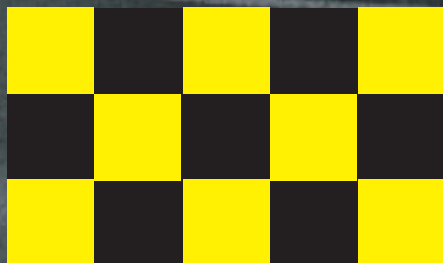


Mascot



The Magazine
of the
Midget & Sprite
Club





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

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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 June '08

By the time this reaches you all, Spridget50 will have been and gone just over a week ago. Hope the weather stayed fine and that everyone made it to and from the event safely. It will certainly be a very long time before a thousand examples of everything Spridgety will ever be seen again! It was great to meet up with such a large number of you. Apologies if I didn't get chance to chat with you – maybe I'll catch up with you at Castle Combe Retro and Sportscar Action Day on 14 June, where MASC is going to be the Featured Club (please see page 13 for details).

Once more it's been extremely difficult to fit everything in this month. If your material has not been used this time, then there is a possibility it will be used later in the year. The current page count is purely a result of budgetary constraints, not because we have gone to full-colour. The colour is there because our friends at Quorum Print Services wanted to support our Award Winning magazine and maintain the standards – they, like me (and I hope you as well) didn't really want to revert to mostly black and white. So a big thanks to our printer for their commitment to our cause.

So what have we managed to cram into your post-Gaydon issue? ... This month I must make special mention for the ongoing help and support given to *MASCOT* by John Sprinzel. In the previous two issues of *MASCOT* we have had articles from John on the Falcon Sprite and the Bug Eye; this month we have a fascinating piece on his experiences on the infamous Liège–Rome–Liège Rally. I'm sure we are all really appreciative of these unique insights into the heritage of our treasured vehicles. I must also thank David Lillywhite at *OCTANE* magazine for allowing us to reprint the first part of his recent study on arguably 3 of the most historically important Spridgets in existence. I'm sure, if you haven't seen it already, you'll find it extremely interesting – the next two sections will appear in subsequent issues of *MASCOT*. There's also Part 5 of Terry's History of Midget & Sprite Club; and of course, another selection of Area Reports.

Next month (July issue) I would like to include as many photos as possible of your cars at Gaydon – so keep those photos coming in. (200 – 300kb for inside the mag; 1.5mb – 2mb portrait format for the front cover).

PLEASE NOTE:
Deadline for July issue is
MIDDAY SUNDAY 15 June

Barry
Editor
1150
editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk



*Red coupe
ready for
Gaydon*

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: 410 EAO back on the grid at Goodwood for the first time since 1963

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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 & 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 June meeting.
2nd Wednesday	Warwickshire – Meet at The Green Dragon , The Green, Sambourne, Redditch, 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. IMPORTANT – we are NOT AT THE KILTON in June but meeting at The Plough Inn at Euxton, situated between Leyland and Chorley in lovely Lancashire.
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 Meusey.

Club Website

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

Events

From David Hill and Webmaster Toby Anscombe

Events organised for 2008 so far.

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
- Tuesday 10th 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
- 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.
- 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
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

- 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 To Sunday 27th Cambridgeshire Area are going to Silverstone Classic Meeting. Details from Hubie Albany on 01733 265548
- Sunday 27th Kent meeting at Cliftonville Car Show, Margate, Kent. 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 & Sunday 10th Warwickshire Area's Ireland Trip. Details from Alan Couch, 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.

The Cars We Own

Many of you when receiving your membership cards following renewal will have had a request from me asking for the Make / Model of your cars where we do not have them, in order to complete our database. From this database at 28 April'08 we collectively have the following 698 cars listed within the club:

Arkley	4
Austin Sprite	21
Austin A40 Farina	1
Banham Sprint	1
Healey/IOW Sprite	14
Innocenti	5
unspecified Midget	21
Midget Mk 1	16
Midget Mk 2	33
Midget Mk 3	56
Midget Mk 3 FL	22
Midget Mk 3 RWA	59
Midget 1500	59

Sebring Sprite/Repl	4
Speedwell Sprite	1
unspecified Sprite	4
Sprite Mk 1 Frogeye	230
Sprite Mk 2	35
Sprite Mk 3	34
Sprite Mk 4	78
Members looking for a car	10
Members undeclared	40

Interestingly since the club began in 1983, we have had 760 Frogeye and 570 Midget 1500 listed, some may have changed hands but where are they all now?

We will continue to refine the list and thank you for your cooperation. This is some list and will have been a great show at Gaydon for Spridget 50 if you were all able to come!

John Platt
Membership Secretary

Mutual Assistance Directory

Summer's here! Whoopee! Hope that you are all out and about in your Sprites and Midgets. The weather in West Wales has really warmed up so it is down tops and wind in your hair (or in my case, wind in your beard) motoring. It is a superb area for spridgeting so if you are thinking, Where shall we go today?, come to West Wales. You will not be disappointed. We have fantastic scenery and very quiet roads. We also have some super teashops, pubs and even industrial heritage museums (www.internalfire.com). See you here maybe?

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

3011	Tim & Reina Hopper	Cumbria	Frogeye
3995	Barry Cross	Cleveland	Midget Mk 3
3996	Ken & Diane Kelso	Cambridgeshire	Frogeye
3997	Maurice Stacey	Gloucestershire	Banham Sprint Frogeye
3998	Stuart Budd	Berkshire	None yet
3999	Gordon O'Neill	Wirral	None yet
4000	Paul Merry	Essex	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4001	Geoffrey Stanton	Surrey	Sprite Mk 4
4002	Derek Stewart	Hertfordshire	Frogeye
4003	Mark Butler & Gary Benyon	Lancashire	Midget Mk 3 RWA

Silverstone Classic

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

Ticket prices per car (including driver and passenger) are:

Friday	July 25	£20.00
Saturday	July 26	£25.00
Sunday	July 27	£25.00
3-day pass	25/26/27	£45.00

The code for ordering tickets and passes is **SCMSC**.

The telephone number is: Motion Works UK Limited 01327 856024.

After the above date you will be charged the normal public admission of £30.00/£35.00 per person and no infield pass will be available.



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Liège–Rome–Liège

The Marathon of the fifties and early sixties

Once upon a time ... during the early days of motoring, city to city road races were quite the thing, with perhaps, the Peking to Paris as the grand daddy of them all. The trouble was that as road traffic increased between the first two editions of the World Wars, this type of motor sport not only fell out of favour, but with increasing customs procedures, became a bit too difficult to continue.

Along came a Belgian motor club, the Royal Motor Union, in Liège, and under their imaginative and energetic president Maurice Garot, the Liège–Rome Liège Marathon became the last of the REAL Classic Road races.

In the early days, the Liège as it has always been affectionately called, actually did race from Liège to Rome and back, but even the wildly enthusiastic Italians finally reckoned that the road network around Rome was becoming far too crowded to accommodate a full-on road race, so Monsieur Garot turned to

Yugoslavia, and then to Bulgaria, to provide the second half of his event.

My first drive on the Liège was in 1957, and this was certainly an eye-opener. The only mention of the word Rally was to state that the event counted for the European Rally Championship (In those days, this was the precursor of the current World Rally Championship). Everywhere else in the uncomplicated rules, the word Race was prevalent. Lasting about 90 hours, and covering over 3000 miles the route actually started in the village of Spa, at the foot of the hill below the race circuit, but a convoy from Liège to Spa preceded the contest. The assembly in Liège, in the courtyard of the Palace of the Prince Bishops, in the very center of the city, was just spectacular, especially in view of magnificence of a selection of the world's finest competition cars.

The course wound its way around part of the famous circuit and then ran the first night through the byroads of Belgium and Germany,

with a short neutralized section to cross the tourist-crowded roads of Austria before tackling the massive passes of the Italian Dolomites. These mountain roads of the Gavia, Vivione and Croce Domini were unsurfaced, unfenced, twisting and reached up into the clouds at over 9,000 feet, finishing with the Passo Di Stelvio, which was at least surfaced on the way up its 48 steep hairpins, but much rougher on the way down. We then crossed Northern Italy and into Yugoslavia onto some of the roughest roads I had ever seen.

A word here about the time schedules. European Police regulations governed the speed at which motoring events could be held, so M. Garot and his team set all the control points at a 30 miles per hour average. While even this would be hard to achieve over the Mountain passes and rough tracks, and Governmental concerns were suitably appeased, there was a second time schedule! This dictated the opening and closing times of every control point for each individual car in the event, and these times bore no relationship to the set average speed. It is true that if you had arrived at every control point at the 30 mph average you would theoretically have lost no time, but you would have found all but the first three or four closed to you, and would arrive back at the finish a day and a half later than the rest of the competitors! In this way, average speeds for the event rose up from the difficult, to the well nigh impossible, and the few survivors, generally between ten and fifteen, would have lost a great deal of time, often a total of hours rather than the seconds of modern rallying. There was also the question of police speed checks, and at the drivers' meeting M. Garot would announce that there would be police checks, and then silently held up a list of their whereabouts. He also announced that there would be no protests! The technical regulations stated that vehicles with four wheels would be eligible, but I doubt that if you reached the finish with only three, that there would have been any problem. There really seemed to be no other restrictions, except that if you were competing for points in the Rally Championship, your car would have had to be in compliance with those regulations.

The entry list not only contained the names of most of the world's top rally drivers, but also a

handful of Grand Prix and Le Mans racers, eager to rise to the challenge of this Marathon. Cars included Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Porsche, Mercedes, plus all the usual suspects of the Championship – Citroen, Austin Healey, Triumph, Peugeot, Sunbeam, Ford, Saab, Volvo and the others of the sixteen or so manufacturers contesting the annual round of events.

Control points were superbly run, and where there was the chance of a close finish, one marshal would recite the car numbers into a tape recorder, another would call out the minutes, so that any query could be easily answered. Cars also started three at a time, at three minute intervals. This was to allow a natural order to be established, with the fastest of the trio getting well ahead to be clear of the dust of those who had set off three minutes ahead. As September in Southern Europe was generally hot, dusty and not windy, the dust clouds tended to hang around for a lot longer than this, but at least it was better than sitting inches behind a slower car in really thick dust. Another detail was the timing at each control was called out by the official who then released the road book from under his fist on the control table for eager co-drivers to grab, rush to their waiting cars, and off onto the stage. A certain amount of maneuvering was inevitable, especially for the Brits in their right hand drive cars, who were often seen on the other side of the control table to allow the co-driver to fall into his seat in a speedier manner, to offset the advantage of those Continental drivers. As the rally progressed, the trios would be reduced to two and then one or even none, as competitors fell out with lateness, damage or mechanical disasters. On my best rally, in 1960, our trio lasted right up to the finish, which added quite some drama to the usual challenge, but this was most unusual.

Just as the second evening fell, we would cross over into the wilderness of Yugoslavia over a narrow and very contorted Passo di Moistrocco, and then the dust became a real problem. Every inch of the inside of the car would be coated with this fine brown dust, ones hair was thick with it, and every pore of your body was ingrained with Jugo's finest dirt. The time schedule was now so tough, that there was not a second to do anything

other than drive like heck. Stopping for nature meant a couple of minutes lost, refueling lost you whatever time it took, and my little Austin Healey Sprite, with its five gallon tank, meant that time was flowing out in proportion to the fuel flowing in at the many stops. In those days, hand cranked fuel pumps in tiny village squares took forever, but at least allowed one to dunk ones head into the village water trough to alleviate a little of the dust problem. Team service was non existent – no mechanic could have kept up with the relentless time schedule we were attempting, and as most rallies in those days, you ran all the way on the same set of tires, perhaps fitting new inner tubes (what are they? I hear you ask) at the side of the road, in a struggle to keep within the control closing times.

Most of the names which were so often in the press and on TV during the splitting up of Yugoslavia into its many new countries are still set in the minds of those of us who competed in this magnificent event. Pec, Titograd, Kotor, Split, Dubrovnic – to name just a few, were just blurs in a never-ending rush. At night, the tracks would have bullock carts packed with workers, on an incessant journey from farm to farm, and the edges of the road were full of horseshoe nails to catch the unwary racer.

I recall seeing several top drivers at the side of the road, with a heap of three or four tires, frantically trying to replace tubes before the relentless clock forced them out of the event. In later years, the Marathon ventured into Bulgaria, for a four hour rest halt in Sofia – just about time to down a quick meal – the first in two days, check the oil, water and such, before once again rushing off into the dust for the third night of combat.

Crossing Yugoslavia the second time was usually across the southern part of the country, with a lot of views of the dazzling blue Mediterranean from that wonderful coast road that winds its way in and out of the bays and mountains of this spectacular part of the world.. However, our weary eyes saw little but the two sides of the road and the bumps and potholes to avoid. Once back into Italy there was just time for a brief car service, and the welcoming snacks handed out by our mechanics – the first time we had seen them in three days – before the trek across Northern

Italy and, for the sting in the tail, the French Alps.

Tired cars and very tired crews now had to tackle half a dozen of the classic French mountain passes, usually with the Col d'Allos as the hors d'oeuvre. This very high and lonely pass has long been a feature of the classic rallies, and has narrow winding and unfenced tracks to rival the toughest in the world. In 1960 Pat Moss's Healey 3000 arrived here leading the rally but with a slipping clutch. The mechanics who had reached this control, managed to change the offending item, and Pat became the first lady to ever win a full International rally – and she chose probably the toughest event in the world to succeed over all the men!

Progress during the final night took in a few more of the lower Alpine passes, where a Porsche Carrera finally displaced us from the runner up spot in our brave but dusty Frog-eye Sprite as dawn brought us to the long drag back up to Belgium.

The final couple of hundred miles to the finish at Spa was quite unique. Every inch of the roadside was lined with knowledgeable enthusiasts and by this time, the dwindling convoy has sorted itself more or less into the correct finish order, so the cheers or the crowds were particularly touching as they knew who had done well, and who had survived in spite of mechanical disaster.

In the arrival area, Maurice Garot and many of his organizing team would welcome every car, presenting floral bouquets and posing for photographs with car and crew who were amazingly revitalized at the thought of having finished among the few survivors of this last remaining city to city road race of the 20th century.

Sadly, the ever increasing traffic, even in the remote mountain passes, forced the end of the Liège after the 1964 event. Happily, I can say I was a finisher, albeit in last place on that occasion, so I can truthfully say I was the last person ever to complete the most respected of all the post war motoring contests in Europe.

John Sprinzel
June '03



Retro and Sportscar Action Day Castle Combe Circuit – Saturday 14 June 50 YEARS OF THE SPRITE



I can now confirm that we have been offered the **Featured Club** space at the above event. We have up to **40 free admission tickets** for Sprite and Midget occupants and a dedicated free track parade around the famous Castle Combe Circuit. This is a major bonus to the Big Party event at Gaydon for all owners of Sprites and Midgets and derivatives. We need to know who is coming so please contact me immediately in order to claim your free tickets in time.

For those wishing to take advantage of some 'quick' lapping sessions, then Track passes are available at the discounted rate of £20 per session. These must be pre-booked and paid for.

As time is short, make your application for these directly to Castle Combe Circuit Ltd in addition to your application for admission tickets from me. The contacts are -

Free admission tickets

Terry Horler, 63 Littledean, Yate, Bristol BS37 8UQ 01454 881770

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Castle Combe Circuit Ltd, Chippenham, Wilts SN14 7EY 01249 782417

When applying for Track passes, please state 'MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB'

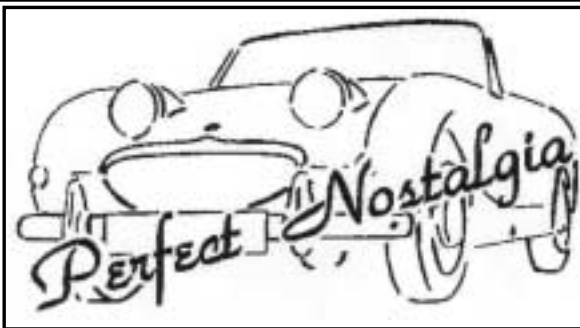
This has been a long standing annual event on our club calendar and this year is our big opportunity to get as many Spridgley things together as the featured car. I do hope that you are able to attend and look forward to you claiming your free tickets. Remember, time is now very tight so please act without delay to ensure that you tickets will be with you in time. We cannot make tickets available on the day.

Terry Horler

D J Grove Restoration

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STOP PRESS!

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rebuids, original
Speedwell rebuild,
modified race Sebring
construction
Car supplied for Ch4
TV filming

25 Years of the Midget and Sprite Club (Part 5)

The 25th Anniversary of *MASCOT*



This edition, No 291, June 2008 marks 25 years of *MASCOT*. The very first edition of June 1983 (Just in case you haven't worked it out) was at the suggestion of Member No1, Lindy Clifton. Lindy and husband John Ruderman had a Banda printing machine and were already set up to produce newsletters for other organisations they belonged to. Lindy could type, spell and was just one of those tireless people who just got things done. As the club formed, Lindy became our first editor and along with John's help, typist, collator and distributor, indeed, the entire production and distribution process.

The very first edition was but 3 sheets of A4 stapled together but thereafter the familiar folded A5 format which we retain to this day. I was one of the main contributors in those formative days and submitted my monthly scratchings to Lindy in my coded handwriting. Whereas today copy is sent via email or on disk, in 1983, everything had to be typed onto the Banda skins. Frequent phone calls from Lindy, Horler, what the hell is this word or I am not going to print that comment became a normal part of getting *MASCOT* out each month. Final proof reading was completed with a bottle of Tippex and trying to realign the Banda skin in the typewriter, a long lost craft – thank goodness! The big drawback was the inability to reproduce photographs. This was addressed when a couple of members offered to have some pages photocopied, this it seemed, without their employers knowledge. Lindy's job now meant driving to secret locations in Bristol to hand over masters and then collecting the photocopied pages when all was clear. We now had photographs in *MASCOT* with nothing more than a gallon of fuel to pay for. However, as each photocopier was using slightly different paper and Lindy was using recycled paper for the Banda, *MASCOT* had rather a disconnected look about it. Indeed, the Banda print could be seen on the reverse of each page and hence could not easily be read in bright light!

As the club was then mostly Bristol based, members would have their copies passed on by hand to save on envelopes and postage.

Those that did have to be posted went in recycled envelopes – times were hard then you know! A colour paper cover appeared in November 1983, not just to look a little more distinctive but to try and hide some of the Banda 'bleed' problem. Then tragedy, the dreaded winter lurgy hit our production team putting them out of action for 2 months. The December edition was lost but TH and Dick Morris managed to produce a single A4 newsheet for January 1984. Happily, Lindy and John were back in action for February 1984 and continued to produce the 8 or 12 page editions each month until October 1984 when Bryan Whitfield joined the team as 'Assistant editor'. This was not just to help out with the increasing workload but to act as a backup should the 'lurgy' ever strike again. We soon learnt not to take volunteers for granted and how important a role they perform, it is soon noticed when they are not able to perform!

In July 1984 *MASCOT* gained its first logo cover and by now gained an advertiser on the rear cover. Still of 12 pages and a variety of paper quality and typefaces. It may have lacked polish but the content was well balanced between Technical, Historical, members advertising, event reports and club news pages. We were still very much a Bristol based club so there were no area reports from outside the region other than Steve (Harry) Raggett's serialised reports of his adventures in his Sprite MK111 in Sharm el Sheik. Next big change came in June 1985 when we introduced a professionally printed yellow card cover with amended logo. This was paid for by selling the remaining 3 pages of the cover to advertisers. The covers we had produced in batches which would carry us for about 6 months at a time, hence the covers carried no dates or edition numbers. In October 1985, Lindy had had enough of trying to decipher the TH scribbling each month and handed over the bucket of Tippex to Linda (Lou) Riches. Bryan continued as Assistant editor. *MASCOT* was now wholly photocopied on a uniform paper quality but still suffered varying typefaces and even some handwritten bits! We were now starting to receive area reports

which had to be fitted into 12 pages. Prior to the card cover, the page count included the cover but since then, we now had a proper 12 pages available. Lou stepped down as Editor in September 1986 and handed over to Sue Proud. We also lost Bryan as Assistant editor at this time leaving just Sue in charge. The club now had its own photocopier so not only could we produce *MASCOT*, but take on photocopying jobs for other organisations. All this happened in my mother's spare room, which was no longer spare from then on. Sue lived less than 2 miles from my mother's so logistically, getting the copy to the printers was fairly easy each month. Many of those old master copies are still there! Every now and again we got our sums wrong and ran out of printed covers, hence, some members received their *MASCOT* with a 'Limited' edition cover in any colour card that came to hand. We longed to get away from this batch buy system of printed covers but the funds would not stretch to a separate print run for each month. However, we did manage to purchase a brand new 'state of the art' typewriter for Sue to use, Sue was no more impressed with the TH scratchings that her predecessors.

With the absorbing of SMOG members into MASC in 1988, we now had Jonathan Whitehouse Bird on board. As a Graphic designer, Jonathan was soon to get to work with all our graphics, most of which were a little bit 'iffy'. A new cover for *MASCOT* appeared for the February 1989 edition thanks to Jonathan. We were now very proud of our magazine but one important feature was still missing. Member Graham Powney had long campaigned for *MASCOT* to be stapled; only Graham could spill all the pages over the floor when opening the envelope. Such was his voicing on the subject; the 'production team' put some 30 staples all around the outside edge of just his copy to make up for such an omission in the past. Graham went rather quiet after this but really; he did have a very good point. This was only resolved when we abandoned the club photocopier, which by now was becoming temperamental and very time consuming for the production team. In November 1990, the job was handed over to KB PRINTING SERVICES in Bristol. We employed a typesetter to do a proper layout after Sue had performed her editorial magic. Not only did this relieve the volunteers of a lot of work each month, we had a much better looking *MASCOT*, professionally produced and STAPLED together. This also reduced the risks

of any of the team being indisposed and not getting an edition out. The down side was that of costs, but the membership numbers were increasing and with an increase in subscription fee, it was the right thing for us to do.

Sue served the club as editor from September 1986 to March 1998, almost 12 years and to date, our longest serving editor. Finding a replacement was not going to be easy but thankfully, Jenny Smith from Budleigh Salterton in South Devon volunteered her services. In addition to having to follow a long and experienced editor, Jenny was logistically well separated from most of the rest of the club. Should we have worried? Not at all, Jenny hit the ground running and continued to produce a first class *MASCOT* each month. However, things were about to change again. We were still plagued by the cover having to be bought in batches rather than per issue. KB could not accommodate us with this problem or offer their own affordable typesetting service. We really needed a 'one stop shop' for everything after the editorial stage. Typesetting, printing, covers, distribution, we needed all this taken on professionally.

Salvation came in the form of QUORUM, a printing company in Cheltenham. Nigel Williams, Brendan Joyce and TH paid them a visit and were very impressed with what we saw. Not only could they do all that we required, but could do a lot more besides. Whereas we had pretty much come to the end of the development road with KB, Quorum was well ahead of our game. It has to be stated that we enjoyed a very good service from KB and in no way were we unhappy with them. It was just that our needs were changing and we had a commitment to members to do the right thing. Although this change would be a big relief to many of the team, it was Jenny that now had to work in a way that suited Quorum as well as the club. This she did and in September 1999, the first Quorum produced *MASCOT* appeared with new cover containing the edition number (193) and a different photo each month. Quorum could also include our annual ballot papers. These all carried a differing serial number and the number of papers included had to be increased where joint members were added to the mailing address. This was no easy task and one we feared we would still have to do 'in house' as an additional mail shot. Quorum proved otherwise and again made life a lot easier for the team. Naturally, costs again

rose but we could cover it with another small increase in subscription, increasing membership and more paying advertisers. Indeed, with a much better looking *MASCOT*, advertising was easier to obtain. One thing we couldn't afford at this stage was colour, but Quorum could certainly do this if and when we could.

Jenny handed over to Mike North in December 2000. Mike lives in Mill Hill in London but unlike our earlier fears of having an editor separated by distance; modern communication technology presents no such problems. Long gone were the days of getting in the car and having a paper chase to different addresses to get the job done. No more phantom photocopiers, recycled envelopes, licking stamps, stuffing all the local pillar boxes with envelopes, going to the post office etc etc. its all done on a key board these days. Again, the change over of editor from Jenny to Mike went very smoothly and *MASCOT* continued to keep members informed each month. Mike decided that he may like to take the Christmas period off and as this was a quiet time of the year clubwise, the January edition was dropped. By way of some compensation, Mike took advantage of the colour printing services of Quorum and hence, the December editions of *MASCOT* now gained a colour supplement.

Mike's turn in the editor's chair finished in September 2006, the chain of office now headed northwards to Barry Lowe in Yorkshire. Again, we feared that a change in editor could have an impact on the quality and delivery date of *MASCOT*. Not only does a new editor have to take on board the requirements of the club, but the requirements of a printing company. The days of sloshing Tippex over the mesteaks are long gone and a good understanding of modern IT skills essential. I was therefore bowled over when Barry's first edition not only arrived ahead of time, but with a completely revamped cover too. During Barry's occupation of the editor's chair, the page count has risen, colour has appeared everywhere, we have more advertisers on board thanks to both Gary Lazarus and Barry, as I said before, a good quality magazine is easier to sell. More recently, the bumper editions of *MASCOT* have had to be reigned into 32 pages as we fight the cost issue yet again. This is bringing about new headaches in terms of the balance of *MASCOT*. Those 32 pages have to include the Technical, Historical, event reports, area reports, advertising, contacts pages, calendar of meetings and events etc etc. This has become

a bigger problem with the number of active areas we now have, there is just so much to try and get in to those 32 pages each month. *MASCOT* has now returned to 12 editions per year and I look forward to perhaps seeing it return to the 48 page bumper editions too.

As the sole contributor to the very first edition of *MASCOT* and a regular contributor ever since, I have always been very proud to be associated with our club magazine. I have known and worked with all the editors and have to say that they have all done an outstanding job. Our resources have been meagre at times, the production process both difficult and time consuming, but the results have always been worthwhile. In addition to our hard working editors, there have been numerous unsung heroes helping out from behind the scenes. Today, the job has gone from having to do the whole job from start to finish in house (accepting the phantom photocopiers of course), to that of an equally time consuming job using modern IT skills. What you see in *MASCOT* each month is just the tip of the iceberg of a 25 year long challenge. The crowning accolade is of course *MASCOT* being awarded the 'MOST IMPROVED CLUB MAGAZINE' award of 2007 by CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR magazine. Considering the size of our club and the subscription fee, it has been a tremendous achievement to actually produce a monthly magazine at all leave alone the quality that we now enjoy. It is a testament to all those editors and helpers that we now celebrate 25 years of *MASCOT*, long may it continue.

The Editors of *MASCOT*

June 1983 to September 1985
Lindy Clifton (Midget Mk11)
October 1984 to September 1986
Bryan Whitfield (Midget Mk111)
(Assistant editor)
October 1985 to August 1986
Lou Riches (Arkley)
September 1986 to March 1998
Sue Proud (Austin Sprite)
April 1998 to November 2000
Jenny Smith (Frogeye & Midget)
December 2000 to September 2006
Mike North (I.O.W. Frogeye)
October 2006 to present
Barry Lowe (4 Innocentis)

Next month, I will reveal those members who failed to take a step backwards and found themselves on the committee.

Terry Horler

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GATWICK

Advertisement for Octane Magazine. The background is blue. In the foreground, a white classic car with license plate PBL 75 is shown. To its right is a red classic car. In the top left corner, there is a magazine cover for 'Octane' featuring an Aston Martin. The text 'Octane MAGAZINE' is written in large white letters across the top. Below it, the text reads: 'for the best stories about the best cars', 'To subscribe call: 0844 844 0382', and 'www.dennismags.co.uk/octane'. At the bottom right, the website 'www.octane-magazine.com' is displayed.

Octane
MAGAZINE

for the best stories about the best cars
To subscribe call: 0844 844 0382
www.dennismags.co.uk/octane

www.octane-magazine.com

Ano-frills sports car. Already we're thinking Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget, because nothing before or since has so perfectly encapsulated low-budget, wind-in-the-hair motoring. And now we're celebrating the 50th birthday of the Sprite.

Yes, it was in May 1958 that the Sprite was launched to a world that was familiar with cheap sports cars but usually associated them with flawed specs, flexible chassis and wayward handling. Compared with its contemporaries, the Sprite was practically perfect in every way.

You wouldn't think so from the specification, though. A 940cc BMC A-series engine. Front suspension from the Austin A35. Drum brakes. Quarter-elliptic rear leaf springs. An A35 gearbox and rear axle. A Morris Minor steering rack. A body so basic that it didn't even include a boot lid. Tiny sliding side windows and the most primitive hood possible. Talk about the sum being greater than the parts!

How did this work? By being stitched together around a monocoque body/chassis so stiff that it took over its great designers by surprise. With little in the way of body roll and a wonderfully precise, high-ratio steering set-up, the Sprite would react to a driver's every input.

Later Sprites and the similar MG Midgets that followed were granted larger engines, more tubular interiors and much-improved weather gear. But for character for unadorned fun, it's the early cars that win – and we have three of the best for you here, all of which are expected at the forthcoming 50th anniversary events (see page 38). So wish them a happy birthday! »



50 years of the **Sprite**

The Austin-Healey Sprite and the MG Midget it spawned were the best low-budget, mass-production sports cars ever made – and these three are the most important examples in existence

Words: David Lillywhite Photography: John Cusby



Sprite & Midget



This is the one. The most important Sprite in the world. It's a beauty, perfectly restored and only recently arrived back in the UK after over 40 years in relatively quiet exile. We're glad to have PBL 75 (chassis number AN5/507) back.

Leaf through original Sprite publicity material and you'll find PBL, popping up with remarkable regularity, but there's much more to its history than it being a mere camera star. It was one of a small batch of Sprites built between November 1957 and early January 1958, the first true Sprites to be produced after testing of 'QG', the second of the only two Sprite prototypes built.

No-one has been able to confirm how many cars were built in this first batch, but we do know that PBL 75 was registered in January 1958 taking with sister car PBL 74 and sent on to be used as a test and development car in the French Alps and at MIRA, where it was subjected to 1000 miles of the dreaded pavement.

It was this testing that led to the discovery of a weakness in the chassis, rectified in production by welding plates into the rear inner wheelarch and floor area. The plates in PBL 75 are bolted in, though, one of several points that identify it as something special.

Motorbible, PBL 75 was on its way to stardom, being photographed by BMC's head of publications Ron Booth, with a pretty blonde in both left- and right-hand seats. Ron's pictures were used across adverts, posters, postcards, books, press packs

PBL 75 WAS USED AS A TEST AND DEVELOPMENT CAR IN THE ALPS AND AT MIRA, WHERE IT WAS SUBJECTED TO THE DREADED PAVEMENT.

Left and below: Super's restoration brings PBL back to original spec, with feature PBL with blonde and being used by Sabotini.



and magazines. Sadly, efforts to track down the blonde model have so far failed.

Roy Salvadori was also filmed in PBL 75, with ex-racer John Bolivar commenting, 'You'll never tire of driving the Sprite' was one of his suitably plummy proclamations, and the stills from the resultant publicity film again appear across all manner of PR material.

From there, PBL 75 was prepared for the press launch of the Sprite at Monte Carlo in 1958. It's suspected that PBL 75 didn't actually make it to Monte Carlo though, but instead stayed behind for magazine road tests – so many in fact that Geoffrey Healey later commented that 'PBL 75 must be one of the most photographed cars of all time'.

Once the fans of the launch had died down, PBL was relegated to Healey family ransomed, before passing through numerous owners. But in 1963 it was bought by Phil Even who, two years later, emigrated to Australia, taking PBL 75 with him. The car was restored between 1973 and '84, and then again between 1988 and 2006. Early in 2007 it was sold to its current owner, and shipped back to England.

Of the other early Sprites, PBL 74 is known to exist but is hidden away in, apparently, a very poor state and unseen in public for years. Another early car chassis AN5/505, is in Mississippi, USA. Prototype Q1 is lost, while it's thought that Q2 was used to build the Super Sprite, featured overleaf. So you see, PBL 75 is still quite a star.



The Lucas RB106 Control Box

Part 1: Introduction

For many owners, the simple uncomplicated Meccano-like construction of a Spridget forms an important part of its appeal: it is somehow very satisfying to be able to look at any part of a car and to know how to remove it and how to either repair or adjust it. It is similarly satisfying to understand exactly what each component does and how it does it. One single component that is arguably much harder to understand than most is the subject of this series of articles – the two bobbin RB106 control box (Figure 1) which was fitted to all Spridgets up to and including the HAN9/GAN4 models (except the Innocentis which used Magneti Marelli electrical components).

This control box is a vital electromechanical device that sits at the heart of an early Spridget's electrical system and performs a series of arcane, almost black magical tasks. It connects battery and dynamo together and ensures that the battery is charged at the

proper rate despite the varying electrical demands of normal service. It ensures that battery and dynamo always operate safely within their rated limits and it disconnects the dynamo from the battery at low engine speeds in order to prevent the battery discharging spectacularly (and expensively!) through the the dynamo. Amazingly, it accomplishes all this in a very economical fashion with nothing much more than two simple sets of contact points, a few wires wound on a couple of bobbins and a robust 60 ohm resistor. Despite this deceptively simple construction, its operation is a maddeningly difficult thing to comprehend: the knowledge evaded this particular scribe for more than 35 years of continuous Mk1 Midget ownership.

Although the RB106 control box is a remarkably tough and soundly constructed little device, it can fail – usually after long service, sometimes because of a faulty dynamo and occasionally because an

enthusiastic but rather reckless owner has attempted to correct an electrical problem by making one of the dangerously simple adjustments that are possible within the unit. Because such failures can destroy the battery and/or the dynamo, this unassuming device deserves considerable respect: it is well worth trying to understand precisely how it works before making any attempt to fiddle with it. This is easier said than done however – not so much because it is hard to understand but because it is very difficult indeed to find any expert literature on the subject. While the workshop manual does contain instructions on how to test and adjust the box, it makes no attempt to explain its operating principles because the manual was

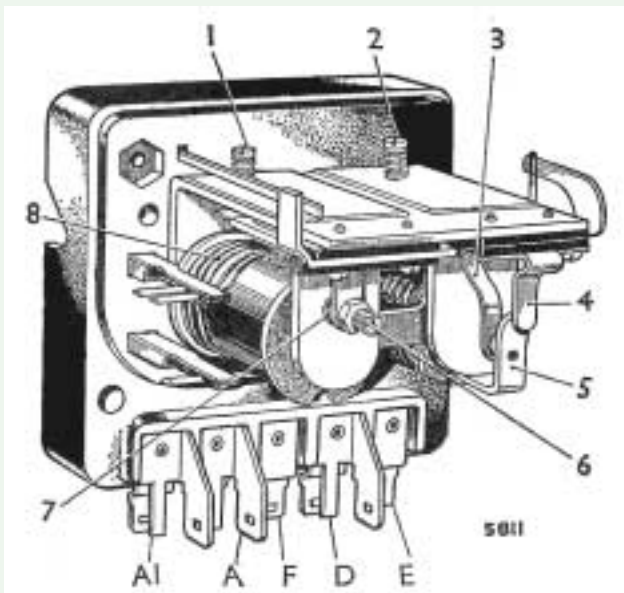


Figure 1
(Early RB106 units have grub screws rather than Lucar connectors but both models operate in the same way)

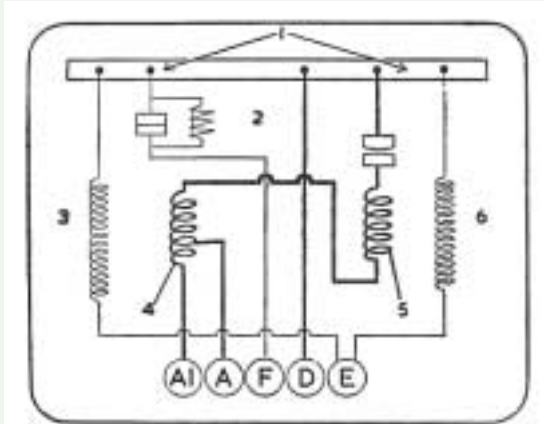


Figure 2

written for trained mechanics and so assumes prior expert knowledge of the workings of engines, dynamos, regulators and so on.

In an attempt to be helpful, the factory manual does contain a circuit diagram for the RB106 (Figure 2) but – for years – I found this impossible to understand. Finally I located, acquired, studied and inwardly digested an obscure Lucas manual written specifically to explain the workings of the RB106 to Lucas engineers and technicians.

Although the electrical equivalent of a gold mine, this Lucas manual in turn is quite difficult to understand because of the scary and complicated nature of its diagrams (e.g. Figure 3) and because the really essential operating principles are buried within a veritable mountain of minor technical detail.

Almost certainly, Figures 2 and 3 (and other figures like them) are *not* good places to begin a description of the RB106 control box. If Figure 2 looks to you like impenetrable hieroglyphics in an ancient Egyptian Pharaoh's cartouche, please do not panic but instead be prepared to knuckle down and persevere. My hope is that when

we return to this diagram in the final part of this series of articles, it will all make perfect sense and you will be able to rush out into the street like Champollion, shouting 'Je tiens l'affaire!' We must also hope that, unlike Champollion, you will not then fall to the floor, apparently dead with the shock of sudden comprehension.

Instead of something like Figure 2, I believe that the best place to begin a discussion of the RB106 control box is to first appreciate that

the dynamo and the control box are inextricably linked; they are best viewed as two separate parts of a single component; it is very difficult indeed to understand how the control box works unless one first understands what it is designed to control (and why, indeed, any sort of control is required at all).

So, next month's instalment will be entitled "Part2: The Dynamo".

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

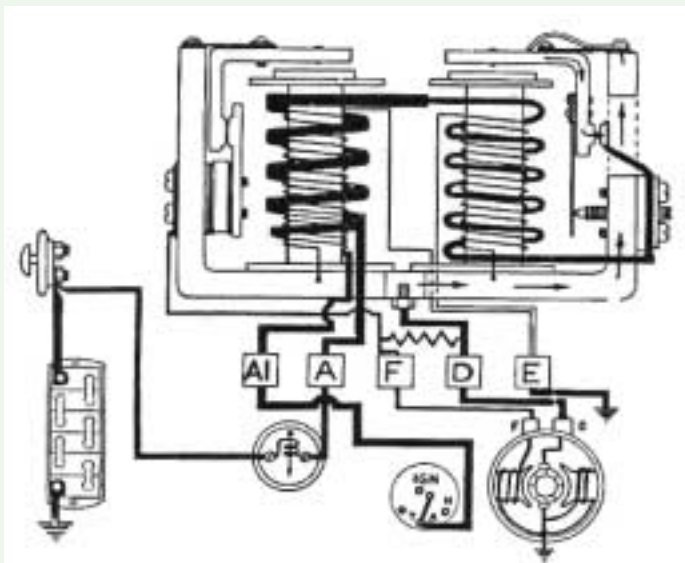


Figure 3

MASC Miglia 2009

This tour is for Midget and Sprite Club members driving MG Midgets and Austin Healey Sprites or derivatives thereof only.

**The provisional date is
Saturday 12 – Tuesday 22 September
2009**



- The tour will start on a Saturday when crossing the English Channel, by Speedferry Catamaran, from Dover to Boulogne Sur Mer, it proceeds to Reims via Arras and a WW1 museum at Compiègne.
- Sunday we travel to Mulhouse for Schlumph motor museum and / or Chemin de Fer Railway Museum.
- Monday we cross Switzerland climbing the Alps via passes then entering Italy to climb the Stelvio Pass.
- We overnight at Bormio.
- Tuesday we drive along the side of Lake Iseo to Brescia to visit the Mille Miglia Museum before overnight at Turin.
- Wednesday we leave Italy via Tende Tunnel to visit, and spend the afternoon at, Monte Carlo before continuing to Nice to overnight.
- Thursday we travel over the hills to Bolone taking in the scenery.
- Friday we travel via the Milau Bridge to Aurillac and on Saturday drive on to Angouleme where we remain throughout Sunday for the Circuit des Remparts motor race.
- On Monday we start our journey home stopping overnight at Le Mans before continuing on Tuesday to Boulogne Sur Mer.
- Hotels will be mainly Campanile (where rooms, for two sharing, are normally less than E70 per night) except for one night at Bormio.
- Daily driving will be limited, hopefully, to no more than 260 miles per day. The overall distance being somewhere in the region of two thousand miles.
- I will, as usual, be on hand with overalls and tools to deal with *minor* breakdowns.

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Telephone: 01322 384050

Cambridgeshire Report

Mad Cat night came early in April but sadly Pat could not make it being at work again, however since it was relatively dry, if a little cool, I decided to take the proper car, top down obviously (but you knew that didn't you). I had hoped to get some photos but since in the end I was running late and although there were a couple of other Spridgets in the car park when I arrived, I had missed the window of opportunity due to running out of light.

We had a good turn out (great to see Derek back safely from Australia) once again in both proper and unofficial cars, five Spridgets in all at least two of us topless (well done to us both) not to mention someone with a Tupperware top. Part of the reason for me being a bit late was that I paused to check my mail and found that I had just received the tickets for the Kimbolton charity classic and to my delight and amazement tickets for 10 or so cars were eagerly claimed and handed out almost as soon as I mentioned I had them (note to self to order some more) at this rate we will need a bigger pitch.

After a short while HTJ arrived sporting a mystery box (in place of a fumble bag) about 300mm square and 600mm deep, and asked us to guess what might be inside, I think the best suggestion came from the aptly named Jo King (considering HTJ's Australian connections) was that it contained his tinnies. Eventually all was revealed, it turned out to be an incredibly compact but very powerful telescope and as it was a very clear night the meeting adjourned to the car park, we perched the telescope on John's hard top (so that's what it's for) and were all treated to an in depth look into some of the Moon's craters and an incredible look at Saturn (rings and all) I don't think I have ever seen such views of either first hand in such amazing detail, truly brilliant!

The remainder of the evening was taken up with details of the Cottenham run, Fred handing out Wisbech road run information sheets and entry forms and the fumble bag,



not to mention some battery problems with Graham's Frogeye and the usual good natured banter and off topic stuff. Sadly I could not make it to the Cottenham run but Graham has kindly provided me with an eyewitness account and photo, reproduced below.

Yesteryear Run 2008 Sunday April 20

8.30am it's raining, we're not succumbing to HTJ syndrome, it's tonneau or soft-top at worst. By the time Maggie had made sandwiches and a flask of coffee and I had dug out the soft top from the back of the shed and was fiddling with fitting the side widows and frame, but by now the rain was minimal so soft top goes and tonneau is positioned.

Now we're running a bit late for the 09.30 start. "They were late starting last year", says Maggie, and sure enough we had time upon arrival to make contact with Chris and Mary in their Midget, also friend Simon in his twin-cam Suzuki Swift powered Mini and Hubie and Sally in their Sprageye. After bumping into new member, Fred and Chris toggled out in period costume in their Austin 16, we later met Dave (not our worthy leader Dave Dixon) and Mick in Dave's Frogeye who forced us to top up our systems with superb Woodfordes Wherry bitter at the Over community hall.

Whilst at a lengthy stop before Oakington Mick disappeared through a gap in the hedge, surely no blackberries this time of year Mick (see photo of concerned *MASCOT*ers). A great rapport was built up at this friendly and well organised event, particularly between us and a steam powered truck who looking down at us offered to lift us up by our 'handle' and put the

car back in its box. I think Maggie's comment was "how cheeky" and I retaliated with "at least we're not on fire". In one of the frequent village green stops we met Ken a local farmer who has a 1959 Frogeye to restore – he's only owned it for 40 years! He's also interested in joining our ranks, don't leave it too long Ken.

Once again hardy souls young and old came out to cheer us on route through the villages and give further support to topping up the total funds raised to date for MAGPAS to over £100K.

* * * * *

The next thing on the agenda was the working party at that other club's premises at Swavesey (I was chuffed to bits to be able to help out and so become a small part of what will probably be the biggest and best Spridget event ever). Pat and I woke up to a glorious sunny morning so it was a great Sprite down the motorway in the sunshine in my newly

MOTed Sprite to arrive at Swavesey a full half hour early (we sat in the sun and waited for the others to arrive). In all about 15 of us, not all from Cambridgeshire (but we were the biggest single group), the object was to assemble the packs to be sent out to everyone who will be attending Spridget 50. The Cams guys formed a production line or two and 750 packs were assembled in less than two hours (great work guys). Once we had done all that was asked of us, met up with a few new faces and made a few purchases, we headed home in time for lunch. As luck would have it we found a village pub just off the A1 that had the good sense to organise a barbeque and real ale festival to celebrate St George's day, so we spent a very pleasant afternoon in the sunshine.

See you all at the Mad Cat.

Dave Dixon

Linc'slot

Everyone turned up at the pub on natter night in Spridgets. There were three 1275s, one Sprite and one Frogeye. Oh! Everyone except Jane and Steve, that is. They came in the Porsche. They followed Lizzie in



the Frogeye in case it conked out, like it did last month. It behaved impeccably with its new float needle. Pete and Mary surprised us all with their new white 1275 RWA Midget which looks brilliant. By the way, their 1500 is for sale.

On Sunday 4 May, Phil and Annie, Tim and Jill, Pete and Mary and Sue and myself, met at Wragby market Place for our Rhapsody in Blue run. After a short photo call, we set off in convoy, following Three Pom Pom Pete, in his new car as he had the route firmly fixed in his head.

We set off towards Gautby and Minting and soon reached the foothills of the Wolds. The weather was beautiful and a good run was anticipated by all. We were taken up through and around some of the quaintest and most convoluted villages in the area, with names like Bag Enderby, Hagworthingham and Tetford where the villagers were enjoying a Scarecrow Day. We seemed to become part of



the attraction as we drove slowly through the village checking out all the clever scarecrow displays. One of the best was the Speed Cop pointing his Radar Gun down the road at approaching speeders. We continued on until we made a stop for refreshments at The Vine Inn at South Thoresby where we were welcomed by the Landlady who admired our cars and invited us to have our meetings there in the future. A tempting offer we will have to think about.

The next stop was at Hough Hall racing stables where the private church was open for teas and cakes. We spread out our blankets and had a picnic on the grass. Some of us took advantage of the Tack Room facilities. It wasn't far to Rigsby Woods but we drove there and parked on the cowslip strewn verges ready for our walk amongst the carpet of bluebells in this ancient woodland.

Onward and upward. Those of us left after Tim and Jill had to depart, continued on to Alford

where Pete had left his Morris Minor Van and his 1500 Midget on display in the Alford Market Place, Classic Car Show. We were guided in and left our cars on display whilst we took tea at the recently renovated Alford Manor House. On our return to the cars we chatted to some local enthusiasts and then Phil and Annie and Milo, their Jack Russell, took their leave of us for a drive to Louth. Pete and Mary lead us to the local taxidermist in Claxby village as we have a frozen Barn Owl road casualty we would like to have mounted. We got a look at his impressive show room in a disused church next door to his residence. Pete and Mary then guided us on the short cut back to the main road home where we parted company and drove home in the only few drops of rain for the whole day.

This was a very full and tiring but most enjoyable day thanks in no small way to Pete and Mary's local knowledge and enthusiasm.

Brian Jeffery

Dutch Report

By the time you read this Gaydon is already in the past. Hopefully we have met but at the point of writing I'm still not sure I'm gonna make it. The engine is still out and hydraulic concentric clutch doesn't work well enough, only 5mm piston movement which according to the supplier should be 8mm to 12mm max. 5mm is not enough and would probably cause a slipping clutch and quick wear of my clutch plates/cover. We tried a bigger master cylinder but couldn't get that one working properly at all?! Looks like the clutch cable (no. 5!!!!) has to go in again if I want to try to get to Gaydon.

No time left to fiddle with the concentric clutch anymore. The supplier needed 18 months to get it developed and send it (untested!!!) to me leaving me 3 weeks to sort it.

Then I lost 2 weeks of sorting out the not supplied (but crucial) bits and finding out the system doesn't work well enough... Needless to say that at this moment I lost my faith in the British suppliers AGAIN!!! Isn't there someone in the classic/modifying car business on the whole island who does take his job and customers seriously?

Don't forget boys and girls: 1 June Spridget run and the 6 & 7 September Dutch Spridget weekend!!!

For more info or just a beer and Spridgetchat contact me on ariedebest@planet.nl
Cheers

Arie



South East Area Reports



Drive IT Day

April at the Blue Ball, Surrey

John Clark and I, John especially, must hold the record for the longest distance travelled to a Surrey meet. We started out early. John earlier than I as he had to come from Herne Bay to collect me, at Greenhithe, before we set forth for Blue Ball via Bristol. Bristol? John had kindly offered to assist, with trailer, to pick up a car lift. The journey went well, the weather was fine, and we arrived at the Blue Ball in plenty of time to have a meal before others arrived.

Peter Gardiner was first to follow through the door. Top up on such a fine evening? Does Peter have friends in the meteorological office? Did he have a premonition of what was to come, weather wise, later that evening? The car hood stayed firm.

Hils and Peter arrived in Frogeye with top down as befitting such a fine evening. Hils was modelling a fine flying hat when Nigel Saynor pulled in again in a Frogeye – top down. Nigel modelled a flying jacket. What will Hills get for a Christmas present this year? A flying jacket perhaps? Nay and Col arrived. Where was the Midget? Mike Lay – his car still wearing its hardtop. Well it did snow last week. Colin Aldridge, and where was Jude, again top down. It was looking good in the car park. If only we had room amongst the tin tops

to park together. The landlord used to mark out an area for us, with beer barrels, but this practice seems to have died. David Bruzas could not bring his car as it is a long term project but he has been 'bitten by the bug (eye)' and was enquiring about engine specs for a shorter term Sprite project just to get himself Spritely mobile. The sound of another Sprite outside caused a flurry of excitement and an exodus to the car park. Alex Bowers and Jess Smale had pulled in with their restoration fresh Iris blue Frogeye. Mike Gorman, running in a 3.9 diff, that Alex has helped to install, was to arrive almost un-noticed as the crowd around Alex's car swelled.

Mike North; Chris and Laura Banton; Chris Harding and Jacqui Lane; with Sue Judd completed our group but alas they left their Spridgets at home.

Unfortunately I had to leave early as John and I had to off load his trailer and then John had the drive to Herne Bay. Unlike me John had to get up for work on the morrow.

Was Peter Gardiner wise to keep his Midgets hood up? I should say so. The sky darkened and the rain tipped down. Was there a scramble from the bar, back at the Blue Ball, to erect hoods against the torrents? Perhaps I shall find out next month.



April at the Moat, Wrotham, Kent

Drive it day brought a good number out to the Kent meet. Seventeen Spridgets and a new MG saloon (Nay and Col)!

Gary Lazarus (Frogeye) came down from London to meet me (Sebring rep) at my home before we drove, in convoy, along the local lanes to reach the Moat first and even before the pub was open. John Clark (Frogeye) led in a convoy comprising Chris Anderson (Frogeye) and Paul Coveney, with Jane, in their Austin Sprite. Paul and Jane's car no longer crunches its gears since the hydraulics have been overhauled. I would thoroughly recommend their mechanic. This trio had started some distance away at Herne Bay /Canterbury way.

Another long distance convoy arrived being Helen Brenchley (Frogeye); David Brenchley (Spridget) and Dennis Hasleham (Frogeye). This group had stopped off at Faversham to take breakfast.

Now Goodwood has a breakfast meet. Do people fancy a Kentish Breakfast meet at Faversham if I can get David and Helen to divulge the venue's location?

Peter Gardiner is one of our most regular attendees in his Midget. Another caller from South London was Ron Edwards all the way from Lee. Chris Playfoot, in a very nicely trimmed Midget, paid a first visit. Mike Pearson was another Spridget driver. Gavin Rowles made the effort to attend after poor health for himself and his car but both have, thankfully, now passed their respective MOTs. Mel and Barb (Spridget) had also just recovered from gearbox maladies. John Larrington and Martin Bird added their

respective cars to the goodly turnout of Frogeyes.

Martin Bird took Dennis Hasleham for a ride in his car for Dennis to get an impression of a Frogeye fitted with a 5 speed gearbox and then Chris Playfoot rode with Darren Tyre in a road rocket camouflaged as a Frogeye Fronted Sprite. They were seen passing the pub car park at impressive pace

this much modified car currently being powered by a 1.8 litre Ford Zetec engine. As if it did not have enough oomph



Darren was suggesting that he might take it to 2 litres. After a few hours we broke up each going our own way with the sun coming out to make for pleasant journeys.

April at the Friars Oak, Hassocks, West Sussex on the Thursday night

How the weather keeps on changing. When our numbers began to rise, and the manageress was good enough to find us a corner where we could all sit together, and stop us from re-arranging all of her tidily positioned furniture, we were able to sit with a view of the rear car park and watch the rain bouncing off the hoods of Elaine and Tim Thorndale and Nigel Baker and Heidi Beech's M.G. Midgets. Out of sight and to the side, David and Linda Southcott's car was collecting pools of water upon its tonneau cover. Julie

and John Harle complete the sports cars wisely coming in a roofed MGB.

John posed the question as to why, if Surrey had an annual prize (a bottle of wine) for the person bringing a Spridget, or derivative, to a Surrey meet why did Sussex not do the same. The John Harle Trophy bottle of wine is now up for grabs. Several people have arrived once in a Spridget so all have a chance in the forthcoming months with no one, so far, setting a definitive lead.

Sue and Jason Alexander are keen to promote a club stand at Boughton Monchelsea, Nr Maidstone, Kent on 6th July. This is but two days before many of us go on the Le Mans Classic Tour. An ideal opportunity for last minute adjustments or instrument checks. anglebox105@yahoo.co.uk for detail.

David and Chris Wright are arranging a walk around the village, and finish in the local pub for a meal, type treasure hunt on Sunday 3rd August 2008 and on 3rd September (Weds) a visit to Fitchling Manor and Motor Museum. This Museum, which is by app't only, has the only remaining Malcolm Campbell Bluebird record boat. Davidandchrisw@btinternet.com for detail. Good to see long time MASC members John and Noreen Page at a meet. Our group was completed by young Chris Burgess eagerly awaiting his father to finish a project and give him a hand with his Spridget. Like so many projects, will it be ready for Spridget 50?

Alan Anstead

S.E. Area representative

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Bristol Report

25 Years from our First Meeting

The very first meeting that was to lead to the formation of the Midget and Sprite Club was held at the Lamb Inn, Iron Acton near Bristol in April 1983. Nigel Williams and Terry Horler were the instigators of this meeting and were there again on the 21 April 2008 to again welcome enthusiasts of Midgets and Sprites. Also at that very first meeting was John Ruderman, holder of club membership No1 and again returning to where it all started. We met here on the first Monday of each month from April 1983 to January 1984, not a long period of time but certainly a very important time. The idea of a club for Midgets and Sprites became a reality in October 1983 by way of the meetings held at the Lamb. Hence, the importance of this venue in the history of our club. Another early visitor to the Lamb Inn was Dick Morris; Dick became a regular contributor to Mascot and later along with daughter Karen, responsible for the collation and distribution of Mascot each month. Dick organised numerous events in the early days and even produced his contributions to Mascot in a separate booklet. Dick's Midget Mk111 has been off the road for many years and his membership lapsed, but still came along to remember those early days.

Sadly, we were unable to contact many of the other people that were members during the 'Lamb Inn' days but it was heartening to find that several of our 'newer' members came along even if they had never been here before. As well as some of the Bristol Regulars of Andy, Colin, Phillip and Paul, we were joined by Richard and Debbie from Clevedon, Geri, and passing through on the way home to Coventry, Ian and Dawn. Certainly, our Spridgley things got noticed in the car park, I wondered if any of the local regulars remembered such a gathering 25 years ago?

The Bristol Area meetings continue on the second Wednesday of the month at the Rose and Crown at Pucklechurch. Being the summer, we are likely to resume our evening trundles so please give Terry a ring to see if we are planning to depart from the Rose and Crown. I will refrain from littering up Mascot with times and dates of local events, again, please make contact to find out what we are up to over the coming months. As always, you don't have to have your Spridgley thing on the road to join us or indeed, to feel ashamed if it is showing its battle scars – all are very welcome.

Terry Horler

'April, come she will' for SS&NB

A busier April than I had expected, this year.

At the Green Man

On Wednesday night as I arrived at the Green Man for this month's meeting I didn't really have great expectations for a big meeting. I had to wander through the labyrinthine connected rooms looking for the team and found them as far away from the door as we can get at the Greeny. We had a central large-ish table, plenty of room there I thought. Off to the bar for a refreshing drop of liquid gold and was joined by nigh on half a dozen extras and after we got back to the table it was full to bursting point so we added another to it to stretch the accommodation.

But this wasn't enough and we had even more additions so many that for the first time in ages I passed the notebook round for a roll-call, sixteen of us, we took over the entire alcove/room/cubby hole. So much chatter it was impossible to be in every thread, hasn't been that busy for ages, marvellous.

Roll call follows: (not in order of appearance, we're not the BBC tha knows) Matt and Steve Dicken, Andy Bird and Jeanette Bowron, Vince Gillin, (now using his car at last after its long rebuild and very very lovely it is too) And Geoff Mears. Behind Geoff, Dawn and Gavin Manion and across from me Mark Guthrie and Bob Clarkson and Trevor Lane (Our webmaster in SS&NB) Working round a bit further John Collins and John Wragg. Dave O'Neill and Bill McKenzie (Bill 2 fame, of course) and myself. Phew now my fingers are out of breath...

We decided, at Bob's instigation, to meet up at Shugborough Hall on Sunday the 20th of April, this year's Drive Your Classic day.

Here's Bob's report, edited for length sorry Bob

Drive It Day, SS and NB MASC Style

A run to Shugborough Hall took place for local members of our club on Sunday the 20th April 2008.

With weather conditions chilly, almost winter like, only the brave turned out. They were John and Pom in their red Midget, Andrew and Jeanette in the red Big Healey, Mark and Louise in Mark's red Midget. With Gavin and

Dawn in the ex-USA very dark green Midget and Bob and Dianne in his highway yellow Sprite. Also in attendance John and Pom's friends in their modern car.

Everyone had arrived on time and parking had been reserved by the friendly attendant, so far so good. We thought it was strange that we now parked a long way from the house so it was decided to walk to the coffee shop for drinks and then have a walk round the grounds. As we headed for the coffee shop a large but polite security man stopped us and asked for our tickets. Tickets? We all seemed to say together, what tickets? Entrance tickets he says. But we are only going for a cup of coffee! Without tickets of £12 each we were not allowed into the grounds or the coffee shop!

Mutter mutter mutter this must rate as one of the most expensive cups of coffee in the Midlands! A quick re- think by John and we all get into our cars and head for the Barley Mow on Milford Common were they served the biggest cups of coffee I have ever seen. Suitably refreshed we said our goodbyes to Andrew and Jeanette, John and Pom and Friends.

The three remaining cars headed by Gavin and Dawn had an impromptu run over the chase back roads via Brocton, Hednesford and Slitting Mill. On the way round catching sight of a stag (no not a Triumph but one with antlers!) We even had people waving and cheering as we drove by. We finished up at a walkers'/ biker's rest area and not only had more coffee



but entertainment as well from the local bird life singing away, not to mention the visiting Woodpecker.

My thanks to all that turned up and especially to Gavin and Dawn who not only telephoned Bill, but lead us round parts of the Chase on a scenic traffic free run.

Regards to all

Bob

In addition to that I managed to fit in another Track Day at Marham with half the committee on display

Great fun and far less damaging to tyres than last time, due to fitting polyurethane suspension bushes. Makes a marked difference to handling.

Toby Anscombe, Gary Lazarus and I were joined by Bob Tooke and Steve Murrell for the adventure, run by RAF personnel for charity. Another Midget, not one of ours (yet) had a rollover caused by a mishandled modern car in a chicane.

Although damaged and the screen wiped right off the car the driver was OK after a precautionary visit to Hospital in Kings Lynn. And the body shell was intact, just needing some panel beating and paint!

And Geoff managed a fast trip up to Derbyshire for a tune up at Peter Burgess's rolling road. Actually he had a much faster trip back! All in all a busy start to the summer period.

Bill Mohan
SS&NB area rep 1067

NW Area Report

Nothing to report as we haven't had our May meeting at the time of writing. IMPORTANT – we are NOT AT THE KILTON in June but meeting at The Plough Inn at Euxton, situated between Leyland and Chorley in lovely Lancashire. Back to the Kilton in July.

That's all for now, see you at the Plough.

Les

Market Place

Adverts to Alan Lo, 23 Charnell Road,
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Apology to the seller whose email content was removed by anti-virus software before I could retrieve it.





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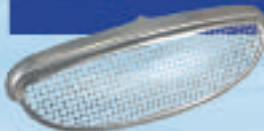
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