars.org.uk) or I believe that he will have a stand at Spridget 50 on 24 May at Gaydon.

It was good to see Sue Judd with us after a recent health scare whilst poor Jim Judd seemed to be suffering from a cold. Chris and Laura dropped in to pick up a door sill and associated parts from Ashley, for their blue Frogeye, whilst I passed on a 1275 main bearing cap to Nay and Col for machining. Col, of course, runs Southern Rebore should any other members require any engine machining.

Pete, without Hils; Tim and Helen; David and Linda; Colin and Jude; Chris and Jaqui; Bob Wallis and Mike Gorman were in attendance with Mike North arriving after most had left.

Essex Section

No, I am not offering to become the rep for Essex. I have no devilish agenda to take over the world. I am, however, aware that Lee Reed has recently stood down as Essex Rep. If anyone in Essex would like to attend either Kent or Surrey meets you would be most welcome. Both meets are easily accessible via Dartford Crossing and M25. This invitation is also extended to any member, of any section, who wishes to make the journey.

Kent Meet at Chatham Festival of Steam and Transport

Sunday 23 March 2008 was cold and it was snowing. Why, Oh why, did we still attend the Chatham Festival of Steam and Transport where it was, you've guessed correctly, still cold and snowing. This is a superb venue for a Transport Festival or just a day out as there is much to see and do but preferably when much warmer.

Many car enthusiasts had the correct idea and stayed indoors as the number of vehicles on display was vastly inferior to previous years and paying spectators, I guess, were few. Those bothering to look at the exhibits were probably other vehicle entrants.

I would like to thank those that did attend namely Nay and Col in RB Midget, Peter Gardiner and female friend in RB Midget, Pete and friend in Hils Frogeye, Paul and Jane in Austin Sprite (Paul was handing around Easter eggs, from an appropriate basket, and Jane had baked a superb cake – slices, of which, were distributed amongst our group at



lunchtime), and John Larrington in topless Frogeye. And to think that John Clark and I had hurried to fit our 50 year celebration badges to our cars (Frogeye and Sebring rep' respectively) especially for the occasion. Martin Bird came in a tin top being surprised to find us brave (stupid?) souls having arrived in our Spridgets whilst Jason Alexander and Sue Gibbs arrived, together, in more vintage transport.

Mr Taylor of Wellingborough (tel: 01933-224331) was the original owner of a Frogeye YBD196 and wishes to know if it is still extant. Any one out there own it?

Sussex Section (March 27)

The evening of Thursday 27 March was the monthly Sussex meet now seemingly established at Friars Oak, London Road, Hassocks, Sussex, BN6 9NA.

I arrived early having allowed for hold ups on the M25 but when you allow for hold ups they tend not to occur and I motored along arriving well before David and Chris Wright.

Jason Alexander and Sue were the only ones to bring a Spridget whilst new members Heidi Beech and Nigel Baker arrived in a Ford Capri obviously saving their Spridget for warmer evenings. That said they would have had problems fitting the parts that I was transporting, for them, in a Spridget. David and Linda and Trevor and Sandra completed our group.

David and Chris offered to try to arrange a visit to an old house, and car museum, open to groups by appointment only, whilst Jason anglebox105@yahoo.co.uk offered to arrange a MASC stand at the forthcoming Classic Car and Transport Show at Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent on Sunday 6 July. This is looking to be a busy year.

Alan Anstead

S.E. Area Rep (Surrey, Sussex, and Kent)

Mail to: alan.anstead@bopenworld.com

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Yorkshire Report



April Meeting

John and Janet from Sheffield chose the venue for our April meeting on Saturday 5th. We met at The Lord Nelson at Hoylandswaine near Penistone. Ken and Mark Halls set off from a snowy Bradford in Mark's Harvest Gold Midget and were first to arrive in the empty snow-free car park just after 11am. We had planned to come in our new Frogeye but it had developed a mysterious misfire the evening before. So we used the Mini Cooper D and brought Mitch with us. We retreated to the relative warmth of our cars when we discovered the pub didn't open until noon. Then Roy arrived top down in the Deep Pink 948cc early MkII Sprite that I have written a short article on. It was a good opportunity to have a detailed look at the car in daylight and take some more photographs of this very rare-coloured Sprite. John and Janet turned up in their MkIV Sprite just as the pub opened. John informed us that it was a detached rear float chamber causing the lack of uphill power on the Hot X Run. A few photos later and we eagerly went in search of the bar and menu. Lionel brought Arthur this time but had decided to leave the Stag at home due to snow. Peter and Dorothy from the NW Area joined us too. Their Frogeye, Scotty, has its engine and 5-speed Toyota gearbox out at the moment. Peter wants to get the gearbox rebuilt but is experiencing difficulties in locating spares and relevant expertise. Jason and Michelle also have a MkII Sprite but Sybil is a 1098cc later version. Sybil's engine freshening is nearing completion so wasn't able to accompany them this time. Ian and Claire also had snow at home so we only had 3 Spridgets this time.

There was a lot of talk about Spridget 50 which is now only a few weeks away. I know quite a few of the Yorkshire crowd are already booked in as well as some of our friends from further North.

From May our monthly meetings will revert to the first Thursday of the month starting with Ye Jolly Farmers at Dalton near Thirsk. June will see us in a more easterly venue, moving west for July.

Other Matters

Carlo and Elisa's Mk1 Midget is having a heart transplant. A 1293cc block fitted with a Swiftune SW5 camshaft, Cooper S rods, slipper pistons and a stage 3 head is replacing the tired 1098cc engine. The front suspension is going to be updated too and the Midget will have an anti-roll bar fitted. After meeting up with John and Pom from Tamworth in Goathland, Mark and I popped into Whitby to see Tim and Vanessa's recent acquisition tucked away in their garage. The Leaf Green Frogeye has already given Tim hours of fun even though they haven't had many opportunities to drive it yet. Tim has a good collection of Spridget related literature including Spridgets by Chris Harvey which I hadn't come across before. Mark took an opportunity to drive Tony and Clare's Toyota-powered (1600 Twin Cam) Midget recently. I was in the passenger seat and boy does that car shift! Mark reckons it's the most powerful Midget he's ever driven and probably the fastest although we stuck to the speed limit (honest guv!).

Some other important dates are:
Croft Track Day with MGs on Track – Saturday 16 August – Book your place using their website <http://www.mgs-on-track.com/> Make sure you pick the Midget and Sprite Club session.
MGCC Midget Register Run – Sunday 7 September – A 65-mile Cotswold drive finishing at Rodmarton Manor near Cirencester. Sprites welcome too.

Finally, congratulations are in order for Simon and Trevor (MKIV Sprite) and Tony and Richard (RWA Midget) who did very well indeed in the Ilkley Jubilee Rally and Run respectively.

Anita

Market Place

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

Wanted – By new member from France – Midget Mk 3 for restoration but body should not have serious corrosion with reasonable mechanicals. Ideally from Southern England – Andre Peynot (3987) tel 062 871 7155 but prefer contact by email as I speak little English andrepeynot@gmail.com and computer can translate.

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