

Mascot



The Magazine
of the
Midget & Sprite
Club





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Also see the Club Nights section on page 4 for new areas and contacts.

Compiled by David Hill. Please advise me of any changes, errors etc.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: IF YOU EXPERIENCE 'MASCOT' PROBLEMS UPON RENEWAL, PLEASE CONTACT THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY OR THE TREASURER STRAIGHT AWAY. The Committee

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Editorial

Well, it's been a month of ups and downs, the ups being materialistic things like my new engine (thank you Alan Anstead, Toby and Bill) surpassing my wildest expectations during the last days of summer, blasting the Frogeye along the main runway of RAF Marham at more than 100mph, roof down in the sunshine whilst in the company of good friends. The beginning of a beautifully autumnal autumn. The colours of the leaves on the trees seem particularly vivid this year. Perhaps they just look that way while sitting behind the wheel of a Spridget on fast country lanes whilst again driving in the company of friends on a cold sunny Sunday in October.

I have a vivid image of brown and gold leaves flying up from behind the rear wheels of the MG Midget I was following, while driving under a thick canopy of trees. It's a memory that will stick with me for a long time.

The downs have been on a more human level, as we said goodbye to a friend and fellow Spridget owner, Nick Veuger who tragically left us at the age of 27. He was well known to many more of us than actually met him in person, through the various Midget and Sprite internet forums, where his knowledge and desire to share it with others, belied his relatively young age. Also in mid October we lost an Icon in Pat Moss, well known for her rally partnership with Ann Wisdom, driving amongst other things, Sprites and Big Healey's in the late fifties and early sixties. Many of us followed her exploits at the time, while others have subsequently read about her successes both in motor sports and Equestrianism.

They, along with Brian Archer, who passed away last month, will be missed by their nearest and dearest but also by a wider group of people whose lives they touched, sometimes unknowingly. It makes me value, all the more, the ups that life has to offer us.

So, as November kicks off, there are still many opportunities to get out and about in our Spridgets to enjoy the last months of the year.

On the 9th of November we will be holding our AGM at the Patrick Collection in Kings Norton, Birmingham and the following week on the 14th, 15th and 16th, the club will have TEN Spridgets on show with our biggest ever club stand at the Classic Motor Show at the NEC. It would be wonderful if you could attend both events and we'd love to see you. However, instead of hopping into your modern car (if you have one) and shooting up the motorway, why not get the Spridget out and find an alternative route along the back roads and country lanes. Take your time and enjoy the journey, as well as the destination. I know I will.

Gary & 'Gaps'

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: Andy Cross's very original MkII Sprite



John Sprinzel and Bic Healey presenting the Michael Turner painting to Pat Moss and Ann Wisdom to celebrate their sensational victory on the Liege Rome Liege Rally in 1960

Club Nights

- 1st Monday **London Area** (Congestion Zone) – 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 Plough**, Potterhanworth Booths, LN4 2AU, south east of Lincoln on B1190 at B1202 junction. 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 November 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.
- 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 Wednesday **Home Counties North West** for members in Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks, N. London or anyone interested! Meet at the **Chequers Inn**, Redbourn, AL3 7AD from 6:30pm. Please contact Chris Jackson Tel: 01707 261567 or Mark Hall, Tel: 01296 660103
- Last Thursday **Somerset** – Meet at The Lord Nelson, Norton-sub-Hamdon. 8.00pm
- Most Sunday Lunchtimes **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Spotted Cow**, Marston Meysay

Events

From David Hill & Webmaster Toby Anscombe

Events organised for 2008 so far

November

Friday 14th To Sunday 16th Classic Car Show at the NEC.

December

Sunday 7th Cambridgeshire Area are having their Christmas Dinner at the Mad Cat, Pidley. Contact Dave Dixon on 01733 222810

Wednesday 10th Warwickshire Area's Christmas Dinner at The Green Dragon. Details from Sheila Yates, 01608 665066 or email: chrishe@tiscali.co.uk

Sunday 14th Dorset Area's Christmas Meal at Bulbury Woods Golf Club. 12:30 for 1pm. Please ring Ian Beaver on 01722 326840 or Bryan Fox on 01202 683842

Tuesday 16th Kent/Surrey/Sussex Area's Christmas Meal at Woodman Public House, Sevenoaks, TN14 6BU. No other area meetings this month.

2009

May

Saturday 23rd To Tuesday 26th South East Area's Westward Ho! Tour. Visiting Somerset Exmoor and North Devon. Book now or you may be too late. Details Julie: john_julie@mac.com or Helen: h.ward@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk

June

Sunday 7th Dorset Area will be attending the New Forest Run organised by MGOC 1009. Further details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.

Thursday 11th To Sunday 14th South East Area's annual June Battlefield Tour visiting museums, monuments and castles around Amiens. Contact Alan Anstead, alan.anstead@btopenworld.com.

Sunday 14th Dorset Area are organising their annual "MGs at Kingston Lacy" with all proceeds to Dorset Air Ambulance. Further details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.

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

As the season draws to a close (except for the hardy souls) I had the story below from Alan Anstead which I think illustrates what Mutual Assistance is all about.

Nigel's car stopped on the Southdowns Run and he was towed home. At my suggestion he had, earlier, fitted an Aldon Ignitor electronic

ignition system to replace points and condenser. I had previously fitted a Sports Coil (Lucas DBL105) to his car at a club night. I was on holiday so he took his Dizzy out and asked the "experts" at the Surrey meet how to reassemble the points etc. in order to 'prove' that the electronic ignition was at fault as he suspected. He reassembled the dizzy

with points and condenser and it was still dead so he waited for my return from holiday.

I thought it best if I went to his place, forty miles away, and had a look. Preceding the rainfall I had a nice drive, along quiet country lanes, past Redhill once clear of M25. With "expert" advice, or Nigel's interpretation of expert advice, it was all wired up incorrectly. With tree foliage and frogeye bonnet for shelter against the rain and church bell practice, across the road, for 'music while you work' I set to and rewired. The engine started then died. By swapping parts about the fault was traced to the rotor arm. With new rotor arm and retiming to suit the points system the car was soon running sweetly. Then I refitted the Aldon Ignitor which was not the culprit, retimed, and hopefully Nigel will have some trouble free running once the weather clears.

He is now seeking a spare baseplate to load with condenser and points should the electronic ignition go "pop" on the road. An e-mail around S.E. Area members has brought a mass of offers of a spare Dizzy baseplate.

If anyone is suffering the frustration of serial breakdown of modern condensers I am led to understand that Swiftune, of Bethersden, Kent are supplying heavy duty units for racing, but at a cost of £25 each. Anyone want to purchase, road test, and report back? Has anyone experience of the Moss heavy duty rotor arms?

I had exactly the same problem some year ago with a Mini. Unfortunately the rotor arm was the LAST thing to be exchanged for new, next time it will be the FIRST!

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

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The Lucas RB106 Control Box

Part 5: The 'Series' & 'Load' Turns

In our continuing discussion of the RB106 control box, we have so far made two extremely dangerous assumptions: the first is that the dynamo is able to generate unlimited amounts of current and the second is that the battery is always fully charged. Both assumptions are incorrect for reasons that are probably pretty obvious to everyone. The armature of a dynamo will overheat and ultimately fail if too much current flows through its windings and this can happen, for example, if the dynamo is connected to a very low resistance or, worse, a short circuit. Flat batteries probably require no extra explanation for who amongst us can raise their right hand and say that they have never experienced one? Not many, I suspect.

To understand why these two assumptions are so dangerous for the RB106 charging circuit, we must look again at last month's diagram (Figure 1) and see what happens if the battery is flat. Glossing over the possible reasons for this flat battery, let us assume that the rest of the car's electrical system is in perfect order and that the owner is embarrassed, red-faced, cursing and anxious to get going. The gentle battery charger solution with an armchair, a calming cup of tea and the newspaper is not a viable option on this particular occasion. Instead, we shall assume that the owner opts for either a quick push- or jump-start.

Once the engine does start and any jump cables are removed, everything will behave normally at first – but only so long as the cut-out switch remains open (i.e. only so long as the engine idles and the ignition warning lamp glows). Initially, as the engine speeds up, neither the regulator nor the cut-out can know that the battery is flat (both assume that the

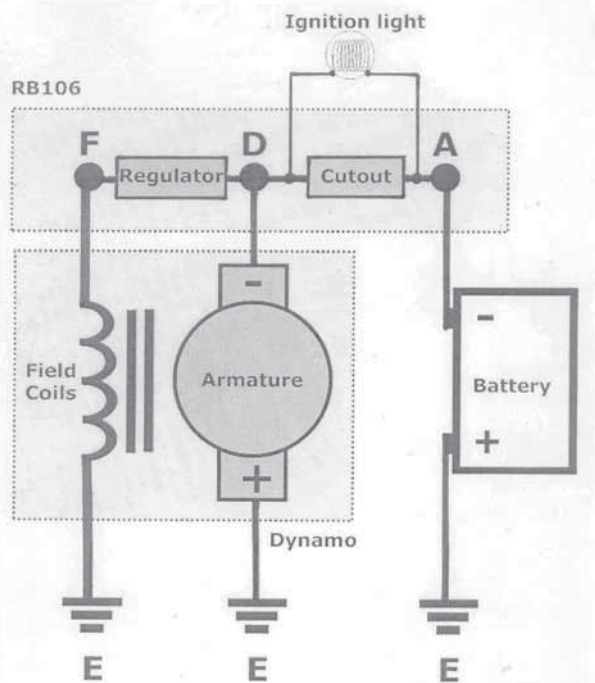


Figure 1

battery is fully charged). The dynamo voltage will therefore rise to the value pre-set at the regulator and the cut-out switch will close at the moment when the dynamo voltage is equal and opposite to that of a *fully charged* battery.

When the cut-out switch closes in this situation, like Houston we have a problem. Because the battery is flat, its voltage is *less* (perhaps much less) than that of the dynamo¹. The dynamo is therefore connected to a much smaller resistance than usual and so a large current will begin to flow immediately from dynamo to battery. At the same time, the cut-out contacts will remain even more tightly closed than usual because a larger

¹ Continuing the analogy used earlier in Part 2, the Sumo wrestlers are not balanced here (i.e. the dynamo 'pressure' is larger than the battery 'pressure').

than normal current will be passing through those extra ingenious turns² on the cut-out bobbin. If, in addition, an extra load is now placed on the battery (e.g. by switching on the headlamps), an extremely heavy current will flow in the charging circuit as the poor dynamo endeavours to maintain the voltage pre-set at the regulator. Unless something extra happens very quickly now inside the RB106 control box, this large current might destroy both dynamo and battery (the dynamo because its armature windings might overheat and burn out, the battery because the large current might exceed its limits of safe charging). The worst-case scenario is when the battery is not only flat but 'dud' with an internal short that further reduces its resistance: in this disastrous situation, the dynamo might be connected to something approaching a total short circuit!

Disaster can be avoided if, somehow, the operational voltage setting of the regulator can be varied automatically, depending upon the current that is flowing from dynamo to battery. If the voltage pre-set by adjusting the spring tension at the regulator contact points is a *maximum* rather than a constant value and if this setting can be *lowered* suitably if the difference between dynamo and battery terminal voltages is too great, then the voltage difference can be reduced and the charging current can be limited to the maximum safe output of the dynamo. This is exactly what the RB106 control box does and, astonishingly, it does it with just a few extra twists of wire ...

Inside the control box, the ingenious extra turns on the cut-out bobbin (which, remember, carry all the useful output of the dynamo) do *not* go straight to terminal **A**. Instead, they continue through some additional 'series' windings on the regulator bobbin. These extra turns are wound in such a way that any current flowing in them will assist the opening of the regulator contacts and so *reduce* the voltage setting of the regulator: the heavier the current, the greater the magnetic pull of the bobbin, the sooner the regulator contacts will open and the lower will be the regulator's voltage setting.

These extra 'series' turns on the regulator bobbin terminate at the **A** terminal of the control box and the battery is connected directly to this terminal. The *number* of series turns is such that, as charging proceeds, the battery will receive a strong 'boost' charge at the beginning, to enable the battery to be recharged as soon as possible. When the battery is near-fully charged it receives, of course, only a trickle charge because at this stage the battery and dynamo voltages are balanced.

One final problem remains – if the battery is totally flat, the strong initial 'boost' charge can consume most of the current that the dynamo can provide safely. If our intrepid owner – anxious to forget the indignity of the flat battery – takes off immediately into the lashing rain of a winter storm on a moonless night, with heater, windscreen wipers, headlights etc, all switched on, a dangerously high current might still flow, despite the series turns on the regulator bobbin. To prevent further indignity, one or more additional turns are added to the series turns on the regulator bobbin and taken further to a terminal labelled '**A1**' (see Figure 2). These are called the 'load' turns and they operate only when electrical equipment in the vehicle is switched on: they further reduce the voltage setting of the regulator as the car's electrical system draws more and more current.

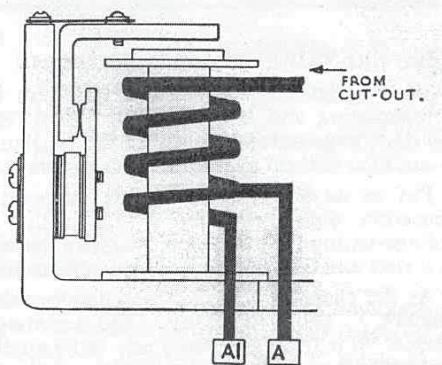


Figure 2 The series and load turns of an early pattern regulator. For clarity, the regulator windings have been omitted.

² See Part 4 'The Cut-out'

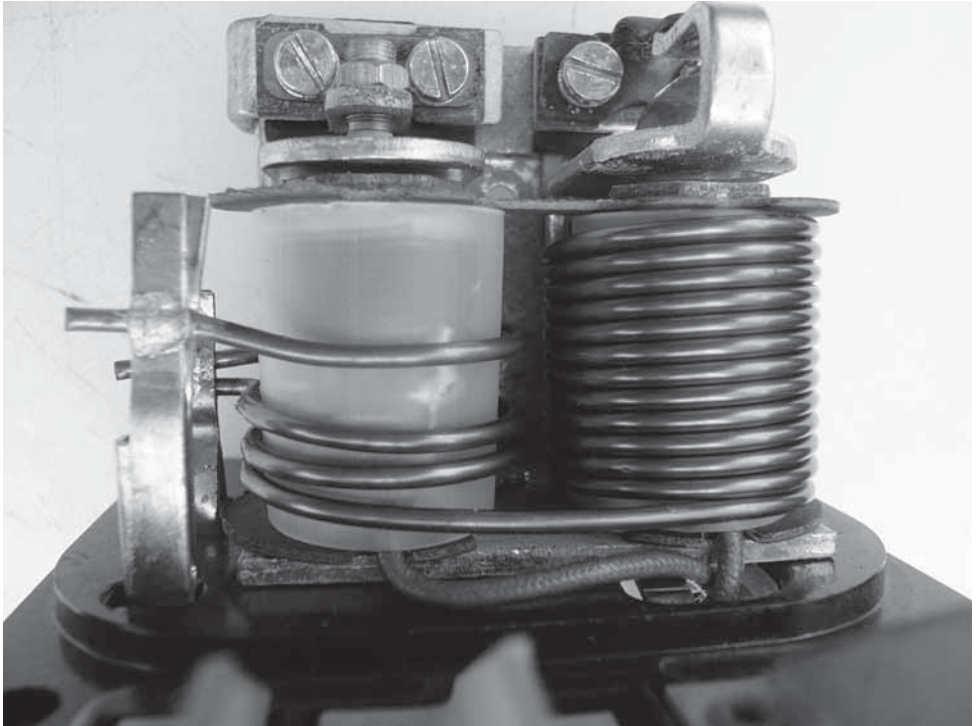


Figure 3 The series and load turns of a late pattern RB106. The red-covered wires carrying current to the regulator and cut-out windings (which lie beneath these turns) are clearly visible here.

These series and load turns together ensure that, when the cut-out switch closes, the dynamo will endeavour to charge the battery as quickly and as safely as possible. The battery will be charged more quickly on a hot sunny day because in this sort of ideal Spridgeting weather most of the dynamo's output can be used to charge the battery. If much of the car's electrical equipment is switched on, part of the dynamo's output must be diverted and the battery will, perforce, be charged more slowly.

Any attempt to include the series and load turns in Figure 1 destroys the essential simplicity of the diagram – but these turns are clearly visible in Figure 3, a photograph of the innards of a late-pattern RB106 control box. The single wire that makes the thirteen ingenious turns on the cut-out bobbin continues on to make two (or perhaps 2 and a half) series turns on the regulator bobbin before it is soldered to terminal **A**. A second short piece of wire, also soldered

to terminal **A**, then makes one load turn and ends at terminal **A1**. This second very short but vital piece of wire is all that distinguishes terminals **A** and **A1**; I believe it summarises perfectly the simple, robust and economical nature of the RB106 design; anyone who hankers after a modern electronic version of the RB106, stuffed full of transistors and other fancy solid state devices, should contemplate this one tiny piece of perfectly placed wire and remember the old adage: “an engineer is someone who can do for a bob what anyone else can do for ten quid”.

In the next thrilling instalment we shall complete our discussion of the RB106 with a description of the temperature compensation that is built into this remarkable gadget – but this will really be a discussion of the weakest link of the charging circuit: the battery.

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

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4059	Douglas McClymont	Cheshire	Frogeye
4060	anon	Hertfordshire	Midget 1500
4061	Roger Pearce	Surrey	Frogeye
4062	Vernon Docksey	Staffordshire	Arkley SS
4063	Munfred & Emma Lewis	Bedfordshire	Arkley SS
4064	Jan Venema	Netherlands	Frogeye
4065	Antony Allen & Fran Baskerville	Staffordshire	Austin Sprite
4066	Andrew Sworn	Hampshire	Midget Mk 2
4067	anon	Nottinghamshire	Midget Mk 3



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Midget Challenge at Mallory Park, October



Mallory Park was awash with warm sunshine when I arrived for the final raceday of the MG Midget Challenge series. Fifty free entrance tickets and dedicated parking spaces had been donated by Dennis Wharf of the MGCC's Midget Register and were advertised on our Club (and SS&NB) website.

I awoke to a glorious mid October morning and set off, hood down in shirtsleeves to the lovely Leicestershire race track. On this warm day I didn't even need a jacket for the drive home. Twelve Spridgets were parked in the MG car park by the time our final car arrived. SS&NB produced three of them, Mark Guthrie in his lovely 1098 D reg, Andy Bird and his son in Andy's white Frogeye Sprite. I was in my 1966 car Lara, the small dark green pleasure machine. Anita, our treasurer, with new committee volunteer Mark Boldry came from Yorkshire along with several other cars. Other cars came from Warwickshire area's Alan, whilst Dennis Wharf came in his superb "D" reg beauty, other cars made up the numbers (including a Yorkshire Innocenti Mini, en route to new ownership).

With eight scheduled races and the morning for practice sessions it was a very full day of motorsport ideal for the petrol heads amongst us. If you didn't hear or read about the free tickets you must be one of those who rarely check the club website for events to share in. **I strongly advise looking in once or twice a week.**

The racing was as eventful as you'd expect on a circuit as small as Mallory, lap times just under a minute are usual and it is an easy circuit to watch from most places. Here's the race blurb from Mallory Park's own webpage for a flavour of what we enjoyed... *"This will be the 14th round and Championship decider for three classes all of which are set to go out with a flourish at the Friendly circuit. The Formula Vee, Locost, and RGB are the Championships in question and they are expected to produce close fought racing to thrill the Mallory Park crowd. Practice will start at 0930 with the first race at 1340 there will be eight races in total to keep fans thrilled all day. Formula 4, Sports Racing, GT Challenge, MG Midgets and the 750 Trophy will all be duking it out at what is set to be an exciting days racing."* It was!

For me this was the culmination of a weekend motor racing fun as on the day before Gary Lazarus, Toby Ancombe, Bob Tooke (and his son Anthony with a mate) and I attended a Charity Track Day at RAF Marham, Norfolk.

Gary has been running his new engine in which, now ready for a re-torque, makes his Sprite significantly "quicker" than my car now. Bob has been running his debumpered EFI 1500 with a lowered suspension and my car Lara has been slowly sinking into the west (figuratively) as the new last August (2007) rear springs simply get more inverted by the day. This gives me plenty of grip coupled with a suitably low Centre of Gravity and is



quite good on track even if on the road it is becoming uncomfortable. We had several hours of track time, I used mine to learn further how the car reacts under severe turning conditions... OK I also had fun just pointing the car at the far horizon and driving flat out up the mile long runway... Who wouldn't?

If a track day opportunity arises I'd advise all with an interest in discovering just how good these cars are, to take it up and find out.

Bill Mohan

Musings from the Chair

Well the club is now officially 25 years (and one month) old and it's the time of year when all the official stuff has to be done. By that I mean the election of the committee for the coming year and the AGM. There are important decisions to be made about the future of the club and how it is run. This relates specifically to the club becoming a limited company and how the new structure i.e. directors will impact on the running of the club in the future. These changes will feed into the new constitution which will be voted on by the membership in the near future.

I encourage all of you to come along to the AGM, meet the committee and help inform the decisions on the future running of the club. It's your club so help make sure it's around for another 25 years.

Nigel Williams
Chair

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GATWICK





The French, Swiss, and Italian Job

Part 2 (or, The Charge of the Penarth and Worcester Motor Club)

In last month's MASCOT we followed Adrian, Dawn, David and Kate's trans-European journey from Worcester to Dijon. Now the adventure continues.

Monday July 21st. Dijon to Sion.

The day started well, weather-wise, and the miles flowed by. A coffee stop was taken in a village near Mont-sous-Vaudry. Onwards to Poligny and Champagne was the plan, but the French had other ideas in the shape of a 'deviation', which added at least 35 miles, sorry, 56 kms, to the journey and caused Holly to throw a fit. As we headed south so the countryside and the roads changed. Gone were the wide open spaces and large fields of ripening corn to be replaced by ever-larger hills and deep valleys, connected by winding roads. At la Cure, we turned left and after a friendly wave from a border guard, we entered Switzerland. Up and over the Col de la Givrine at 4000ft. and down the other side towards Nyon for an excellent view of Lake Geneva with the city and its famous waterspout. We followed the western and northern sides of the lake, through Lausanne and Montreux to Martigny and then following the Rhone valley to our hotel in Sion. Now we are in the mountains and the views from our hotel-room windows were wonderful.

Tuesday July 22nd. Sion to Como.

Today can be summed up in 2 words – Simplon and traffic. The hotel in Sion was superb in every way. We had a room facing south-west down the valley with mountains on either side – wonderful views. The food was good and the service very friendly, in short,

a hotel to be remembered. The drive east to the Simplon Pass was busy with traffic, so a stop at a road-side stall to buy fresh apricots got it out of our way. Onward and upward over the Simplon with great roads and stunning views on the way. David and I swapped places on the road several times for 'filming' purposes and lunch was taken in a restaurant at the 2006m summit, giving us our first taste of that wonderful dish called 'Potage'. This is a thick, creamy liquid which can best be described as 'soup with attitude'! Entry into Italy was a friendly wave from a border guard and a left turn at Domodossolo took us over another pass, lower at only 1020m, and then a long and winding road to Locarno – back in Switzerland. A nice but hot drive down the eastern shore of Lago di Maggiore was followed by nearly 2 hours of driving 'hell' through Varese, Malnate, and on to Como. A quiet day tomorrow, methinks!

Wednesday July 23rd. Como.

Just what we needed. The cars were left in the cool and secure underground car-park at the hotel and we took a long and slow boat trip from Como to Bellagio. This place is a delight: lots of narrow streets and alleyways with shops and restaurants and life taken at a slow pace. A very good lunch was taken at a lakeside hotel while watching the world go by, before a gentle stroll around the town in the afternoon. The return boat ride to Como was as relaxing as the outward one had been and the day was rounded off nicely with a drink in the Duomo Piazza in the cool of the evening. Perfect.

Thursday July 24th. Milan

The 'Girls' had decreed that a trip to Milan for shopping and sight-seeing was the order for the day, so, at 08.50, we boarded the fast train at Como for Milan. In Milan we joined the mighty throng of multi-national tourists heading for the Duomo and Piazzas in the older part of the city. The Duomo, or cathedral, is stunningly beautiful and worth every moment spent walking round, up, over, and through it, despite all the b-----y tourists! The day was very hot, in the mid 30s, so much time was spent in the shade if the many arcades and galleried walkways. The heat of the day was too much for us, so we took the Metro (that's an experience) back to Milan Central Station and the fast train to Como to cool off at the bar!

Friday July 25th. Como.

What a difference 22 years can make! The last time we came here the drive round the lake was a delight, close to the lakeside, it was a winding, often narrow, and undulating road with wonderful views over the lake and quite challenging to drive. Now it is for the most part a 2-lane dual carriageway with tunnels several miles long. Only the section from Como to Bellagio and south to Lecco remain with any character, taking in all the villages with their small shops, watering-holes, and restaurants, and offering the driver some interest and with a small sense of achievement upon arrival at your destination. But this small section is well worth the drive, the cool shade of the roads offering an antidote to the heat of the previous day, plus another chance of a

Chasing David up the Simplon Pass



'browse' in Bellagio. Lunch in a small 'local' café in Sorico at the northern end of the lake was very good with the car causing a lot of interest, as it did almost every time that we stopped – the Italians just LOVE their motorcars.

Saturday July 26th. Como to Verona.

The Lakes ain't what they used to be! I know that it's over 20 years since we were last here and a lot can, and has, happened in that time. Lake Garda was always the most 'commercial' of the 3 lakes but it seems to have taken a quantum leap. Anyway, I am ahead of myself. We left Como under a cloudy sky with temperatures in the low 20s and the promise of a cool day's drive. By 11 o'clock it was 25° and by lunchtime it was 30° and rising, it made 34° by mid-afternoon. Bergamo and Brescia were traversed with some ease and we took to the road alongside Largo di Garda. Salo was expensive-looking with fine villas and manicured gardens and big hotels with long names. Stops by the lakeside confirmed the rising temperature and humidity, driving at some speed bringing welcome relief. A visit to Verona's fine old town-centre was aborted due to heat fatigue and a lack of suitable parking, so Holly obliged us with a somewhat circular route to our air-conditioned hotel and a welcome shower. Verona will have to wait until tomorrow for us to grace it with our presence!

Sunday July 27th. Verona to Bolzano.

The promised visit to Verona did not disappoint. David's suggestion of taking a taxi to the centre was a good one, saving us the grief of finding parking places. The old town of Verona is a browsing place, mainly traffic-free with fine shops in arcades and small side-streets. Juliet's statue and balcony were a photographic 'must' as were the Roman Arena and lunch in a small café by the river in the company of the locals (a good pointer this) and various members of the



Lunch stop at the top of the Simplon Pass

local 'Polizei' (not so good). The taxi took us back to the hotel with the temperature in the mid-30s, and on to the road north, and WHAT A ROAD. We headed towards Rovereto and Trento and on to our next overnight stop at Bolzano. The drive through the Val Lagarina along the A22 is a 'must' – great scenery and an excellent road surface, and very popular with Bikers. A drop in the temperature and the humidity was most welcome, and the gently sweeping road was most enjoyable. Our hotel in Bolzano, the Stadt Citta, in the centre of the old part of the town was superb, with views of the mountains and secure underground parking. THIS is driving country, I can't wait for tomorrow! (Ed says you'll have to wait till December.)



On the shore of Lake Garda

**Words by Adrian Turley,
pictures by Dawn Turley**

The third and final part in next month's MASCOT.

Home Counties North West

September 28th Wimpole Hall World War II Weekend

It was a bit of a Darby and Joan do. Four cars, operated by crews all in the pay of HM Scrimp and Pensions, set out to recall the days of our youth. The day was very like that one, way back in '39, when it all started. Bright and sunny and good to be out. Wimpole Hall put on a good display of 'The War at Home' including The Home Guard, The Land Army and civilian activities, a soup kitchen, the local rat catcher and a public canteen. Some relevant vehicles in the form of Jeeps and Army trucks were on display.

Wimpole Hall staff, who all did an excellent job of looking after us, dressed in period costume as did many of the visitors. Lily



L to R Mike Gahan, Lilian and Vic Beaumont

sorted out her old Land Girl regalia and exchanged yarns with others who had served on the home front. Vic, who had served his time in National Service as a PT instructor, strutted his stuff. The rest of us remembered but were not senior enough to have taken part. The day afforded a most pleasant road run in each direction covering some of our favourite Hertfordshire Lanes.

Pub night, on Wednesday 24th, saw 12 bold souls at The Chequers, Redbourn, but the weather dissuaded all but Keith and Anne from being Spridget mounted. Some talk dwelt upon the 'Christmas do' which, we decided, should be in late January. Details will come later.

Brief, but to the point... Anyone interested in joining our games should contact me or Mark. Details in the front of MASCOT.

Chris

Editors note: Lilian's age is 84. Add Vic's age, 76 and the car, 45 total 205. Can anyone beat that? Lily uses the Sprite to do her Tesco shopping and pops out on fine afternoons and beats up the local Hertfordshire Lanes. Her other interests are monthly meetings with old comrades in pitchforks, fellow Land girls, and she is an enthusiastic member of the Frank Sinatra Society. No laurels for Lily to rest on, she's a goer. Her Sprite is the Green one in the picture.



refurbishment. I was sold to an engineer in Kanes Hill in Southampton who spent nearly 5 years rebuilding me. I was then sold to Mike Authers, a Midget and Sprite Dealer at Steventon near Abingdon (nearly back to my place of birth) where Ian & Chris became my 14th Owner.

I still have my original 1275cc engine but now with a new unleaded head. My original trim colour was autumn leaf but some when over the years has been changed to ochre (yellow). My home is now in Salisbury where I am well cared for and get plenty of exercise with my top down all through the year. I have covered 16,000 miles in the 5 and a half years with Ian & Chris.

Members' Cars – Ian & Chris Beaver

My name is 'Midgie' and I have been adopted by Ian & Chris since May 2003. They were going to call me Henrietta (after Thierry Henry the footballer) but the name Midgie just seemed to happen.

I was born between the 27th & 28th February 1974 and then dispatched to Weybridge Automobile Company Limited in Surrey about a month later. I spent 2 months gracing the showroom there before being sold to a lady from Leatherhead who kept me for 15 months. My next port of call was Sarisbury Green, Southampton where I belonged to a RN Lieutenant for the next 6 and a half years.

I then spent a year and a half in Gosport before moving on to my second lady owner in Waterlooville where I spent 3 years. My next stop was in our local area at Ringwood in Nov 1986.

Over the next 8 years I had 6 further owners in our local area, 2 of them being ladies, and moving between Bournemouth, Broadstone, Furzehill Wimborne, Colehill Wimborne (2 addresses) and then Canford Heath Poole. My longest stay being 3 years with one of the ladies at Colehill, Wimborne.

4 years was then spent in Portswood, Southampton at the end of which I was in a bit of a state and in need of major

My registration of VPL 531M seems to cause amusement with some people (something to do with panties I believe).

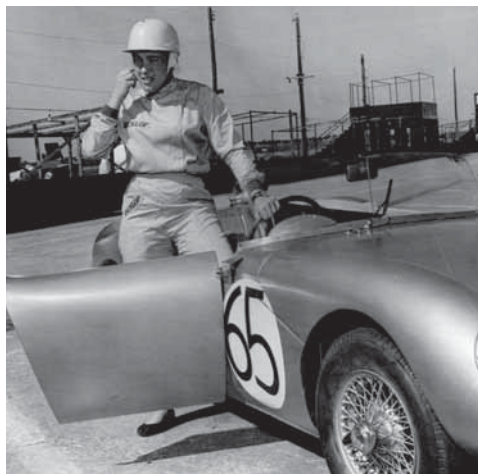
Pictured below are before and after pictures at the time of my refurbishment.



Ian Beaver (Dorset Area)

Pat Moss-Carlsson

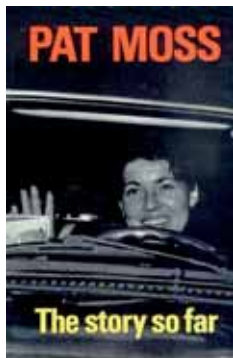
27 December 1934 – 14 October 2008



Pat at the Four Hour GT race at Sebring in 1961

I first met Pat in the mid fifties when we were both members of the Harrow Car Club, and competing with TR2s. Pat was already famous in the equestrian world, and had represented Great Britain with her show jumper Danny Boy. Triumph's competition manager Ken Richardson had missed his opportunity to sign Pat onto the Triumph team when he declined to pay her expenses for the RAC British Rally, and Marcus Chambers stepped in to finance her entry in an MG. We both joined the Abingdon competition department for 1958 and with Anne Wisdom as co driver, Pat soon began to make a mark in the tough sport of International Rallying. An early indication of her strength and determination came when several of us were driving separately to Silverstone for a test day with Marcus Chambers, the Abingdon Competition's Manager, and I came

*Pat's early
Autobiography*



across her wrecked Healey near Buckingham. Marcus and I took care of getting her car back to the factory and I visited Pat in hospital where she had stitches to her face and a very sore knee. The following day, after some pain injections, she took part in an International Show Jumping contest at White City and performed as if nothing had happened!

She was the first Lady driver to win an International Championship Rally, and chose the toughest of them all, The Liege-Rome-Liege Four day marathon to perform this feat. That she achieved this in the Austin Healey 3000 was an even greater testament to her skill and strength, as only a year before, Team Captain John Gott had offered the opinion that this car was too much for Pat to handle. Pat and Anne also won one of the rare and coveted Coupe Des Alpes in a Healey, and were International Rally Championship winners on a number of occasions. She also won a couple of International Rallies in the Mini. At a previous Liege event I had introduced Pat to Erik Carlsson, whom she would subsequently marry. Pat also raced one of my Sebring Sprites and joined her brother Stirling in my team cars for the Four Hour GT race at Sebring in 1961.



*Pat with brother,
Stirling*

After her years with BMC, Pat joined Ford for a time, and then went on to rally SAABs, where Erik had become one of the most successful SAAB drivers in history. With a career lasting over twenty years, which also included work's drives for Lancia, Renault and Toyota, Pat withdrew from the sport to concentrate on her first love – show jumping, encouraging her daughter to take up the sport. It was only in the last couple of years that Pat had shown up at Rally events with Erik, and at the 50th reunion of Ecurie Cod Fillet – that slightly eccentric gathering of Rally drivers from all over the world.

She was certainly a character who will be missed very much.

John Sprinzel

Variable Oil Pressure Relief Valve



The engine's oil pressure can be varied (normally increased) by using / fitting a stronger value spring from another A series variant in place of that which is housed in the side of the block, on Spridgets, under a metal cap situated on the drivers side of the engine. Some people also like to replace the original bullet shaped relief valve with a suitable sized ball to reduce the possibility of the former type sticking or perhaps just because it is worn. Fitting a ball or a stronger spring will increase the oil pressure but perhaps by too much. What is correct oil pressure? Don't ask me as I am no expert but Vizard suggests 60lbs at 3000 revs.

Whichever way, if the oil pressure is deemed to need altering it can be varied by the use of a variable oil pressure relief valve (1) as shown in the picture. The original bullet type valve (2) is shown with spring (3). The complete variable cover is shown and its component parts. The component parts are the original engine cover (4), a bolt, a nut (5) and a metal disc (6). It really is basic

and simple to make. Remove the engine's oil pressure relief cover and drill and tap a thread into it (0.250 or 0.375 UNF?). Use a suitable bolt with lock nut. All that is left to do is to make a small disc that will sit upon the end of the bolt within the cover and act as a seat for the spring. Assemble the whole and adjust the oil pressure by tightening or slackening the bolt thus increasing or decreasing pressure on the spring and ultimately on the valve or ball, whichever is used. It will be necessary to shorten the spring a tad, if lowering the pressure is your desire or if converting to a ball, before assembling the device. Once the desired oil pressure is obtained then lock off with the nut.

A simple idea and simple execution but some places will charge about £15 for you to purchase such a device.

Alan Anstead

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Jack Wheeler's Racing Sprite (Part 1)

Words by Martin Ingall (sebringssprite.com), pictures reproduced courtesy of John Phillips, Jonathan Whitehouse-Bird, as well as John Sprinzel and Tom Coulthard, authors of "Spritely Years"



A Sebring Coupé with a long racing pedigree, this Sprite has, amazingly, remained with its owner since he acquired it from the works (Donald Healey Motor Company) in 1960. Built in 1959 it was sold to Jack Wheeler by Louis Cassoni, who was salesman when John Sprinzel was in charge of the Grosvenor Street showroom, and Paul Hawkins was foreman of the workshop. It was then described by Cassoni as a "low-mileage company car, with a special specification". When Jack met him again at Lancaster Mews in 2005, he mentioned this to him, to which Louis Cassoni replied "Well, I'll give you your money back if you like!"

It is a little unclear as to whether all previous works Sprites bearing registration 7080AC were in fact the same car – Jack has seen pictures of Tommy Wisdom in Sicily, Moss at Sebring, and Wisdom again on the Alpine Rally, all with Sprites bearing 7080AC, prior to his ownership. It is possible the number was used on several of the Healey's cars at that time.



With newly fitted Peel alloy rear



On the 1967 Targa Florio

Jack initially ran the car in a few rallies and other modest events before deciding to go club racing. The car began as a standard-bodied Sebring and is pictured in "Spritely Years" fitted with a supercharger. A fibreglass Sebring bonnet was the first major modification, followed later by an alloy hardtop similar to those of Sprinzel's Williams & Pritchard coupés. Unable to afford W&P's prices, Jack obtained front, rear and side screens from Paul Hawkins and trotted off to Peel Coachworks for them to create a similar top. Jack made his own lightweight doors by stripping off the steel outer skins, and cladding them in aluminium. He bent the shape "over his knee" and was naturally proud to show me that the driver's door he made remains on the car today. Later, when funds allowed, Jack went back to Peel's and asked them to make him an alloy rear end. While there he noticed that they had made one for Douglas Wilson-Spratt which incorporated Bentley rear light units, so he asked for his to be fitted with these as well.

Jack lived, for a time in a flat in Netherhall Gardens, off Finchley Road (London) which he shared with Martin Davidson, Paul Watson, Graham White, and Andrew Marriott, the then editor of Motoring News. Jon Brown (he of



Original supercharged Sprite

Targa Rusticana and LeJog fame) also joined them for a while.

The group inevitably talked often about cars and racing over a beer in the local pub and on one occasion the subject got around to what was termed PROPER racing. Jack had always been fascinated by the Mille Miglia and had done a 'recce' of the course, but before he could 'get his act together' the Mille Miglia was abandoned on safety grounds, (in 1957). It was concluded that the only real race left was the Targa Florio which was run on public roads around the island of Sicily. Back at the flat, someone said "Well, why don't you do it then?" By this time the Sprite had been retired from club racing and a project to build the ultimate lightweight Mini was underway (this still awaits completion today!). "Well, what about the Sprite?", was the next suggestion. So, the Sprite was dragged out of hibernation and was modified to cope with long distance international events. Jack, and Martin Davidson, would share the driving and in years to come, they endeavoured to take part in 4 or 5 races on the continent each year. These included the 1000Kms at Nurburgring, the Targa Florio in Sicily, the Circuit of Mugello in Italy, and the 500Kms back at the Nurburgring. Mugello was a 40-mile road circuit over the mountains and back again.

Looking at the car today one can see the mods which were made over a period to improve handling, braking, performance and interior ventilation among other things. The team took part in 8 Targa Florios including the last run in 1973. The first four of these were with the Sebring Sprite and the later ones using a sports-racing car called a Daren.

Engine and transmission developments included several wet sump engines fitted with a wide shallow high-capacity sumps, before the dry-sumped XSP engines of varying capacities came along. Seeing that Geoff Healey was running MGB overdrive gearboxes in his competition Sprites, Jack followed suit, these ideal for circuits like the "Little Madonie" with long straights followed by twisty mountain sections. Later he acquired one of the few 5-speed boxes developed by Donald Healey/BMC. Jack also managed to borrow an 8-port cylinder head from Eddie Maher of BMC (this has often been referred to as the Weslake head, but Jack says it is in fact one developed by Morris Engines. Harry Weslake's grandson



*The man himself,
Jack Wheeler*

apparently has one of the true Weslake heads which is somewhat different. Jack Cramp, Weslake's flow-tester, who still lives near their former base, in Rye, Sussex was able to give Jack this information – the Weslake head has round exhaust ports while the Morris ones are square). He was lucky to be given the inlet manifolds by Paul Ivey, who he was not meet again for over 30 years. The manifolds had been made by Bob Eccles, and when Jack needed another set for the much more recent re-build, Bob's pattern-making company was able to oblige once again. They went to enormous trouble to re-create these manifolds from scratch, for which Jack is very grateful. Another modification was to create dual-circuit brakes using twin Girling master cylinders in the Sebring pedal box, and fabricating a separate narrow box for the clutch cylinder and pedal.

The Sprite's (period) racing career came to an end at the Nurburgring in 1969 when Jack rolled the car going through the Carousel. Early in the race a throttle spring inside one of the Webers had broken up and jammed the throttle. This had no bearing on the subsequent accident but Jack lost considerable time trying to affect a remedy in the pits putting the car out of contention. Apparently before World War II one was considered quite a hero if you could achieve a lap of the Nurburgring in under 10 minutes, so Jack, being now well behind, decided he could at least try for that. It was in this attempt that he 'over-did it' and was lucky to escape without injury, though the car was mangled – especially the streamlined bonnet of which little remained. After the event the car was dismantled and, due to lack of space, parts were distributed among numerous friends and relatives. Some 25 years later, it all took some finding again when Jack decided to restore it.

Part 2 in December's MASCOT

Cambridgeshire Report

The main event of October was the treasure hunt, which sadly Pat and I missed, having been forced to lie in the sun on a perfect French white sand beach instead, however I have my sources of information. The event started off with everyone meeting up at the Mad Cat in Pidley (our normal pub meeting venue) on a gloriously sunny day, typical Cambs event weather (I nearly got sunburnt and I wasn't even there). Numbers were a little depleted with us in France and one or two others who wanted to attend having to cancel, but even so 6 gleaming Sprites and Midgets glinting in the sun outside the Mad Cat can't be bad, I understand Rob even turned up in his latest yellow Spridget. The event kicked off very democratically with the drawing of lots to determine the order for the staggered start, I suspect this has something to do with Pat nav and I not taking part, since normally we get dispatched first (since we are expected to be last home) so that we stand a fighting chance of all sitting down to a meal together before closing time (yes our treasure hunts always include food). I am not at all that sure that the starting order makes much difference since we all seem to end up passing one another travelling in different directions before very long anyway.

I always think of a treasure hunt as an excuse for a run around some country lanes a bit off the beaten track, through some unexplored villages with a few clues to solve and treasure items to find for added interest (not a drive up the A1M Nigel). I think Hubie and Sally tried to break with tradition and came up with some more cryptic clues for place names rather than just relying on anagrams (excellent idea). I remember being on a treasure hunt many years ago, in an open topped Triumph Herald (that tells you how long ago) loaded with people, and stopping at a crossroads in the middle of nowhere trying to work out which road went to "tartan Tim removes his tail and goes round to the south" a passing motorist even stopped (seeing we looked lost) to ask us where we were going. I won't tell you the answer to the clue just in case I decide to recycle it next time I devise a treasure hunt. I think everyone had an enjoyable day and

Hubie and Sally are to be commended for making the effort to compile the event (well done Guys) and Rob also deserves a mention for turning out to swell the numbers when he was feeling decidedly unwell.

The event ended as it had started, in brilliant sunshine at the Mad Cat where the scrutineers checked the mileage, the answer sheets and the collected treasure before declaring Fred & Chris the overall winners with a tie for second place between Mick & Trish, and Graham & Maggie. Nigel and Diane having been singled out for silverware at the previous last couple of competitive events the group have attended, graciously decided to take a detour along the nation's first highway and give the others a chance. The event was followed by an excellent meal, the meal was so good that that the general consensus was that we should book the Mad Cat for our Mascmass meal, which is exactly what we did (see events page for details).



The next item on the agenda was the monthly Mad Cat night, I was in the Volvo since the Sprite was still in pieces, and on my own since Pat had to work. I arrived to find Fred already in residence. We were soon joined Graham, HTJ, Mick, Dave, Chris & Derek, a few of the regulars could not make it and oddly none of the ladies at all, so we opted to postpone the 2009 event planning and get on with the serious business of the fumble bag and drinking beer instead. HTJ provided the bag and generously awarded me 80% for my efforts, which put me up with the front-runners or maybe even in the number one slot, however Mick was definitely man of the match with his correct identification of the giant bottle opener. All in all it was a very pleasant and amusing evening.

Dave Dixon

Warks Talk



*Warks area club stand
at the GWR Rally*

For this month we had nothing planned, but Andy Bourne, who is also a member of the MG Owners Club, had a meeting at Blenheim Palace and we have him to thank for the following account:

A last minute thing! Whilst working at Rosemarie and Jim's on Saturday, 20th September, the conversation turned to what we were doing at the weekend. I announced that I was joining the Arden M.G.O.C. on their run to the Blenheim Classic Car Show on Sunday (an Andrew Greenwood event). The idea immediately appealed to Jim especially as rare good weather was forecast and he contacted Alan and Peggy who were also looking for a day out. A phone call to M.G.O.C. rep, Fred, confirmed that we could join their run, which was to start at the Golden Cross in Ardens Grafton at 8.30 am prompt.

As is the norm, we from MASC were at the said rendezvous in good time, but there was no sign of Fred and Co! However our fears were soon put to rest with the arrival of Fred in his gloriously restored MG Magnette and Paul in his MG Roadster. I already had my pass and Fred had one spare which was, of course, allocated to Alan and Peggy's MGC, this was an MG Event. Rosemarie and Jim were not so lucky being in their Austin Healey 100-4 and would have to pay on arrival.

Paul had worked out a scenic route and set of at a cracking pace in the "B" with us, normally more sedentary, MASC members in hot pursuit!! We drove along some quiet

and very scenic lanes from Ardens Grafton, via Bidford, Honeybourne and Chipping Camden, and across country to join the A34 at Little Wolford and progressed onto Woodstock. After some initial confusion with the marshals, we were soon in place parked on the grass among a truly stunning array of vehicles and motorcycles. There was something to suit everyone's taste, with the criteria being pre 1980. We were soon joined by Geoff and Janet, swelling the MASC members to number more than our hosts!! As the weather was sunny all day we were able to enjoy a picnic and stroll around the beautiful grounds at Blenheim Palace and the various car stands. There was a Ring Event for those inclined to be judged, with Jim, Alan and Geoff participating. I decided to deny the audience the pleasure of my rubber bumpered Midget. All in all a good impromptu day out, especially as so many events have been washed out this year.

The GWR Steam and Vintage Car Show was held on Sunday, 12th October and 15 cars made their own way to the venue, the Cheltenham Racecourse, where we were greeted by Terry Horler and John Platt, who had organised the event for us. Apart from a few, who shall be nameless, we made it before the 9.00 am deadline. We started the run, with the hood off, in a cool mist, but this soon lifted and the day was hot, with a totally clear sky and plenty of sunshine. There were cars and steam engines of all types, plus a variety of associated stalls, so there was



Lining up for the Show Ring

and to ensure that all necessary tasks are completed. Mo and Phil Woods have invited us to a "Sparkly Spridget Soiree" on New Year's Eve, not the 3rd January as announced at the meeting. There is a Severn Valley Railway Event on the 21st February, 2009 and Spridget Treffen is from June 5th to June 7th. However, planning 2009 will be the focus of our November meeting, so do come prepared with your contributions to the calendar.

Chris and Sheila

a lot to peruse, and for those who still had time there was also a huge Boot Sale at the racecourse, which is a regular Sunday event. In the middle of the day there was time for the cars to be paraded in the main ring and for their owners to talk about the work that they had done to produce such beautiful specimens, while a large crowd gathered to listen and watch. By mid afternoon, most members had walked themselves to a standstill and returned to their cars to sit and enjoy the sunshine and catch up with everyone's news. Geoff kindly supplied wine for the navigators.

There will be an additional meeting on Wednesday, 15th October, to discuss our plans for the NEC, with its celebration theme



The Punctual Group at the GWR Rally

Last Month's Caption Competition

I'm pleased to say that the caption competition was a success both in terms of quality and quantity, with some of you sending in multiple answers.

Alan Ansted (the two-footed one in the photo) had the job of choosing the winner and before you ask, he wasn't aware of the identities of the contributors.

So here are the results ... (metaphoric drum roll) ...

In first place and therefore the winner of the magnificent



MASCOT Binder, with the caption: "Do you know what gets my goat? A photo in MASCOT without Frogeye content" From Terry Horler.

In second place: "We're not fussy who joins Midget and Sprite Club, just sign here". From Geoff Hunter

In third place: "Look! It's down here in black and white." Brian Jeffery

Congratulations to Terry and look out for other caption competitions in the future.



Linc'slot

Pete & Mary, late but unbowed

You may, or may not have noticed, that the Lincolnshire group have recently changed our meeting place. Well, our reorganisation isn't over yet and I'm afraid we are going to have to bother David Hill again in the near future, to change our Club Night page entry. Not only have we soon realised that The Plough is not suitable for our needs, but we have also decided that a mid-week, evening meeting is probably not the best arrangement for our far flung membership. Having to travel long distances on Lincolnshire's narrow country roads at night, with only the dimming headlamps of our elderly Spridgets to light the way is not the

ideal situation. However, I can't think of many more enjoyable things to do on a Sunday morning than to take a drive on our beautifully winding and undulating Lincolnshire roads in a lovely sprightly Spridget to take Sunday lunch with our like-minded chums in a welcoming country pub.

Until we find the right combination of day and pub, I must recommend that anyone wishing to join in the fun of a Linc'slot Meeting should contact me first. To confuse you, and me, even further, the next gathering is set for lunch on Saturday 1st November at The Vine, South Thoresby.

One Night in Glaisdale

At 7am. On Saturday 20th September, Tim & Jill called for Sue & me, and we duly set off for Glaisdale in North Yorkshire. The plan laid by Phil, aided and abetted by Annie, was to spend one night under canvas in a picturesque, tents only, campsite which boasts campfires and barbeques and very little else.

After a quick stop for petrol we headed north for the Humber Bridge. I was using my new Sat Nav. and found it quite a novelty to know what speed I was actually doing, as my speedo has never told the truth all the years I've owned it. Anyway we made good time despite the early fog and were looking forward to meeting Phil & Annie & Milo the Jack Russell and Pete & Mary at the far end of the £2.70p toll bridge. There was no sign of Pete & Mary so a quick phone call revealed that they had broken down for the first time and the AA was in attendance. As Tim was carrying spare points and pumps, he set off back across the £2.70p toll bridge, to the rescue. Phil & Annie and Sue & I continued line astern heading for breakfast at Morrison's at Malton. That's when Phil broke down for the first time. His rear offside tyre went down before my very eyes. We stopped and inflated it with an electric pump I happened to be carrying. Unfortunately the inner tube was too badly split and we only managed one more mile. We didn't have a spare wire wheel between us and my rostyles wouldn't fit, so we took the wheel to Malton and got it retubed for £7.00. We then raced back to the ladies who were guarding the contents of my boot and Phil's three wheeled



Mary & Sue, breaking camp

Midget. That was when we heard that Pete had broken down again. We drove over the beautiful moors, up and down hills of 1 in 4 with grass along the middle. The scenery was stunning when one got a chance to look away from the road for a second.

We checked in to the site and set up camp. The others arrived an hour later and did likewise. Pete's tank was almost dry so a trip to Whitby was planned. Halfway there Pete broke down for the third time. Fortunately it turned out to be a lack of petrol.

Whilst Tim was pumping a washer bottle full from his own tank, the girls were in the woods gathering fallen branches for the campfire back at base. I think they got three boots full. After we filled up we returned for a barbeque and bonfire and a few bottles to help us face the night.

The next day involved a sunny visit to Whitby and a journey home via some stunning convoluted roads of 1 in 4 and even 1 in 3 hills. Magic.

Many thanks to Phil & Annie for their navigating and booking skills.

Brian Jeffery

NW Area Report

Not a lot to report this month. As it was October then it was Ian's quiz night, once again very well done and organised including presharpener pencils for everyone – once a teacher always a teacher. Mind you I thought they used chalk slates when he was teaching, good to see he is making the effort to keep abreast with the times.

And now the moment you have all been waiting for, who actually won this year's quiz? Well it's congratulations to Bernie and Lynne, well deserved winners.

Don't forget November club night: this will be a very special evening. We are privileged to be having a talk from racing driver Derek Walker. Derek is one of, if not the most successful clubman's racing drivers of all time; he has won more races at Oulton Park than anyone else. His experience covers many years and a wide range of vehicle types. He is currently campaigning in the ex-David Rees Terrier Formula Junior. Please be at the Kilton for 8.00pm.

Well that's it for now. See you at the Kilton on 12th November.

Les

Hampshire members 'Do Their Own Thing'

Vic & John at Goodwood Revival

On Friday 19th September 2008 we visited the Goodwood Revival. We had a fine drive down, the 30 or so miles from our home in Holybourne, and parked up in the pre '66 parking area. Overhead were flying a Spitfire and a Mustang, and very soon the track was alive with the sounds of cars and motorcycles of a bygone era – and what fantastic sounds they were! So much to see, racing practice, paddock area and pits, stalls, flying displays and much more, next year will have to be more than one day. We left at about 6.30pm and had a lovely journey home through the Sussex countryside with the setting sun. Importantly the Sprite behaved itself. Here's looking forward to next year.

Alternatives to going out in the Frog! – 'chuff' Harriet

Sunday 21st September 09:15, I've reached a farm somewhere near Hinton Ampner, and I'm polishing the brassware on The Mac. This is an 8HP Maclaren general-purpose traction engine called The Favourite, and we're off to The Hinton Arms for a show.



When I went two years ago it was my first time steering, and I had plenty of Jaguars to aim at as I went into the car park, this time we didn't! There were, however other classics to fill the bill! This year we stopped for water at the bottom of

the field, and then went and did a neat piece of reversing (if I say so myself!) into a shady spot next to a Healey. There were all sorts of classics, cars, trucks, tractors – oh and two Frogeyes! We then had the polishing to do; cleaning the paintwork and keeping the engine alight for the return journey. This show is a small one, very informal and good fun. You turn up, have a look/drink/meal and then leave when you want. If you are lucky, you might win a plate – and yes we did! Winner of

the Commercials category, great stuff! All this before commencing our epic 8 mile journey to Twyford taking an hour and a half and causing havoc with the traffic flow in the area ... I counted twenty cars at one point, and only stopped there because they went back round the corner! The unfortunate thing about steam is that you don't want to stop on a hill, so to anyone who was caught behind us we apologise but it was such a lovely afternoon! And what's this to do with Spritely things? Well, I would never had got involved with the Mac if it hadn't been for meeting Pete after Terry who started the Hampshire chapter, so thanks guys!

Jenny is On the Road Again

Two years ago at a club outing to the Fairford Show I saw a 1967 Mk 4 Sprite for sale. Barry's Frogeye had been on the road for a couple of years by then and I was in need of a new 'run-about'. I fancied a car that would be fun to drive – and it was for a year. My little car came off the road last September for a few bodywork repairs but unfortunately, like Topsy the list just grew and grew and it was a whole year before we took to the road again.



I am extremely happy to say that after an extensive body overhaul and complete refurbish of the interior, me and my car can be seen running around the roads of Berkshire once again – and I'm loving it!

**Jointly written by Harriet Langridge,
John and Vic Foard and Jenny Green and
compiled by Barry**

More information as usual at
www.midgetandsprite-hampshire.info

Yorkshire Report



Spridgets on track at Castle Combe

Due to some email problems last month, the Editor only received my pictures and not my report. So here it is with this month's added on. Despite the lack of a summer we have still managed to cram in a lot since Spridget 50 at Gaydon, to where a good number of our friends travelled from Yorkshire, County Durham and Tyne and Wear. The memories of that event will last for a long time.

MGCC Silverstone in June brought the opportunity to see Spridgets in action in the Midget Challenge, Cookshoot Cup and Enduros. Mark sealed a deal for Steve Collinson's road-going class Midget to race next season. Carlo has been enjoying the improved performance and handling of his MKI Midget, now with a 1275cc engine. Now the brakes need attention!

In July Mark flew to Italy to rescue Frogeye Alice after her Australian owner, Bob Nisbet, was taken seriously ill. Then we were off to Le Mans Classic with Andrew H and Tim & Sarah. Two Frogeyes and Sebrina. We met up with the SE group in Chinon and of course at Le Mans, parking with L'Amicale Spridget. On the way home we stopped overnight near Reims; by chance very close to the old 12 hours Reims Circuit de Gueux. Our B&B hosts organised a visit to a Champagne house and we ended up enjoying a glass of champagne in the glorious mid-morning sunshine in front of the pits.

At the Newby Hall show Roger's MKIV Sprite was awarded Highly Commended. We met a few potential members at a show at Ripon Racecourse the following weekend on the only hot day of the summer.

In August it stayed dry for the annual BBQ at Mark's parent's place despite heavy showers close by. Plenty of classics to admire as usual.

Miraculously we had dry weather for the track day at Croft Circuit. Our group consisted of Midgets and Sprites, a Mini Cooper S, a Downton tuned Austin 1300 and a Caterham. Nick V had problems with a newly fitted alternator on route from Durham. Luckily he got sorted out with some help from John S so was able to enjoy a whole day of driving his beautifully restored Midget. Nick M was able to take himself round this year in his Caterham. He drove very well growing in confidence during the day. In one session Nick's Caterham, Tony's Toyota-powered Midget and Mark driving my Ford-engined Midget had a few laps together of spirited driving. We had no breakdowns this year although plenty of fettling occurred during the day. We had one red flag caused by a flying bonnet that luckily landed safely without damage.



Tiger at Park Rash



Some of us took up the chance for free entry to the Oulton Park Gold Cup weekend. Thanks to Les and Ian of NW Area for organising. It was good to meet our friends from across the Pennines again.

On 29th August we received the tragic news of the death of our friend Nick Veuger from Durham. Many others also knew him through his postings on the Bulletin Board. He had planned to join us the very next day on a Weardale Run organised by John & Carol. He would have enjoyed the homemade cakes at their farm in Frosterley where they offer B&B. Then he and his Midget would have joined the 4 cars of John & Carol, Lisa & Rob, Tim & Sarah and Mark & I on an excellent drive from Weardale over to Teesdale and back along some great roads finishing at The Black Bull opposite Frosterley station. Nick was in our thoughts throughout the day. Some of us were able to attend his funeral and pay our respects as representatives of the Spridget community. Nick had been talking to Lisa about doing last October's Tyne Bridges Run again. This run starts in Newcastle and heads up the Tyne valley crossing the river many times on the way to its source near Alston in Cumbria. This event will now be dedicated to the memory of Nick. Look out for details.

Meetings

In May we met at Ye Jolly Farmers in Dalton and welcomed Claire & Nigel with their smart Frogeye for the first time. In June we travelled east to The Half Moon at Elloughton and invited the Mini Cooper Register to join us. July brought us back west meeting at The Red Lion at Burley in Wharfedale. The August venue was The Chequers at Ledsham where we met Dave T & girlfriend Sophie with her Inca Yellow 1500 Midget. At September's meeting we welcomed David from Pickering and Kevin from Easingwold. David has a MKIII Midget experiencing possible carburettor problems. He is also currently restoring a

MKII Sprite. Kevin has a RWA Midget and is waiting the arrival of his Frogeye project. Some work has been already been done but it needs finishing and putting back together.

From October to April our monthly meetings will revert to the first weekend of the month. Please contact me for details.

In September Mark & I travelled south in pouring rain for the MGCC Midget Register Run. We left the Discovery and trailer near Upton upon Severn thanks to Roly, and then followed his Midget to the start venue at Toddington Railway Station. To our surprise John & Ann Platt turned up, their other plans having been cancelled due to floods. The route took in some great roads as usual and the only problem for many was the ford. We were amongst the few brave (or daft) enough to take the plunge.

The following day Mark & I were at a dry Castle Combe for a Register Track Day with MGs on Track. Mark had great fun as there were a few well turned out Spridgets for the Atlantis to play with one being Jim Mackie's road-going race Sprite.



Membership secretary
John Platt, takes a dip

For our October meeting Ken N not only organised a great route through the Dales but also managed to arrange clear blue skies for most of the day. Eight Spridgets, a Mercedes 280SL and a modern (Midget not quite ready) set off from Leyburn Market Place heading south for Kettlewell at Hawes before turning north taking in the challenging 1 in 4 hairpins at Park Rash. The lunch stop was the Three Horse Shoes at Wensley where it was warm enough to sit outside and catch up with everyone's news. The afternoon route took us north from Askrigg over Satron Moor along a gated road with fantastic views. We passed through Reeth (good spot for tea and cakes) and finished up in Richmond Market Place. Those who managed to meet up enjoyed a well-earned liquid refreshment before thanking Ken for organising the day and heading off home. You can see some photos from the run on www.pipspatch.com together with her article 'Topless in October'.

Anita

Scotland Report 4

Bejagers! The meringues at the cake shop at Kilncadzow are magic! (See www.glasgow-mg-and-triumph.co.nr). Poking fun at myself as an envoy of freedom, I hereby pronounce the 'best meringue' competition officially open and closed, with Lanarkshire the clear winner by a mouthful. Seriously, here's a gentle meringue competition for you all-the biggest number of area votes wins-simple. But, in the event of dispute, examples can be sent, by post to Gary, for his arbitration.

The run that took us to Kilncadzow was put on by Betty and John and was excellent; up and down those crater filled tracky roads that we so love. Dave Ambler turned out in his '70 Sprite which was a first and he wore an enviable 'Great Waldo Pepper' flying cap which set off his craggy features to a tee. When we halted at a now forgotten junction, Dave turned to a man in his garden and chatted. When I looked at the man, I saw it was the famous Scottish Midget racer, Bob MacGillivray. A '30's Austin poked out of his garage. Then the chums moved off, the moment gone.

When we were munching our cakes, Dave discovered he was pooling water under his car and Ewan and Anne's Midget was doing the same with petrol from a split tank. I used to carry a huge amount of 'things to fix' stuff, but I got tired of grounding so often that there was nothing useful to provide. Immaterial it seemed, because again we soared and this time, down one particularly straight road, at ferocious speed and all went well. The cars seemed pleased and everybody smiled.



The spitfire is Doug Paterson's. Steve is with the 'B' and Ewan with the Rubber Bumper

This end August run was to celebrate John Kerr's new garage opening, happening that very day. John had had enormous difficulty with the planning department spread over many years, but, this was it, at last. And we returned there for a BBQ. The garage is splendid and very professional. We all wish John maximum success for he is such a genuine and nice man who would never do anyone a bad turn, that he deserves all the good things going in life which includes not getting up every morning at 4am to drive a huge truck; for that's definitely not as good as it gets, John.

It has to be explained that John Kerr is the J Trevit seen in the signage in the photo; which isn't so puzzling really: but I like to think it's maybe the classic convenience, when somebody comes bearing a bill to be paid, John can say 'See Trevit!' Naw, that's not you, John; that's more of a sneaky meanster like me.

Matt Alexander from Linlithgow made his first visit to our natter and was made very welcome. Matt and his super- neat RWA were part of the Gaydon gang.

Next month, our island hopping year ends with a report from Bob on his and Lorraine's visit to Islay and the jazz festival they attended, as an official Club outing. Brilliant!

Carson and Chums



MASC banner with John Kerr on the left and holding it on the right, is Bob Miller



Club Meets in the S.E. Area

I was unable to attend the Blue Ball, Walton on the Hill, for the Surrey meet, on the evening of 16th September 2008 being on holiday in New England, USA but, from the attendance register, I see that fifteen people made it with six Spridgets. Three Spridgets were apparently absent through accident or breakdown. After a re-arrangement of the bar area, following refurbishment, it seems that the Landlord remembered my request and roped off the large alcove for exclusive MASC use.

I did not make the Sussex meet, on the evening of 25th September, either as that

was the day of my return from U.S.A. I had not been without seeing a Spridget whilst away for I found a Sprite possibly for spares and repairs in Plymouth Mass', a Frogeye in a museum window at Kennebunkport, and I saw three M.G. Midgets at Stowe, Maine where there was the 'English Invasion Car Show'. Now other than club meets and Spridget 50 that is more than I have seen on English roads this year.

Sunday 28th September was the Kent section meet, away from our usual location of the Moat at Wrotham Heath, Kent, at Classic Car Day, Bearsted Green, Kent where several members assembled in support of the Kent Air Ambulance. This meet drew a variety of vehicles including beach buggies, hot rods, vintage and classic and to top it all it was a hot sunny day for entrants to relax on the village green. Those in attendance were: John Clark (red Frogeye); Chris Playfoot (red Spridget); self (blue Coupe); Nay and Col (blue Midget); Paul & Jane (green Austin Sprite); Colin & Jude (blue Spridget); Gavin Rowles (red Spridget); Peter Gardiner (black Midget); Mel & Barb (red Midget).

Alan Anstead

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A Sandwiched Sprite in the USA

Last of the Summer “Whine”

Waiting for the ferry to Dartmouth

After a good nights rest and a “cavalcade” around the village we set off for Dartmoor passing thro’ Totnes, Dartington and on to Buckfast entering the National Park to visit Dartmeet and Widdecombe in the Moor where we stopped for the obligatory Cream Tea, which we later walked off climbing up to Hay Tor. By this time further electrical/mechanical problems had beset another car and so sadly

Does this title refer to the sound of a Spridget in first gear or a moan about the summer weather? Whatever, we almost needed “first” on a couple of winding hills (20%) on our final weekend’s summer run to the South Hams, when we returned home across Dartmoor on the Sunday. But we certainly had no complaints about the weather, wall to wall sunshine, perfect for enjoying top down motoring at a leisurely pace through the lanes of the magnificent Devon countryside.

Saturday 27th saw us leave “Zumerset” sharp at 9 am. and travel into Devon to pick up friends, Jerry & Leslie in their AC Cobra (J. always carries a comprehensive tool kit!) at Colyford Garage, worth a visit if you are ever that way, and off along the road to Exeter via Sidford & Newton Poppleford, eventually passing under the M5 before getting on a “proper road”, namely the A379 which runs along the South Devon coast thro’ Powderham, Dawlish & Teignmouth to The English Riviera at Torbay on to Kingswear for the ferry to Dartmouth where lunch was taken, then to Slapton Sands & Torcross with its memories of WW 2 as a practice area for the Normandy Landings. Onwards to Kingsbridge, finally reaching our destination of Hope Cove around 5pm just in time for a few well deserved “sundowners” before dinner. And boy was the sunset fantastic. Whilst the journey was largely without incident there were some problems with ageing parts on some of the cars in our convoy though everyone eventually made it to the Sun Bay Hotel “with a little help from their friends”.

we lost two of the party who decided enough was enough, one returning as back up for the other and a good job too; as the “sick” car had to be towed for the last part of the journey home. Despite these problems everyone seemed to enjoy the trip and they certainly enjoyed the weather! As I write this (29.09.08) the forecast is for more rain this week so I’m glad we made the most of the Last of the Summer?

So as we move into the Autumn and winter what else is planned for 2008, well the Xmas lunch get together certainly and if we get another few fine weekends we hope to get out for some other runs around the local area. On that note we may even consider a change of title from that of Somerset Area to Three Counties Area to encompass South Somerset, East Devon and West Dorset in the hope that we may attract a few closeted Spridget Owners who may be hiding away in these parts! Don’t forget we continue to meet at the Lord Nelson at Norton sub Hamdon around 8pm on the last Thursday of the month if any would like to join us.

Ray Darch, Somerset



Frogeye at Tor Peak. How did it get up there?

25 Years of the Midget and Sprite Club

Part 8 – Where all the Money Goes

When the founder members realised that you couldn't have a club without some means of financing it, some important decisions had to be made. Initially, this was just a £2 donation thrown in a hat to get us through those first few months whilst we decided if the proposed club would indeed actually become a club. In the meantime, we wrote a constitution (rules) and investigated the Banks to see what would be required to hold funds in the name of a club. Most banks at that time were very happy to hold our funds but would also charge us for the privilege. Every cheque we deposited or drew would incur a charge, we didn't like this. Happily, we found NATIONAL GIRO, who would not charge us for being a club, so we signed up. We had to provide a copy of our constitution and a list of account signees, our cheques to have 2 signatures to be valid. So, all set up properly, from the 3rd of October 1983, we were ready to accept the first flood of membership subscriptions to the MIDGET and SPRITE CLUB. But first, what to charge? We knew what the A-H and the 2 MG clubs were charging, we also knew what SMOG were charging, we had to come in cheaper. SMOG, as the other new club on the block had a subscription of £8 per year, so we came in at £6 per year. Then we had this wonderful idea. As the Club kicked off on the 3rd of October 1983, and £6 is a figure easily divisible by the 12 months of the year, then why not have a pro rata subscription rate? Hence, as each month passed on from October, we could reduce the rate by 50p per month. All renewals would then take place the following October. We felt that this would prove attractive to potential members, paying a reducing amount to 'sample' the club before being hit by the full £6 the following October if they liked what they saw. As advantageous as this seemed at the time, it was fraught with problems. Firstly, it seemed very few people could divide 12 months into £6 (even though this was stated on the application

form). Very few people seemed to know what month they were in or when October would be next year. Hence, very few people actually sent the correct amount. Nigel Williams, as Membership Secretary, was forever sending money back or asking for more. We stuck at this for a while but then, as the club grew, we could see that October was going to be a busy month for Nigel. All the renewal notices to go out at one time, all the subscriptions to come in at one time, it was almost a relief when people didn't renew! (Not really). Compounding the confusion and workload, the cash flow through the Bank was more of a tidal wave followed by a slight but constant leak for the rest of the year. In November the club was loaded, by September, near skint!

We soon changed to a more manageable and financially stable – annual membership from the date of acceptance. This also removed the unfathomable mathematics of having to divide such odd subscription rates as £7.50 per year by 12 months. Fortunately, we never did have to work that one out. By the time it was £7.50, we were on the fixed year membership system – phew!

Our main expenditure was of course *MASCOT*. In the early days, even £6 was under budget. Only by printing 'in house' (Lindy and John's actually) on an old Roneo machine could we keep near target. This was backed up by our 'phantom photocopiers'. Members who had Bosses 'wot lunched' and left the office photocopier with the engine running. Very naughty I know but it helped enormously.

Many copies were hand delivered, in the early days the Bristol Group was about 80% of the club and all kept in close touch. Those that were posted went in re-cycled envelopes, even with re-cycled stamps – sometimes over weight too! Still, we had an understanding membership that didn't mind a walk to the post office to hand over 2p before they got their latest copy of *MASCOT*.

MASCOT was not our only expense; Nigel Williams was running up quite a postage expense. Enquiries, processing membership, producing stationary etc, it all had to be paid for. The first year gave us quite a shock in how much these seemingly small amounts add up. Not everyone who asked for details would necessarily join, hence stationary and postage costs became lost revenue. Nigel was also receiving mail from the world at large, not just potential members, the Midget and Sprite Club now seemed to be on every directory and mailing list on the planet. Much was junk mail but there were still many other things that required a reply, if not by Nigel, then by another committee member.

Both Nigel and I also noticed a substantial rise in our phone bills when the club started. Many callers were surprised not to find us in the 'Club office' during working hours and would ask that we call them back. There was no 'Club office' and our working hours were spent at Rolls-Royce in Bristol. Hence, it was evenings and weekends that we spent in the office, our own homes.

Our entry into the world of Car Shows required further expense. This we simply couldn't do at first, other than the cars, we had no display equipment or means of purchasing any. Fortunately, we did have Public Liability Insurance, a requirement of most show organisers and something we felt essential to have as a responsible organisation. We needed to get in on the Car Show circuit as this seemed a very good recruitment vehicle for us. After much hard work by Bristol members, a basic display kit was produced, not enough to win a 'club stand of the show' award, but enough not to get us laughed at.

Our first 'major' was BRISTOL CLASSIC CAR SHOW and did we feel proud to be there. For the first time we were rubbing shoulders with the 'establishment' – and not ashamed to do so. We were right; this was the place to be to enrol new members. We ran out of paperwork on the first day, a 'phantom photocopier' saved us on the Sunday. Nigel wanted an armed guard to leave the show on the Sunday night. Even our few small items of Regalia were selling, which then started us thinking about larger items of Regalia.

Although membership subscription was our main source of income, we managed to 'sell' a bit of advertising space in MASCOT. This was only a 'bit' though. With a slightly doubtful look about it and a smallish circulation, we weren't about to attract any 'big' advertisers. However, the seed was sown, with a better looking MASCOT and increasing circulation, surely bigger business could follow? Naturally, you have to spend to accumulate. As we were, our budget was too tight to provide any more, so up went the subscription rate. This gave way to a better looking fully photocopied MASCOT. A card cover was introduced, paid for by advertising, and slowly but surely, an improving MASCOT attracted more paying advertisers. With MASCOT now beginning to stand on its own two feet financially, our 'sundries' costs needed to be addressed. Nigel was for ever having to explain at AGMs why his expenses were so high. The costs of paperwork, stationary, postage and phone calls were all lumped into Nigel's bag and members were questioning his recent 5 speed gearbox conversion.

To address this cost and to offset the largely identifiable costs of recruiting members, we introduced a 'Membership enrolment' fee. This was to be a one off charge when people joined the club in addition to their normal annual subscription rate. At this time, the annual subscription rate was written into the Constitution and could only be changed by a ballot of the membership. Should the committee see a sudden rise in operating costs, a ballot of the membership would be required to increase the subscription rate. To change any thing on the Constitution can take around 3 months from the point of announcement to actually having the decision of a Ballot implemented. Even then, should an increase be agreed, only new members would pay immediately, existing members would not pay the increase until their annual renewal date. Any increases therefore take a long time to be fully effective. The Membership enrolment fee was set by the committee without reference to the membership, the advantages of having the annual subscription rate set and implemented by the committee alone was then realised. Should operating costs rise suddenly, the committee could

then act quickly in effecting an increase. This may seem less democratic than before, but by the committee having the power to act immediately, larger increases could be avoided in the future. This could also avert a crisis should club finances dip sharply. The membership agreed to the change and now the committee set and implement any increases in either enrolment or annual subscription fees.

One thing we have successfully avoided, paying for advertising. Right from the start we knew how important it would be to advertise but just simply could not afford the commercial rates. Thankfully, some of the major monthly magazines offered us contra advertising deals. They would advertise the club in return for space in *MASCOT*. This really worked well for us, and continues to do so. Also, whenever they ran features on Spridgley things, they came to us for any assistance. This gave us even more exposure with quite a number of members having their cars included in the feature. Only very occasionally have we actual paid for an advert, generally, if you see the club listed anywhere, you haven't paid for it!

Another source of income has been our 'Technical Services'. Valuation letters, Verification of date of Build, Buyers Guide and DVLA Re-registrations have made up a small but important income to our coffers as well as a helpful service to owners.

Our only other income is that from Regalia sales. Initially, we thought that this could be a big player for us – but it hasn't. The solid items such as windscreen stickers, grille badges, key fobs and tax disc holders have sold quite easily. It is the 'wearable's' that cause the headaches. It is having a range of colours in a range of sizes that means carrying a large and high value stock. This is compounded by having the stock available in many different locations or selling by mail order. We have suffered 2 incidences of theft of Regalia at car shows, plus any petty pilfering that we haven't recorded. It is a high risk area particularly when stocking up with new items that we have no sales experience with. To keep the unit costs reasonable, we have to buy in a sizeable stock number. This could sit on the shelf for ages, fortunately,

most items other than calendars, do not have a shelf 'life'. We know that some clubs shift a whole van load of regalia at shows and events, but not in our case. We have yet to address this problem but realise that members do expect items of regalia to be available just as the club needs to get its regalia more easily available without increasing costs. It may not be the big money spinner that we first thought but a service that we need to keep going – your purchases will help!

In more recent years, the web and modern IT has brought about changes in which the club operates and subsequent costs. Certainly, e-mail and telephone deals have much reduced the cost of postage, stationary and call charges. Well, if we don't lump in the cost of everyone buying a computer and charging the club for it. It's one of those assumptions we make, that everyone is bang up to date and doesn't charge the club for the provision of their equipment and the electricity to run it! In truth, everyone who has acted on the club's behalf has done so in good faith and to some extent, their own expense. Although the club pays certain expenses to committee and officers in the execution of their roles – Nigel's 5 speed gearbox wasn't one of them.

The club has always had a Treasurer on the committee to oversee the finances. An annual report and statement of accounts detail the club's income and expenditure. In reality, we do not have many sources of income or indeed expenditure, so you could be forgiven if you thought the job might be an easy one. Not so! The big issue concerning the annual statement concerned the change from an October renewal date for all members to the fixed year from date of enrolment. This means that at any particular date, the club is holding membership money in advance. This amount is different for each member, dependent upon when they joined the club. Hence, if our cash in the Bank looks healthy, it has to be remembered that the club owes X number of members Y number of months worth of *MASCOT* and membership. Fancy working that one out?

MASCOT continues to be our single largest expenditure, and rightly so. It is the one thing that all members receive from the club.

Display equipment and Regalia stock are large capital items that we are expected to have as a club, their value against income is not an easy calculation. Operating costs are the main thing we have always had to keep a careful eye on. Certain things like Public liability insurance, postage charges and stationary we cannot avoid. Modern IT has certainly helped on the one hand but only thanks to members having their own hardware. Only once did we have to purchase a computer for a club officer to use. Other large purchases in the past have been photocopiers, printers and most probably, the entire contents of a branch of OFFICE WORLD over the 25 years we have been going. Items requiring capital expenditure often have to be written off financially, there being little or no resale value in them once we have done with them. Also, they are a liability whilst in the club's ownership. Maintenance, damage, even theft are all issues that can hit our modest coffers. We have rather moved away from 'owning' club equipment wherever

possible. Gone is the computer, photocopiers and display equipment trailer, it is better to pay for services as and when required than have money and risk tied up in hardware. Storage has also been an ongoing problem, indeed, storage of the club trailer probably cost us more than actually hiring one or a van when required. MASCOT is now entirely professionally printed and distributed. Gone is the 'front room' print and collation of MASCOT along with the Roneo and photocopier and very importantly, those members's spare time to perform these monthly duties.

From £6 per year in 1983 to £25 per year in 2008 may seem quite a hike, in terms of real value, the 2008 member is getting a much better deal. I know, I have been there for every single one of them!

Next month, I will conclude 25 years of the Midget and Sprite Club by revealing what really did start the whole thing off.

Terry Horler

South Downs Run 14 Sept 08 - Chichester to Eastbourne

Another fine day was booked for this great day out in the Spridgets. A number of members from the Surrey and Kent section turned up bright and early, hoods stowed of course, for what was to prove as a fun and eventful day of excellent motoring, organised by the West Sussex Area MG Owners Club. Well done!

We assembled in the car park at the Festival Hall in Chichester to collect our route map, magnetic rally plate (there is good reason for this description) and of course to part-take the all important bacon sandwich.

John Clarke in his red Frogeye was already there before us. We turned up in our OEW Frogeye behind George and Alex Bowers in his Blue Frogeye.

Nick Bowker joined us in his red Frogeye, and to complete the set 'Phil' aka Mr September, blue Midget with a rubber bumper driven by Col and Nay completed our troupe.

All five cars managed to stay together for the run despite missing a turning here and a quick about turn there. All was going well until we noticed that we were alone on the road (we, Pete & Hils were the lead car). No sign of the others not even a tin-top interloper to be seen. So, another quick about turn and we were off in search of our travelling companions.

Well, there they were, all except John Clark, parked up in the fore court of a 'closed' garage. John had driven off in search of his magnetic rally plate. It had come unstuck – John blames the copious amount of polish on his car and the fact that he was travelling in our slip stream for it taking off. Do you really have a steel bonnet John or is it just pretend! It appears that the rally plate took off like a frisbee missing Alex and George who were travelling behind. They managed to duck and the last report was that it had fixed itself to a lorry heading for Scotland.



If you've never done this run I can thoroughly recommend it. Some of the narrow roads are a challenge to your driving abilities – well they are to mine and I wasn't even driving – whilst if you're lucky enough to be the passenger the scenery is awesome. Plenty of stops for refreshments on route with picnic areas and places of interest identified on the route map.

With the coastline in our sights we descended into Eastbourne to park upon the finely manicured lawns. It all went pear shaped from here. As we entered the lawns to the sound of a jazz band our car decided enough

was enough and just stopped. We were unceremoniously pushed to our parking spot and left to wonder at what had happened.

Question: How many men can you fit under the bonnet of a Frogeye?

Answer: Four, with one other hovering for a space.

Seriously though, we are very fortunate to have such great friends and travelling companions since we joined the Midget & Sprite club. Between them the rotor arm was identified as the problem and promptly

Almost lined up on the lawns





Entertaining the visitors

replaced. Col even gave us a gallon of fuel, worth a small fortune these days, in the hope that it may have just run out of petrol – if only!

Time for goodbyes and the journey home. We'd set off at slightly different times late afternoon all with our own agenda for getting back. The car was okay and really gave no cause for concern that was until we were about 20 minutes out of Eastbourne. She coughed, spluttered, and came to a halt on the side of a dual carriage way. We eased her off the road narrowly missing a dead fox. Nick who was in front of us noticed we were ailing and turned back to offer assistance. Despite all efforts and prayers to he who looks after Sprites, the car would not start. Quick call to Alex who was 5/10 minutes in front of us and he was soon back beside us and under the bonnet. The process of elimination was worked through and bad news, distributor had failed. We had two options, 1) call RAC and be towed home, 2) take up Alex's offer to drive home and return to us with another distributor. Not wanting to be pushed or

pulled twice in one day, Alex set off. We wrapped ourselves up against the early evening chill and waited. We said our goodbyes to Nick and waited for Alex to return. True to his word he was back with us again in less than an hour. With the light fading quickly the offending part was replaced and the car burst into life once again and raring to go.

A quick stop for a coffee to warm up a little and we were back on the road again. Alex escorted us as far as he could before turning off home. We finally got back that evening very late and very cold but none the worse for our adventures that day.

Our thanks to the driver of a red MG who stopped to see if he could help us. Also, the couple who stopped in their estate car and drove off with the dead fox in their boot. This provided us with much humour and amazement as we waited on the side of the road.

**Words by Hils Stevens,
Images by Nay Carpenter**



Chris Harding's Mk1 Sprite

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Offers apply to Sat 15th/Sun 16th November 2008 only. Adult ticket offer limited to 2 tickets per member. Family ticket admits 2 adults and up to 3 children (5-16yrs) and is limited to one family ticket per member. For comparison, the on-the-door prices for 15th/16th November 2008 are: Adults £17.00 and Family £45.00. Hand your special ticket stub in to your club on their stand at the show and your club can earn £1.00 commission! Classic Motor Show tickets allow FREE entry into the MPH Show (excludes live action theatre) All bookings are subject to a single transaction fee. All information is correct at time of publishing.

Classic Motor Show – 14/15/16 November 2008

We have finally selected the 10 cars for display on the MASC stand at the NEC in November. We are showing a Frogeye Sprite, Sebring Sprite, Mk 1 Midget, Mk 3 Midget RWA, Mk 4 Sprite, Midget 1500, W & P Midget, 4 WD V8 Midget, IOW Frogeye and the Sectioned Midget.

All that remains to do is to set the whole thing up and work out a rota for the 30 plus members who have offered to man the stand over the 3 days.

Still time to book the “club advance ticket offer” – See the NEC advert in this copy for details of booking online tickets available to us until 15 November. Bring all your advance ticket stubs to the stand and the club will benefit £1 each commission.

Please do all come and introduce yourselves to us on stand 3C76, buy some regalia and take the opportunity for maybe a rest and a chat!

John Platt

YFO

When my next-door neighbour asked me recently if he could park one of his cars on my drive for an hour or so how could I refuse! I could also not pass up the opportunity to get my Frogeye out of the garage and take its photograph parked next to such a gleaming example of British workmanship – rarely I would think has a Frogeye been in such elevated company!!

The Rolls Royce, a Phantom V1, is owned by my 92-year-old neighbour, Cyril Balfour, who still runs (and drives) Primrose Cars. Cyril purchased the car in 1980 from Lord Sainsbury but the car was owned from 1973 by HRH Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and used to ferry VIPs around the Balmoral Estate.

The car is fitted with television and a cocktail cabinet. As can be seen it is a long-wheel based vehicle with extra wide doors that enables any bride to enter with ease. We were lucky enough to use this car when my daughter was married two years ago with Cyril as chauffeur. Cyril has a website if any readers are interested – www.primrosecars.co.uk



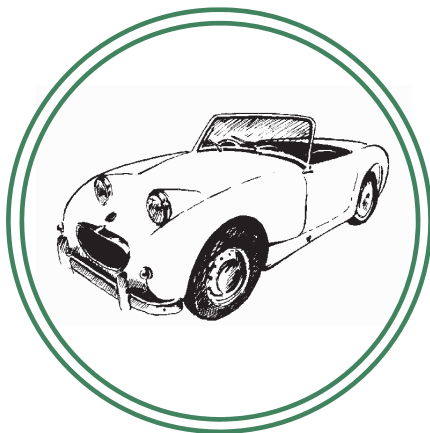
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