

April 2009

£2 No. 301

# Mascot



The Magazine  
of the  
Midget & Sprite  
Club

[www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk](http://www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk)





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

## COMMITTEE

<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>	<b>Nigel Williams</b> , 7 Kings Avenue, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3JN. Tel: 0117 961 2175 email: nigelwilliams7@tiscali.co.uk
<b>GENERAL SECRETARY</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>Anita Lachowicz</b> , 5 Park Grove, Knaresborough, Yorks. HG5 9ET. Mobile: 07720 725429 email: spridget.girl@ntlworld.com
<b>EDITOR</b>	<b>Gary Lazarus</b> , 40B Hungerford Road, London, N7 9LP. Tel: 0207700 5696 email: garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>AREA REP'S REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>Alan Anstead</b> , Tel: 01322 384050 Email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
<b>TECHNICAL ADVISOR</b>	<b>Mark Boldry</b> , 5 Park Grove, Knaresborough, Yorks. HG5 9ET. Mob: 07889 799033 Email: mark.boldry@ntlworld.com
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>John Platt</b> , 2 Pear Tree Gardens, Bearley Road, Aston Cantlow, Henley-in-Arden, Warks. B95 6HT Tel: 01789 488321 email: membership@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk
<b>GENERAL MEMBER</b>	<b>Philip Sellen</b> , 40 Amberley Way, Wickwar, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos, GL12 8LP. Tel: 01454 299222 email: P.N.Sellen@bristol.ac.uk

## OFFICERS

<b>CLUB ARCHIVIST</b>	<b>Terry Horler</b> , 63 Littledean, Yate, Bristol, BS37 8UQ. Tel: 01454 881770
<b>EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR</b>	<b>Gary Lazarus</b> , 40B Hungerford Road, London, N7 9LP. Tel: 0207700 5696 email: garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>MEMBERS ADVERTISING</b>	<b>Alan Lo</b> , Tel: 0117 9572617 Mob: 0775 3867806 email: alan@mobuzzing.net
<b>MUTUAL ASSISTANCE CO-ORDINATOR</b>	<b>David Hill</b> , Llyserfan, Beulah, Newcastle Emlyn, Ceredigion. SA38 9QB. Tel: 01239 811307 email: david@hillnet.clara.net
<b>CAR REGISTER</b>	<b>Bob Clarkson</b> , Tel: 01902 842643 email: raclarkson@tiscali.co.uk
<b>REGALIA OFFICER</b>	<b>Mike Grout</b> , 55 Park Road, Spixworth, Norwich, NR10 3PJ. Tel: 01603 890211 email: mike@motorparts.freeserve.co.uk
<b>WEBMASTER</b>	<b>Toby Ancombe</b> , 7 Lysander Court, High Road, North Weald, Epping, CM16 1HF. email: tobyancombe@taratec.co.uk
<b>TRADE ADVERTISING</b>	<b>John Clark</b> , 16 Barley Close, Broomfield, Herne Bay, Kent. CT6 7XG Tel: 01227 368638, Mob. 07971 153556 Email: clarkjr@tiscali.co.uk

## AREA REPRESENTATIVES

<b>BRISTOL</b>	<b>Terry Horler</b> , Tel: 01454 881770
<b>EAST ANGLIA</b>	<b>David Dixon</b> , Tel: 01733 222810 email: e-dave@ntlworld.com
<b>DEVON</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>DORSET</b>	<b>Ian Beaver</b> , Tel: 01722 326840 email: ian.beaver@btinternet.com
	<b>Bryan Fox</b> , Tel: 01202 683842 home, 01202 674017 work email: sueandbry@x877.wanadoo.co.uk
	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>ESSEX</b>	<b>Terry Langridge</b> , Tel: 01252 626063 email: Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com
<b>HAMPSHIRE</b>	<b>Chris Jackson</b> , Tel: 01707 261567 chrispat@holwell8.freeserve.co.uk
<b>HOME COUNTIES</b>	or <b>Mark Hall</b> , Tel: 01296 660103 markdhall@aol.com
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>Alan Anstead</b> , Tel: 01322 384050 email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
<b>KENT</b>	<b>Brian Jeffery</b> , Tel: 01522 531425 or mobile: 07952 969514 email: brianilncslot@yahoo.co.uk
<b>LINCOLNSHIRE</b>	<b>Gary Lazarus</b> , Tel: 020 7700 5696 email: garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>LONDON</b>	<b>Bill Mohan</b> , Tel: 0121 353 7211 or mobile: 0798 461 6371 email: bill.mohan@btinternet.com
<b>SOUTH STAFFS &amp; NORTH BIRMINGHAM</b>	<b>Carson Thomson</b> , Tel: 0141 245 6327 day or 013606 22334 evening email: THOMSON.C@sky.com
<b>CENTRAL SCOTLAND</b>	<b>Les &amp; Diane Robinson</b> , Tel: 01772 432138 email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>Ian Cooke</b> , Tel: 0115 938 3838 email: ilc@bgs.ac.uk
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND</b>	<b>Dave Bearn</b> , Tel: 01823 412004 email: david.bearn@barnwoods.co.uk
<b>NOTTS/DERBY</b>	<b>David Hill</b> , Tel: 01239 811307 email: david@hillnet.clara.net
<b>SOMERSET</b>	<b>Alan Anstead</b> , Tel: 01322 384050 email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
<b>SOUTH WEST WALES</b>	<b>Alan Couch</b> , Tel: 01564 773302
<b>SURREY</b>	<b>Chris Yates</b> , Tel: 01608 665066 email: chrishe@tiscali.co.uk
<b>WARWICKSHIRE</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
	<b>Anita Lachowicz</b> , Mobile: 07720 725429 email: spridget.girl@ntlworld.com

Also see the Club Nights section on page 3 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

Many thanks to those of you who replied to last month's request for feedback. We will look at all the suggestions in an attempt to keep improving the magazine. One suggestion was that the inclusion of a Trade Directory be made available in or alongside *Mascot* as well as on the website. This would not only be useful to you and I, it would also raise money for the club.

Do you run a service or have you used a company which would be useful to the members? Let John Clark (our trade advertising person) know about it and perhaps we could all benefit.

One request not answered was that of the Wiltshire area representative. I should also add that the club is currently also missing an Essex area rep too. I know that there are quite a few members in Essex and Wiltshire and it would be great to fill both of these posts. It's not difficult being an area rep. If you fancy taking it on or just have questions, why not call one of the other area reps to ask them what it's like.



Last month we featured Mark Boldry's very early Mk1 Midget. At the time he thought that it might be the first production Midget. WELL IT'S NOT. It turns out according to information confirmed by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust that this Midget was not only built three months before the last complete Frogeye rolled off the production line at Abingdon. But that its build date of 17th August 1960 predates the first launch of the MG Midget by a whole ten months. It is the Oldest MK1 MG Midget. You won't find one older.

A date to keep free in your diary for later in the month is Sunday the 26th of April. DRIVE IT DAY® is the historic vehicle movement's annual showcase event. It happens each year on the Sunday nearest 23 April, the anniversary of the start of the 1,000 miles trial of 1900. Various area of the Midget & Sprite Club will be running events on that day. (I will be rushing around a track in Essex). Check the events diary in *Mascot* or call your area rep for details of events.

Have a great month and let me know what you did.

**Gary & Gaps**

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

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*Front cover picture:  
Yorkshire Area Rep and MASC Treasurer Anita's Midget on The Stray in Harrogate*

# Club Nights

- 2nd Tuesday **London Area** (Congestion Zone) – **Note Changed day & Venue!** Meet at The Ace Cafe at 7:30pm. together with the Classic Cars Magazine night. Will revert to The Plumbers Arms, Belgravia next spring. 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 **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 April lunchtime meeting. From May to September, meetings are held 1st Thursday of the month in the evening.
- 1st Sunday **Lincolnshire Area** – **NOTE CHANGE**. Lunch time meetings at various locations. Please email; brianlincs1ot@yahoo.co.uk or 01522 531425 for next month's details.
- 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 & Crown**, Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact Terry Horler on 01454 881770
- 2nd Thursday **Cambridgeshire** – Now called East Anglian Area. Meet at **The Mad Cat** pub in Pidley Village, midway between Huntingdon & Chatteris, 8pm
- 3rd Monday **Dorset** – Meet at **St. Peter's Finger**, Lytchett Minster, Poole, BH16 6JE 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 Thursday **NEW! South West Wales** – Meet at the **Fox & Hounds**, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, SA33 5ND. Contact David Hill, Tel: 01239 811307 or email david@hillnet.clara.net
- 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 **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Spotted Cow**, Marston Meysey
- Lunchtimes
- Northern Ireland Point of contact is Robert Holmes, tel: 02892 689274 or email: robertholmes25@hotmail.com. If enough interest, will arrange a meeting.

# Club Website

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

## Events

From David Hill & Webmaster Toby Anscombe

### Events organised for 2009 so far

#### April

- Saturday 4th MGCC Midget Challenge at Donington Park. Details on [www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk](http://www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk)
- Friday 10th Hampshire Area will be at the Wheels Day at Rushmoor Arena, Aldershot. First show of the season from Hot Rods to Jeeps! Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- Friday 10th Yorkshire Area are having a Hot X Run. contact Tim at [mothysaunders@hotmail.com](mailto:mothysaunders@hotmail.com)
- Monday 13th Hampshire Area are planning to attend the Spring Vehicle Meet at Picket Piece, Andover. Cars and Autojumble. Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- Sunday 19th East Anglia Area's Yesteryear Run. Details from David Dixon on 01733 222810
- Sunday 26th Warwickshire are going on the "Drive your classic" Run. For details, contact: Geoff & Janet Hunter, Tel: 01562 851544 email: [hunters360@btinternet.com](mailto:hunters360@btinternet.com)
- Sunday 26th Hampshire are running a "Come and meet the Hampshire Chapter" on the Classic Drive it Day from 12 noon to 4pm at the Fox and Goose, Greywell, RG29 1BY. Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- Sunday 26th Lincolnshire are attending Bardney Heritage Center for Waterailway Cycle Route celebrations. Email: [brianlincs1ot@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brianlincs1ot@yahoo.co.uk) or 01522 531425
- Sunday 26th Yorkshire Area Drive It Day. Picnic on The Stray, Harrogate. Details contact Anita on 07720 725429 or [spridget.girl@ntlworld.com](mailto:spridget.girl@ntlworld.com)

#### May

- Friday 1st Yorkshire Area are going to the MGCC MGs on Track at Cadwell Park, Louth, Lincs. Details on [www.mgs-on-track.com](http://www.mgs-on-track.com) MASC will have a dedicated group.
- Sunday 3rd Home Counties North West's "Spirit of Dacorum" Historic Car Run through the Borough of Dacorum. Multiple start points with Grand Finish in the Marlowes, Hemel Hempsted. Contact Mark Hall on 01296 660103
- Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th Warwickshire are holding their Exmoor and even more Run. For details contact: Chris & Sheila Yates, Tel: 01608 665066 email: [chrishe@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:chrishe@tiscali.co.uk)
- Saturday 9th MGCC Midget Challenge at Oulton Park. Details on [www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk](http://www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk)
- Sunday 10th Hampshire are going to the Basingstoke Festival of Transport, War Memorial Park, Basingstoke. Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th Hampshire are organising the Bill Targett Memorial Rally Nr. Winchester. Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- 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](mailto:john_julie@mac.com) or Helen: [h.ward@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:h.ward@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk)

- Monday 25th MGCC Midget Challenge at Castle Combe. Details on [www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk](http://www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk)
- June**
- Friday 5th  
To Sunday 7th Warwickshire are attending the "Spridgettreffen" in Germany. If interested, please contact, Geoff & Janet Hunter, Tel: 01608 665066 email: [hunters360@btinternet.com](mailto:hunters360@btinternet.com)
- Sunday 7th Dorset Area will be attending the New Forest Run organised by MGOC 1009. Further details from Ian Beaver on 01722 326840.
- Sunday 7th It's the South Hants Vehicle Preservation Society Show at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, nr. Petersfield. Just turn up! Hants members contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com) for more details.
- 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](mailto: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.
- Sunday 14th East Anglia Area are running a Treasure Hunt. For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810
- Saturday 20th  
& Sunday 21st Central Scotland: Does anyone want to join us as we head south to Whitby, on our June, Longest Day Run? The gang is all coming, are you? Contact Carson on 0141 245 6327 day or 013606 22334 evening.
- Saturday 20th  
& Sunday 21st MGCC Midget Challenge at Brands Hatch. Details on [www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk](http://www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk)
- Saturday 27th  
& Sunday 28th Hampshire Area are going to the Bloxham Steam Rally at Bloxham, Nr. Banbury. Contact: Harriet or Terry Tel: 01252 626063 or Email: [Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com](mailto:Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com)
- Sunday 28th East Anglia Area's "Something in Suffolk". For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810
- TBC Home Counties North West will be taking part in the Stoney Stratford Car Club Meet. Details to be announced.
- July**
- Saturday 11th MGCC Midget Challenge at Silverstone. Details on [www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk](http://www.mgmidgetchallenge.co.uk)
- Sunday 12th Warwickshire are holding their "Worcester & Shropshire Run". Contact Stuart Watson or Roy Cole, Tel: 01562 885766 email: [roy@geraldineandroy.co.uk](mailto:roy@geraldineandroy.co.uk)
- Tuesday 14th East Anglia Area are going to the Ace Café. For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810
- Saturday 18th  
& Sunday 19th Warwickshire's Woodies Wild Weekend in Hereford. Overnighter. Contact Phil & Mo Wood, Tel: 1905 456303 or email: [philipwood@btinternet.com](mailto:philipwood@btinternet.com)
- Sunday 19th East Anglia Area are going to the Kimbolton Charity Classic Meeting. For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810
- Friday 24th  
To Sunday 26th East Anglia Area are going to the Silverstone Classic Race Meeting. For more details please contact Hubie on 01733 265548
- Saturday 25th Silverstone Classic Racing. Warwickshire Area will be there. Contact: Chris Yates, Tel: 01608 665066 email: [chrishe@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:chrishe@tiscali.co.uk)

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

# Meet the Committee

## Nigel Williams - Chairperson



**H**i I'm Nigel Williams and currently Chairperson of the club. I am into my second term of office having been re-elected in October. I have been involved in running the club for the past 25 years as I was in at the beginning along with Terry Horler. I started out as treasurer and membership secretary but as the club grew these roles became too much for one person and I became solely the membership secretary. I continued to serve in that position



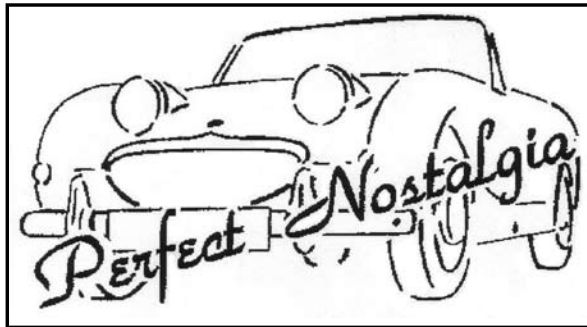
until a couple of years ago when I had a year out from the committee.

I own a 1967 Mk111 Midget which I have had for the past 26 years. The car needed a bit of work when I first got it, the front end was a one piece fibre glass affair held down with a piece of rope (I still have the rope), came fitted with a Morris Minor engine and had knackered brakes but I loved it the moment I drove it. The original engine came with the car but it had melted a piston and was in a sorry state. I decided to rebuild it which I was very glad of later as I found it came with an EN40b Nitrided crank and cooper S spec conrods. The engine is still in the car but now sports a big valve head, 13/4" HIF SU carb and Kent 276 cam mated to a Toyota 5 speed box. The bodywork is undergoing some restoration at the moment, which is taking rather longer than expected, but I hope to have it back on the road for the summer.

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modified race Sebring  
construction  
Car supplied for Ch4  
TV filming

I have driven my Midget extensively around Britain and Europe having been as far as Switzerland and up the St Bernard pass to the Italian border. I have been making the annual pilgrimage to Le Mans almost every year since 1988 when I saw the Silk Cut Jaguars win at La Sarthe. Sadly this has not been in my Midget in the last few years as it has been

off the road but hopefully this year will see its return. If not I have been promised the use of John Ruderman's Mk11, so at least I get to drive a sports car.

To earn a crust I am the programme leader for the Engineering apprentices course at a large FE college here in Bristol.

## Representing the Regions



*Is your Area rep here?*

**S**aturday 28th February saw Mascot Area Representatives meet at Gaydon to discuss National and Area issues that may affect the Club over the following months. Although, since November last, area representatives have, following each National Committee meeting received, by e-mail, information on the actions, or inactions, of committee it was felt that an actual 'face to face' and 'question time' might not be a bad thing.

As each Area Rep is that region's spokesman, through me as Representatives Representative, to National Committee and there to put your views. Was your Rep there? Why not? Did someone attend in lieu? Why not?

Those present were:

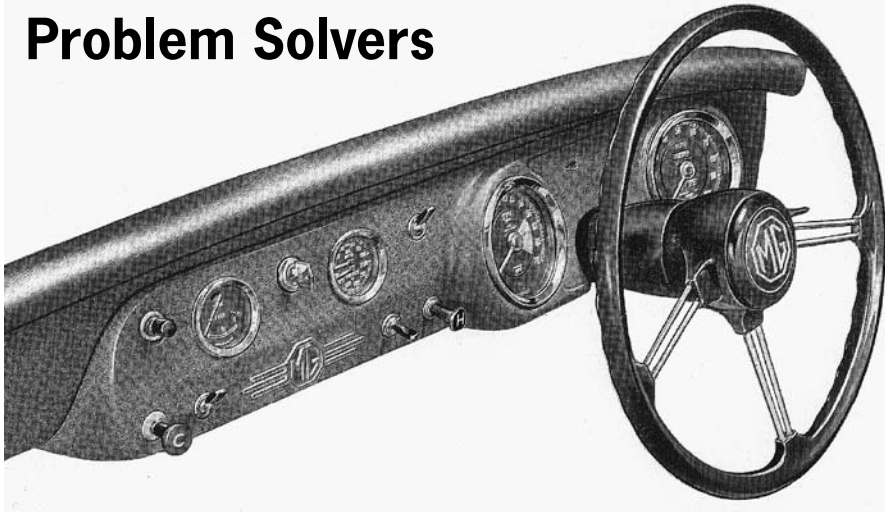
Alan Couch & Chris Yates (Warks). Chris kindly arranged the venue; Gary Lazarus (London & Mascot Editor); Terry Horler (Bristol); Mark Hall (H.C.N.W.) brought insurance expert Mike Gayham as guest advisor; Dave Dixon (the expanding Cambs & East Anglia area); Anita &

Mark Boldry (Yorks); Bill Mohan (N.B. & S.S.); Terry & Harriet Langridge (Hants); Self (S.E. Area); John Clark (Trade Advertising). Apologies from Brian Jeffrey (Lincs): Ian Beaver (Dorset): Chris Jackson (H.C.N.W.): Les Robinson (N.W.): Carson Thomson (Scotland): Ian Cook (Notts / Derby): David Bearne (Somerset).

As this was the first Area Reps meet each in turn was asked to give a description of how their individual areas operate within the Club. This was to assist me as I needed to know what I am representing to National Committee as Reps Rep. Intros were followed by discussion and updates on the Clubs change to Ltd Co and this year's hot topic of Liabilities and Insurance, relevant to events and tours. Briefly mentioned, as matters that the National Committee will have to look at in the coming months were Child Protection Policy (a matter raised by Carson in Feb Mascot), Health & Safety, Diversity etc.

**Alan Anstead**

# Problem Solvers



Last month we highlighted problems, causes and cures relating to the Engine. This month we will concentrate on Steering.

## Part 3. Steering

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Cure</b>
Steering feels stiff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Incorrect wheel alignment</li> <li>3. Stiff track rod ends</li> <li>4. Steering box/rack needs adjustment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct the tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Correct wheel alignment</li> <li>3. Check and replace if necessary</li> <li>4. Adjust if necessary</li> </ol>
Steering wheel shake	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wheels and tyres need balancing</li> <li>2. Tyre pressures incorrect</li> <li>3. Incorrect wheel alignment</li> <li>4. Wheel hub nut loose</li> <li>5. Wheel bearings damaged</li> <li>6. Front suspension distorted</li> <li>7. Steering box/rack needs adjustment</li> <li>8. Shock absorber faulty</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Balance wheels and tyres</li> <li>2. Correct tyre pressures</li> <li>3. Correct alignment</li> <li>4. Adjust wheel bearings</li> <li>5. Replace wheel bearings</li> <li>6. Check, repair or replace</li> <li>7. Adjust as necessary</li> <li>8. Repair or replace</li> </ol>
Steering pulls to one side	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uneven tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Wheel alignment incorrect</li> <li>3. Wheel bearings worn or damaged</li> <li>4. Brakes incorrectly adjusted</li> <li>5. Shock absorbers faulty</li> <li>6. Suspension distorted</li> <li>7. Steering box/rack worn</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Correct wheel alignment</li> <li>3. Replace and adjust</li> <li>4. Adjust brakes</li> <li>5. Check and rectify</li> <li>6. Check and rectify</li> <li>7. Adjust and replace</li> </ol>

Wheel tramp	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over-inflated tyres</li> <li>2. Unbalanced wheel</li> <li>3. Defective shock absorber</li> <li>4. Defective tyre</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Check and balance if necessary</li> <li>3. Check and rectify</li> <li>4. Repair or replace</li> </ol>
Abnormal tyre wear	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorrect tyre pressure</li> <li>2. In correct wheel alignment</li> <li>3. Excessive wheel bearing play</li> <li>4. Improper driving</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check tyre pressure</li> <li>2. Check wheel alignment</li> <li>3. Adjust wheel bearings</li> <li>4. Avoid sharp turning at high speeds, rapid starting and braking, etc.</li> </ol>
Tyre noises	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improper tyre inflation</li> <li>2. Incorrect wheel alignment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct tyre inflation</li> <li>2. Correct wheel alignment</li> </ol>

In next month's *Mascot*, Problem solvers Part 4 will cover Fuelling.

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# The Sebring Sprites

Words and photos  
by John Sprinzel 2009

The first thing I did when I joined the Donald Healey Motor Company was to get Reg Venner to leave Speedwell and join our Grosvenor Street Workshop. The next was to put an ad in the Evening Standard, looking for another mechanic. Paul Hawkins was the first to turn up in answer to this, and his enthusiasm and brief history made me sign him up at once. Not only was he a competent mechanic, but also a very swift race car driver. Over the next couple of years he drove Sprites for me, for Cyril Simson and eventually for Donald Healey, but before this we set about building a trio of racing Sprites which we called Team 221. They all carried this number plate, with H221 for driver David Harris, S221 for Cyril, and X221 for my own car, although this was actually the number from my Lambretta scooter, which we used for parts collection in Mayfair's very crowded streets. Paul, from Australia, was quite a hard drinking party animal, and much of this activity was at the "Down Under Club" where he recruited the nucleus of our army of Oz mechanics. Ken, Bruce, Owen and Laurie came to us in this way, and all these years later, I still get to meet up with them at our mechanic's lunches whenever I travel down to Melbourne. Whenever their time in Europe was up, they usually introduced me to the successor for the job they were leaving, and in this way, we had absolutely no problem getting skilled staff. The cars were quite successful, culminating with a supercharged version driven by Paul, getting an excellent result and a great deal of publicity, in the TT which was held at Goodwood that year. Geoff and I wrote our desired Homologation specification, even allowing a standard capacity of 998cc, and an incredible light weight, taken from the Falcon bodied Sprite I drove for Healeys in the Sebring 12 hour race. I was also due to drive this class winning car at Le Mans, but a broken wrist from the Greek Acropolis Rally prevented me from sharing another class win for Healey's little projectile. While the Falcon had 4 wheel



*John Sprinzel Coupe Des Alpes 1961*

Dunlop disks, our homologated Sprite had the commercially available Girling set up with front disks and the larger 8" rear drums, a combination which worked very well, and also allowed good use of the handbrake, not always so successful with the earlier disk brakes. Bodywork was always free under FIA rules, as long as the weight was within 5% of homologation, which was never going to be a problem, so we added what we called the "Sebring" bonnet, which I had sketched from a photograph that Donald had showed me of the future version of the Sprite. I figured getting rid of those headlamps would be worth a good bit in streamlining, and the lighter fiberglass would improve handling and access to the engine. The very reasonable price for which Williams and Pritchard were able to manufacture these fronts was also a big plus, and as well as the competition Sprite customers, we sold hundreds of them for insurance repairs. The fronts were self coloured so saved even more by cutting out the paint shop costs. We did have a huge problem in getting rid of the old steel bonnets, many of them off brand new cars, and I shudder to say we actually paid the dustmen five pounds a time to take them away. By this time Healeys had decided that the London showrooms were far from cost efficient, and had let me buy the Speed Equipment business for shillings few over weeks many, and we had moved the whole outfit to Lancaster Mews. Marie Clibborn, our new landlord, had been "done" for a few weeks' rent by the previous tenant, and

as we offered to pay this amount, we were quite welcome guests. There was, however, no room to store such things as bulky steel bonnets, so we really had no alternative than to ditch them.

The first of these Sprites, but still with the Frogeye front, was sold to John Patten, a regular on the International Rally circus who had driven factory Fords, was looking for a new rally car, and I was able to sell him the idea of a new Sebring Sprite while at the Steering Wheel club with Donald and Peter Green, the company MD. He promptly asked me to drive it for him on the Liege Rome Liege Marathon – four days and nights of pretty non-stop motoring from Belgium to Bulgaria and back. As is now history, Pat Moss won this incredible event in a Healey 3000, while we were fortunate enough to bag third overall, ahead of the rest of the Work's Healeys, and an assortment of Porsches, Alfas and such, which gave us more publicity for the car than we could have ever dreamed of. That the same car took a class second three weeks later on the German Rally, gave even more substance to the incredible toughness and reliability of the Sprite, and also proved that our modifications were as dependable as they were fast.

Reg and Paul had converted my own Sprite into a Sebring and on November's RAC International Rally, the first to go "into the woods" we managed a second overall behind Erik Carlsson's famous SAAB, but ahead of dozens of the factory entries including all the work's 3000's. Pat Moss drove this car at the Brands Hatch Boxing Day meeting, and immediately this car and Cyril's were taken to Williams and Pritchard's Edmonton works to have the Coupe top fitted. I was determined to get a better top than my old firm's Speedwell GT which was pretty restricted for arm and head movement, so Len and Charlie bent wire rods around my seated position, to give the driver as much room as is necessary with panic corrections on loose gravel! That their genius made it look pretty good was certainly a bonus. Higher side screens also improved sideways visibility, which, as all Sprite racers will know, is often where the view of the road ahead seems to be.

I had managed to persuade Stirling and Pat to drive them at the Sebring Four Hour race, after which the best of the cars would be driven by Cyril, Paul and I in the 12 hour



*Sebring 12 Hour. See a separate feature on this car on page 19 of this month's Mascot"*

#### *The 1960 Falcon Bodied Sprite*



race. While both cars did reasonable well, these long races at high revs encouraged the dreaded clutch slip, which the factory Healey Sprites were able to avoid with some rear bearing modifications, later to be adopted by pretty well all competition Sprites. Still the publicity was wonderful, and as a result, we were able to get Ian Walker, David Seigle Morris, Chris Williams, Andrew Hedges, Jack Wheeler and Doug Wilson Spratt to adopt Sebring Sprites for their competition activities. Ian Walker, incidentally, held the class lap record for every event he drove during the 1961 season, and the record books show so many Sebring rally class and overall wins – and this for a little production car which could be bought for around fifteen hundred pounds fully modified! Quite a few other folks built their own versions, and in all well over a hundred were in action, although only very few boasted Coupe bodywork by either W & P, or Robert Peel Sheet Metal Works. Today, there seem to be more than seventy coupes around the world, almost all the originals well restored and many modern replicas built by that wonderful enthusiast, the late Brian Archer. I was delighted to meet up again with my original PMO200 which Paul Woolmer has restored brilliantly to its original condition, warts and all, when Stirling Moss drove her at Goodwood in the Fordwater Trophy race, the same race in which I had driven to a class second in 1960!

# New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members

4105	Thomas Key	Nottinghamshire	Frogeye
4106	Jane & John Gates	Essex	Midget 1500
4107	Andrew & Shirley Forbes	Staffordshire	Frogeye
4108	Kate Andrews	Northamptonshire	Tifosi Rana
4109	David & Lucie Wigley	North Yorkshire	Sprite Mk 2
4110	Michael & Anita Pearson	Kent	Midget Mk 3
4111	Robert Morris	West Midlands	Frogeye

*New member Jonathon  
Turner's Frogeye*



*New member in March, Gareth Morgan's Mk2 Midget*



*John and Jeanette Roebuck and their 1500 Midget*



*David & Lucie Wigley with their Mk2 Sprite (taken by Tom, their five year old son)*



*Kate Andrews' Tifosi Rana*



## Where is it now?

South East Area Rep Alan Anstead wonders if his old Frogeye "PEE173" seen here with its Ashley hardtop, is still around and if so is it owned by a member of the Midget & Sprite Club?

The other Mk1 Sprite is Alan's current Frogeye, Some of you may also have seen his Sebring Sprite Replica. Plain greedy if you ask me.

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# Your Spridget's Secret Identity Stamp or "VRC"

A problem was highlighted in the USA during the late 1920's involving the accurate identification of stolen vehicles.

In a time of austerity, the Great Depression had led to an increase in crime and specifically that of vehicle theft. As money became tighter and the grip of organised crime increased, the haulage companies often found not only were their cargoes regularly hijacked but also the trucks which carried them would be stolen, often stripped of their parts and sold to unscrupulous garages and vehicle parts suppliers.

With the engines and chassis plates removed, the remnants of the vehicles would be very difficult for insurance companies and law enforcement agencies to properly identify. Just as common a crime would be when whole vehicles had been repainted and reliveried with the addition of false papers and matching chassis plates. The crime would be almost impossible to detect unless the police were lucky enough to catch the criminals red handed. By 1930, there was almost institutionalised corruption among the lower ranks of the larger police forces in America leading to vehicle related crimes remaining largely unsolved.

The insurance companies had to find a full-proof method of identifying suspected stolen vehicles and, if it could be shown that a vehicle had been stolen and taken across a state line, the penalties for those involved would be much greater. Perhaps, more importantly, when a cross border felony had been committed, it would then come under the remit of the almost unimpeachable FBI rather than the corrupt state police forces.

From its inception in 1908 with a small group of 34 investigators, the FBI had by the 1930s grown into one of the world's most sophisticated and successful law enforcement agencies. Working closely and in complete secrecy with the major commercial vehicle manufacturers and insurance companies, they devised a simple system of vehicle recognition codes. These VRC's as



they would later become known, consisted of a set of numbers and letters each less than a quarter of an inch tall, stamped somewhere on a vehicle. Each VRC would be individual to that vehicle and placed in an unlikely but accessible predetermined location.

The key to the success (or not) of the system would be its almost complete secrecy. Most US heavy vehicle production lines would have as few as half a dozen key and trusted individuals who would be responsible for the implementation and stamping of the VRCs. The stamping tools used by those trusted individuals (*it was later believed that many were actually FBI operatives or in the employment of insurance companies*) would be far smaller than the ones used for regular identity tags and chassis numbers. More importantly the stamping forces used would be far less, resulting in the vehicle's VRC being much shallower than a normal identification number. The codes would usually be stamped prior to reaching the paint shop and once painted over, would be almost invisible to anyone except those with knowledge of their secret location.

So successfully was the VRC's secret kept and with such a simple aid to crime detection, it was only a matter of time before the FBI and the insurance companies were able to convince the major car manufacturers to adopt the same secret system of vehicle recognition codes.

It became standard practice throughout America and, by the outbreak of the Second World War, it is thought that every vehicle (with the exception of military vehicles and those from low volume car manufacturers) built in the USA, carried their own individual VRC.

By 1955, with the expansion of the number of European vehicles being imported into the US (many to ex-servicemen who had fallen in love with the charismatic cars while

stationed abroad) the US system of VRC's was in danger of becoming undermined by the sudden influx of uncoded cars. Once again the FBI and the major US insurance companies exerted pressure on the car manufacturers (this time the Europeans) to adopt the American VRC system or risk losing out on valuable US export dollars. Vehicle manufacturers in post war Britain were more than willing to embrace the secret coding system and, in a society only just emerging from the previous decade's need to keep their eyes and ears open, it was easy for the manufacturers to find willing key employees able to keep a secret.

Many companies found the ideal place to "hide" the VRC was somewhere that was fairly accessible during vehicle production, would be completely invisible during daily use and should be almost undetectable to somebody stripping the car down to its component parts, which might include a garage or the home mechanic.

Many Austin Healey Sprite and MG Midget owners will have looked directly at the location of the VRC, even during major renovation of their cars. But most of them would not have noticed anything untoward, even when staring directly at it. This is due to the extremely small size of the code plus the shallow stamping which is generally covered and disguised by paint.

There is a twofold reason why knowledge of the VRC has recently become known to more than the few entrusted with the secret. Both involve technology which would have been unimaginable to those who implemented the system over 90 years ago. The first is the now common practice of car manufacturers electronically coding their vehicles and the second is the "world wide web" which means that a secret previously known to only a few can, in a very short period of time, become available to anyone with access to a computer.

The location of the stamped code on your Austin Healey Sprites and MG Midgets has remained the same throughout the total production run. From the very first AN5 Sprite right up to and including the last GAN6 MG Midget 1500, you will see if you happen to be looking at the underside of your battery tray, a very small number stamped into the metal. It may only be visible when the gearbox is out or with the aid of a torch and a mirror (if the

underside is clean enough and the paint is wearing thin).

Other models may have their VRC stamped almost anywhere on the main chassis, but the same criteria will have been used

- 1 Ease of stamping during manufacture.
- 2 Invisibility during daily use.
- 3 To remain part of the chassis (or monocoque in the case of Sprites and Midgets) even when the vehicle is stripped
- 4 Visible to someone knowing the location of a car's particular VRC without the need for specialised tools.

Obviously, by now, some of our cars will have lost or had trays replaced, especially due to acid leaking from old or faulty batteries, but most of the Sprites and Midgets still in existence will have their own personal secret identity stamp. What's yours?

**Dr. Uve Binhad**  
Stockholm, Sweden

## Mutual Assistance Directory

It is lovely and sunny as I write so I do hope that we are not having our summer in March like we did last year and the year before! I must go into the garage as somewhere in there, buried under stuff is a shiny Midget that would like to go for a run. At least it was shiny when it went in there!

If you look at the front of the mag there are loads of events to go to, ranging from local area get togethers to national classic events. So, pack your Mutual Assistance Directory and off you go! Have fun because that is what life is all about – having fun. It is funny, but zooming along with the hood down, all the doom and gloom seems to get blown away.

If you read last month's ramblings, you will know that the MAD is now bang up to date. It may not be as "thick" as before but at least if you ring a contact when you are in trouble, you will know that the guy or gal who answers is a fellow member.

Don't forget, if you don't carry your copy of the Mutual Assistance Directory and 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. Just ask!

**David Hill**

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# An invitation to Sprint

**H**arrow Car Club are running 2 Sprints at North Weald Airfield, Essex on Sunday, 26 April 2009 and Sunday, 20 September, 2009.

To be able to take an active part in the driving you will need an appropriate MSA licence (entry regs are available on request) but to marshal or just spectate all you need to do is contact me and I will send you entry passes. There will be a free lunch voucher available to signed on marshals. All are welcome. For more details contact MASC member Keith Warner, [mrkwarner@hotmail.com](mailto:mrkwarner@hotmail.com), 07800 875835, 01923 672917.



*Editors note. I now have my MSA National B licence in my hand and my first foray will be a Clubsport AutoSOLO on the 22nd of March followed by the Sprint mentioned above on the 26th of April. Look out Lewis.*

## NXC 885D



A few notes regarding the photo. It shows me and my sister Mary competing on the Redditch and District Car Club Easter Trial (check cover) in 1969. This was a production car trial somewhere in Worcestershire and I was subsequently disqualified from a class winning position following a protest at the end because I had been allowed to start without my bumpers! The car is a Mark 3 Sprite, was new in Oct 1966 and used extensively on club driving tests, trials and road rallies until replaced by an Escort the following year - NXC 885D where are you now?

**John Platt** [membership@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk](mailto:membership@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk)

# The Sale of an Important Sprite



**RM Auctions catalogue entry for 8426 UE, Amelia Island sale 14.03.09**

Following on the success of the Austin-Healey 100, Donald Healey and BMC teamed up to produce yet another sports-car legend, the Sprite. Introduced in 1958 and affectionately known as the 'Bugeye' or 'Frogeye' by virtue of its hood-mounted headlamps, the Sprite combined a lightweight steel unit-body structure with a 948 cc BMC A-series four-cylinder engine and other mechanical components from the Morris Minor. The cars were prized for their remarkable steering response and handling, and quickly took the racing world by storm.

Well aware of the correlation between racing and sales success, Healey and BMC campaigned "works" Sprites in the most important American sports car races, particularly the Sebring 12-Hour endurance race. The name "Sebring Sprite" was described by marque experts John Sprinzel and Tom Coulthard in the book *Spritely Years* as a catch-all term, referring to racing Sprites

that were homologated under FIA guidelines with four-wheel disc brakes, as well as other mechanical and engine upgrades.

The Healey/BMC works team cars were taken directly from the BMC Abingdon production line and delivered to the Donald Healey Motor Co. in Warwick, where they were race-prepared under the able supervision of Geoff Healey.

In March 1959, the team launched its first assault on Sebring with four standard-bodied Sprites, sweeping the GT 1000cc class with first, second and third place finishes. The team returned in 1960, with Stirling Moss taking first in class and second overall in the four-hour race, while John Sprinzel and John Lumkin took first in class during the gruelling 12-hour event. The Sprites returned to Sebring in 1961, taking six of the eight top places in the four-hour race. Ed Leavens, Bruce McLaren, Walt Hansgen, Briggs Cunningham and Dick Thompson, as well as



Stirling Moss and his sister Pat, drove the cars with a variety of GRP, alloy and coupe bodies.

For the 12-hour event, two “works” cars were entered, with 8427 UE using an alloy hardtop body by Les Ireland, which finished second



in class, while the car offered here, 8426 UE, was fitted with an alloy roadster body that was the work of the Healey Experimental Department, under Roger Menadue. Wearing race number 65 and co-driven by Ed Leavens and John Colgate, the car finished third in class, and 25th overall. Recently, Mr. Leavens described 8426 UE as being “much faster and better handling” than the more standard “Sebring Sprites”, and as “... real race cars, considering their era.”

While little is known of 8426 UE after 1961, it did remain in the U.S.A., and was purchased by Mark Flanders of Weston, Florida in 1986. In 1990, the car received





a frame-off restoration by Tsikuris Classics of Lakeland, Florida. In 2008, Eurocoach of Fort Lauderdale refreshed the Sprite with new paint and mechanical work, at a cost of \$40,000. Continuing its winning ways, 8426 UE returned to Sebring, taking first in the SVRA Spring Fling event, as well as first in the HSR night race. On the show field in 2008, this handsome, alloy-bodied sports racer secured first place awards at both the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance and the Boca Raton Concours d'Elegance. It is certainly a very rare and desirable Austin-Healey racing car. Beautifully restored, it would be a formidable vintage racer with several impressive awards to boot.



### **Additional info from the Auctioneers says:**

'Please note this car should in no way be confused with a standard Austin-Healey Sebring Sprite as it is one of just two cars equipped with special one-off, all-aluminium bodywork and, as indicated by its chassis number suffix, was specifically built for works competition use. As its sister car was destroyed at Le Mans, this car, chassis ST 450/S, is the only one of its kind in existence!

Contrary to the catalogue description, this car did in fact finish first in its class at Sebring. ST 450/S went on to Nassau where it won the small-bore class in the sprint race and finished third in the international three-hour. Additional corroborative documentation, including a period Champion spark plug advertisement following the win at Sebring, further confirms this car's identity and uniqueness. Furthermore, it attended an Austin-Healey international reunion at Mid-Ohio, where John Colgate specifically made an appearance to drive this car and reminisced with Geoff Healey, both of whom were photographed with the car.

The owner, who has known of ST 450/S for the past four decades, raced it briefly in the late 1990s, after which it has been carefully stored and seen limited use ever since. It is undoubtedly one of the most important competition Austin-Healeys, with remarkable provenance and wins in several important international races.'

*MASCOT would like to thank Amy Christie of RM Auctions, Inc. Canada [www.rmauctions.com](http://www.rmauctions.com) for her help and permission to use their information and images.*



*Sebring in 1961 with John Colgate Jr. at the wheel*



# February fill yer boots!

SS&NB do some stuff

Pre-drive rendezvous  
at Frankie & Bennie's

24 cars, count 'em! OK that was actually on the first day of March but I'm claiming it for this edition of the SS&NB news.

Where was I? Oh yes we had 24 cars including members from Kent, London and Northamptonshire as well as our friends from Warwickshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire descend on us for the Third Brum Tunnels Run. There were even a few non-club members who asked to come along with us. (The full list has been forwarded to Alan Anstead who was one of our Kentish visitors) We ran through Brum's tunnels and around the course of the old mid seventies Birmingham Grand Prix circuit, as we do and afterwards continued along the A38 to Alrewas and the new National Memorial Arboretum where we rested and took in the many thought provoking memorials set within the grounds. The day was enjoyed in almost balmy temperatures as we had sunshine all day except a short time just before we set off from Frankie and Bennie's New York Restaurant.



The centrepiece of the National Memorial Arboretum

I had been the third to arrive in Erdington, to find that the manager of the Restaurant was offering to let us inside for coffee, even though they were shut for a staff training session. Such outstanding service deserves mentioning. *Whether it deserves abduction and subjection to a trip around the car park in an editorial chariot is another matter but she seemed to enjoy the ride, emerging smiling and full of praise for Frog-eyed Sprites...*

Since we managed to avoid losing any of our visitors except for the two who intended to cut it short after the tunnelling bit, we claim this as a successful run out and have been asked to do it again soon. We may be looking for a ride out to Cannock Chase in the late summer, watch this space!

We had had an earlier trip the weekend before the Tunnels Run when six of us (Bill, Andy, John, Mark, Geoff and I) met at McDonald's for the run down to Stoneleigh for the MG Spares Day. We had a fine run down again and were able to park inside the covered MG car park whilst we wandered around the two halls and the outside stalls. Basing ourselves around the Club Stand so well manned and operated by Warwickshire with the added presence and gravitas supplied by the Chairman in attendance, the entire event was a pleasant beginner for the years' "eventing".

On the Saturday (28th Feb) before the Tunnels Run I was summoned to an Area Reps meeting in the village of Gaydon (the BMIHT centre were unable to accommodate us!) by Alan Anstead, where amongst many things we discussed the use of disclaimers before any Area Event, which was the basis of the disclaimer form which all participants of the Tunnels Run had to fill in and sign. We all had a very informative session before we dispersed,



The masses congregate around Kate's Triumph 1300 engined Tifosi Rana

thanks Alan. I would come to one of these again.

All in all, my Midget has had quite a busy little winter, let us all hope we get a summer worthy of the name and lots of great trips and runs to participate in. My next planned outing will be the April, Ace Café evening on the second Tuesday of the month where I hope to meet up with the chaps from "that London" whilst as a branch we are planning to visit the Snibston Transport Festival in May. The two day festival

will probably be on our itinerary for the Sunday as a full day out.

I saved the very best for last... I mentioned that Beth Wragg had taken her dad to Idaho as support crew for her bid to win at the Boise Special Olympics, I have absolute pleasure to report that she has brought him back to us a GOLD and two SILVER medals. WELL DONE BETH! CONGRATULATIONS!

**Bill Mohan 1067**

### Email from John Sprinzel regarding the Ace Café and Terry Horler's Speedo article

Hi Gary,

Interested to read about the Ace Cafe which was a couple of miles from where I lived as a kid. About sixty years ago, when I was heavily into motorbikes, the Ace was the place, as they say, and crowds of bikers descended on the cafe most nights. I think if you had turned up in those days with a car, you might have been sat upon. It was as rough as a bear's you-know-what, but even then I think eggs and bacon or bangers and mash and a cup of tea was about the total menu. The North Circular road was, of course, free of speed limits, and there were plenty of challenges made and taken, so the cops were pretty much in attendance. I recall some sweeping bends over a bridge not too far from the Ace, and the deal was to take them flat. Last time I passed by that way, I recall it was not only very heavy traffic, but the limit was down to around forty!

Incidentally, you can tell Terry that all Smiths instrument needles wobbled around even when new. Graham Hill had done his apprenticeship at Smiths (not far from the Ace actually), and he arranged a deal whereby we took every speedometer on cars we converted back to them for what they called "silicone damping", which cured the wobble. Initially we had them calibrated too, but when a guy paid for an engine conversion, he didn't really want the speedo reading at less than before the work was done, even if it was now accurate, so we gave that idea up pretty smartly.

Keep up the good Mascot work, a most enjoyable read. Aloha, John





**Come and meet the**

**MIDGET & SPRITE**  
*Hampshire Chapter*  
*We don't bite*

**The Fox and Goose**  
**Greywell**  
**RG29 1BY**

**Sunday 26th April**  
**DRIVE IT DAY**  
**12pm until 4pm approx.**

The Fox and Goose has excellent beer, and a wide range of food on offer, why not make it a lunch to remember?

Hampshire Members we have photos of!  
(with apologies to those whose photos are not available or too ghastly)



# News from Hampshire

## Mike's Blue Midge on track....

Being a Midget owner I pay subs. to the MG Owners Club as well as the Midget & Sprite Club. As soon as I spotted in MGOC's magazine notification of a track day at Goodwood in February, I started asking myself – (a) could my car do it? And (b) would it teach me anything? I fairly quickly concluded that (a) it would be fun and a challenge to find out and (b) it could teach my 18 year-old son (Tim) what track driving is like for real as well as how to drive a car that doesn't roll in bends (like a 20 year old Peugeot 205 "Look").



*On the move!*

So, to cut a long story short, Valentine's Day 2009 found me driving the "love of my life" (it's alright, my wife won't read this!!!) across Hampshire to Sussex and possibly to its ultimate demise....? Only a few days after "the worst snow in 20 years" the weather was perfect – at least with the roof up (it was quite cool).

After initial signing in, there was a parade lap – 3 laps long, so Tim drove those in a leisurely procession. After that came a formal safety briefing – the main points being not to race and not to overtake until the driver in front has "let you" pass, and to make sure that towing eyes were fitted (there were 2 in my car's boot, but of no use there in a hurry), so the only job was to fit one – just in case!

As a relative novice on the road, a total novice on the track, and driving a strange car, I insisted that Tim should be shown what to do by an instructor. At the first session instructors were in short supply, so we decided I should take my turn first. The last time I drove round Goodwood was probably 20 years earlier, but that was fine and I got round without doing anything silly, I thought.



*Queuing for the pit lane*

So for the next session, I waited in and above the pit lane with camera ready while my car was totally outside my control – but again, all went well; I probably should have been somewhere else to get a good action photo though!

The next session had Tim driving again, with me in the passenger seat; and I was quickly trying to shout SLOW DOWN or BRAKE NOW or BRAKE HARDER". But actually Tim was doing exactly what the instructor had shown him and he was really working the car to get round the lap as fast as it could – never that quick of course – I deliberately modified my car more for economy than speed. It was only overtaken – it did no over-taking on the track, but there were a number of race tuned Midgets and Bs, V8s, MGFs, and even one V12 Mercedes SL (not sure how this was allowed, I thought it was MGs only!).



*Waiting for the noise test – spot the Merc SL*

Generally, a very useful experience for my son, but also for me and the car; I have no intention to make this car a true racer, but I do want to make it as capable as I can for road use – at sensible cost; track driving is a good way to test and prove that aim, and I would like to be there again in a year's time, with one or two planned improvements in place!

**Mike Sleath**

[www.midgetandsprite-hampshire.info](http://www.midgetandsprite-hampshire.info)



## Linc'Slot

On 1st March all met at Uncle Henry's Farm Shop and Restaurant at Kirton. We had a nice Sunday lunch, if a bit pricey.

Phil & Annie were in the Midget, top off, as were Sue & I. Pete & Mary had their Moggy Van and discussions were afoot about an L.P.G. conversion. Tim & Jill took their Moggy Minor Traveller, which is up for sale and a potential buyer was at the venue.

Lunches and puddings consumed, we set off to the ex R.A.F. Hemswell site of the Hemswell Antiques Centre where we browsed and hunted for bargains in four of the

recycled, art deco styled, war time Bomber Command buildings. The £1.50 weekend parking fee was not one of the bargains. Neither was the pernickety 50p. refundable entry fee to the buildings. However, the browsing continued until some of us found bargains. Mary in particular found a lovely green, almost complete, Winton tea and dinner service for all of £6.00.

Next meeting is Sunday 29th. March in Boston, yes Boston, in the south of our county. Ring or email for details.

**Brian Jeffery**

## East Anglian Report

As I write this we are still firmly in the low season for Spridgeting activities, however we are on the cusp of the new season, but sadly my Sprite is still in bits, I have really missed using it for short trips and those odd nice bright days. I especially missed it when I attended the recent Area Reps meeting in Gaydon on the last day of February, since we had a brilliant turn out of proper cars. It was a brilliant opportunity to



*Malcolm & Linda's Sprite*

meet up with a great bunch of people some well known to me and others, previously just names off the front page of *Mascot*. It was especially good to chat to Terry Horler, who I suppose is more or less responsible for the existence of our great little club (and that book), and to find out how other areas operate (and nick the good ideas). It seems there are a wide variety of area sizes and styles ranging from large formal well organised groups with their own officials and officers through medium sized (but with pretensions) chaotic groups like ourselves through to tiny enclaves of enthusiasm.

The meeting was organised by Alan Anstead, who has the wonderful title of Representatives Representative (I wonder who represents him) in an effort to pull the club together more and foster crosspollination of ideas. I for one applaud what Alan is trying to do and appreciate the support, and the professionalism he has brought to this new role. Without wishing to duplicate anything reported elsewhere in *Mascot*, one of the main issues discussed was the changing status of the club to a limited company and the insurance implications regarding the club and official club events. We are living in an ever changing world with more emphasis on litigation and the legal aspects of things, and the upshot of all this is that (for everyone's benefit) we should start thinking about putting our events on a slightly more formal and professional basis (instead of the glorious chaos of the past). We have all on occasions been asked to produce documents at some of the larger events we have attended and this is in reality the same sort of thing. I don't think this needs to be too demanding, just a record of those taking part and an indication that all cars are roadworthy and legal would probably suffice, however more details will emerge once the dust has settled on the new arrangements.

Getting back to more local news it is great to be able to welcome yet more East Anglian members into the fold, this time it is Malcolm & Linda from Peterborough who have a very nice red Sprite (see photo) although I would rather not see it again surrounded by the white stuff any time soon, although I understand it will shortly be heading south for a spot of preseason sunshine.

See you all at the Mad Cat and beyond.

**Dave Dixon**

## Diary of a Race Midget



**M**y new owner has been very busy since my last report. He has stripped down my back brakes, removed the half-shafts and hubs, inspected the lot and rebuilt using new parts if required. I also have a new radiator and will have some new front brake pads soon too.

The local college have helped to strip down a spare gearbox. This has then been rebuilt using new parts where necessary. At last I now have a spare Ital engine block. This engine has just been stripped down and the next stage will be to give the block a re-bore before starting to source suitable parts. I expect it will be a few months before my spare engine is complete.

Most of all I'm looking forward to a good wash and polish plus a change of engine oil and filter before my first outing of the new season as car number 67. This will be on April 4th at Donington in the MGCC Midget Challenge and my previous owner will be there to check I am being properly looked after. With the refurbishment of my brakes stopping shouldn't be a problem. I'm just wondering what my lap times will be like. No pressure for my new driver then! I hope a few of you will be there to support my fellow Midgets & Sprites and I.

**Chequers**

# The StarSprite Bonnet

If people in the outside world think Spridget ownership is quite an obscure pastime, they would be bemused and slightly concerned to hear that there is a thriving subsection within that group of owners which can only be described as specialised in the extreme. I am a fully paid up member of this little group of enthusiasts, owning various Mk I Sprite hardtops (five at the last count) but only one fibreglass front.

You can liken us to the rare aquatic group of crustaceans which up until very recently lived undiscovered, deep in the Atlantic Ocean, feeding from sulphurous volcanic hot springs belching forth nutrients that would instantly choke the rest of the planet's carbon-based life forms. These small prawns and crabs love it and they can't get enough of it ... so it is with us and our chosen interest.

I'm talking about period aftermarket fibreglass bonnets and hardtops. Many companies who specialised in the production of these period adaptations came and went in the 1950s and 60s: from larger concerns like Ashley Laminates and Williams & Pritchard (the latter being bespoke car body fabricators in their own right, using metal as well as fibreglass) and later Lenham, to smaller companies producing anything from a couple up to a hundred or so units.

It is one of these small to medium-sized companies which is featured here. GA Glassfibration Ltd (and that's not a typo) was created in Leeds by Graham Atkin (the GA in the company name), who was - and still is - a brilliant design engineer. He teamed up with Allan Staniforth (who worked as a reporter in the Leeds area for the *Daily Mirror*) to make a more attractive bonnet for the Mk I Sprite.

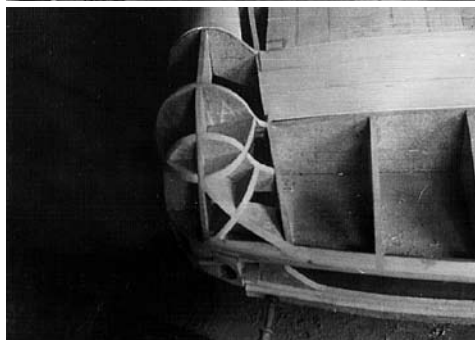
Bobby Monkman (the son of a Leeds builder) was a member of the BARC and offered his Sprite to be used in the bonnet manufacture. The car was stripped of all lamps and the screen etc. and a mould was taken from the complete car. The Sprite was then resprayed, re-assembled and returned to Bobby.

A male mould was taken from the female, reinforced, stood on oil cans (see photos) and Graham manufactured a buck (again see

photos) by laying lengths of very thin plywood to form the correct shape. As can be seen by the photos, the finished item was superb and well over 100 'StarSprite' fronts were sold.

The colour sales leaflet described the StarSprite fibreglass front as follows:

*"Lighter - Faster - quicker off the mark - and a transformation in appearance. 'StarSprite' bonnet gives you all these. Your stopwatch and spring balance can check our claims on weight and performance - but only your eye will tell whether it looks as beautiful as we have tried to make it. New grille in anodised*



*Original photos of the buck, circa 1959*

alloy – flush fitting headlight covers – air intake clears, special carb kits. Goes straight on existing hinges. Bumper can still be fitted. Takes existing head and side lights, wipers and wiring loom”.

The cost was £42. The bonnet came moulded in BMC Colours and they'd even fit it for an additional £3.10s.

Graham was at this time working in the drawing office in Kirkstall Road, Leeds. The bonnets were made in his spare time and he would turn up for work covered in glass fibre dust. Working night and day inevitably resulted in poor health and before long saw the end of manufacture. The moulds were sold to HJ Gill and Co., proprietors of Dyna Plastics of Cardigan Road in Leeds (see image), who recommenced production.

Graham went on to be a director of Lotus Engineering, later moving to MG Rover where he produced the drawings for the K Series three cylinder 1000cc and four cylinder 1400cc engines. However, he had nothing to do with the larger 1600cc and 1800cc engines, having returned to Lotus.

Allan Staniforth rallied and raced various cars over a long period. In the 1970's he designed and built a Sprint/Race car called the Terrapin min (mini). He then wrote a book and plans so that it could be built

as a DIY project. His subsequent books Competition Car Suspension and Race and Rally Car Sourcebook have become essential reading for motorsport enthusiasts. Allan still hillclimbs at Harewood and was recently featured there as 'the oldest hillclimber in town'.



Original colour brochure

**STARSPRITE** Replacement bonnet for AH-Sprite • DESIGN BY **G.A.**

Top class material and finish. Weighs 42 lbs, against 77 lbs. Genuine extra 2 1/2" top speed.

Air ducting to radiator. In high speed flutter in, and powder, delivery to flow, cooled and protected to your feet.

Lighter - faster - quieter off the coast - and a transformation in appearance. The "StarSprite" bonnet gives you all these. Your stopwatch and spring balance can check our claims on weight and performance - but only your eye will tell you whether it looks as beautiful as we have tried to make it. The grille is moulded alloy - flush fitting headlight covers - air intake clears, special carb kits. Goes straight on existing hinges. Bumper can still be fitted. Takes existing head and side lights, wipers, and wiring loom.

Made in Britain by G.A. Glasfibrecreation Limited, Carr Mills, Buslingthorpe Lane, Leeds 7.

The colour brochure makes some interesting claims for performance too:

Some test figures for the Sprite in full road sports tune. (Hood up; 2 people; employing 6,500 rpm in gears; average of double runs each way.)		
TEST RESULTS		
Acceleration	Original	Starsprite
0-60	(Sec) 15.3	13.9
0-70	(Sec) 22.3	18.9
0-80	(Sec) 31,4	26.7
Max. Speed MPH	95	102
Speed at end of 30 secs.	78	83

*This information along with the photos, was sent to me by Derek Burnell, the secretary of the City of Leeds MG and Classic Car Club. They cater for all makes of classic cars and have an active programme of social events throughout the year. They would be very happy for any members of MASC to join them for events and can be contacted at derek.burnell@talk21.com or on 01132 893 050*

*Mascot would like to apologise for the poor condition of some of the photographs contained in this*



*One of the original Sprites featured in the brochure*



*article (most of them are 50 years old), however we felt that it would be better to include poor quality images rather than none at all.*

*The Colour brochure was supplied by Ray English & "Marque One" Magazine in Australia.*



*Completed StarSprite bonnet*

*A very poor image taken during construction*

# Midget Gem: Very First MG Midget Found in Yorkshire

A jewel of British motoring history - the first MG Midget ever produced - has been re-discovered in Yorkshire (UK) and the race is now on to return it to its former glory in time for the model's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2011.

Mark T Boldry, owner of the York-based Drymar Classic Vehicle Services, discovered the Midget in a small village close to Driffield, East Yorkshire, where it had been stored, unused, in a small damp lock-up garage for almost 30 years. Health problems prevented the car's owner from carrying out the restoration work himself but after choosing to sell it to Mark, he will now be able to follow its restoration progress,

After buying the dilapidated MG and painstakingly researching its history Mark was able to have its provenance confirmed by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, the world's leading archivist of material relating to some of the famous marques in British motoring history. The BMIHT has issued an official Heritage Certificate for the Midget, which is a certified copy of the entry against the car's chassis number in the authentic factory records.

The certificate confirms the Midget was built on the 17th August 1960 by BMC at its Abingdon plant. The company used it for 11 months as a development car before being sold and registered in July 1961.

The MG Midget model was officially launched in June 1961. Over the following 12 months 1,124 right-hand drive 'home market' cars came off the assembly line.

'This is an iconic piece of British car manufacturing history and a hugely significant find,' says Mark. 'We're thrilled to be able to restore this wonderful vehicle - it will truly be a labour of love! We're looking forward to being part of the worldwide celebrations planned for the MG Midget's 50th anniversary in 2011.'



Mark expects the restoration project to take two years. The first phase of the work will involve a complete and sympathetic restoration of the bodywork, retaining as much of the original car as possible. The final stages of the project will include a respray in its original colour, Tartan Red.

Drymar Classic Vehicle Services provides a full range of services for classic car owners ranging from winter checks to full re-builds. With more than 35 years experience, Mark's business has specialist expertise in maintaining and re-building Austin Healey Sprites and MG Midgets, early Minis, Cooper and Cooper S models. The business also supplies classic cars to TV and film production companies and its vehicles have appeared on the BBC's 'Top Gear' and Yorkshire Television's 'Heartbeat' series. In addition, Drymar offers Motorsport services including car management, development and transportation.

Contact for further details:  
Mark T Boldry Tel: +44(0)7889 799033 or +44(0)1904 400998 (office hours)  
Drymar Classic Vehicle Services,  
Westfield House, Stockton-on-the-Forest,  
York, North Yorkshire UK YO32 9UU  
Email: [contact@drymar.co.uk](mailto:contact@drymar.co.uk)  
Website: [www.drymar.co.uk](http://www.drymar.co.uk)

# Kent Section



*In the car park at Wrotham*

**S**unday 22nd February gave a good indication of the forthcoming springtime. The sun was out casting its rays upon a pleasant day. What better excuse can there be after such a recent changeable and severe weather than to get out and enjoy some motoring in a Sprite or Midget.

Five Frogeyes, two chrome bumper Midgets, two rubber bumper Midgets, one Austin-Healey Sprite and one Austin Sprite arrived at the Moat, Wrotham Heath, for this month's meeting - a goodly number for so early in the year.

New members Bryan & Sharon were welcomed into the fold and then surprise! surprise! A birthday cake, with candles ablaze, was brought forth to celebrate John Clark's #1st birthday. Relative silence then fell as all gathered gormandised to such good effect that there was barely a crumb left with which to feed the birds.

After a few hours people drifted away aware of a police Q-bike aiding speed enforcement Traffic motorcycle cops along the road outside. I hope all took care and that no one got a 'ticket'.

## **Illuminating the dashboard**

If you fancy a change from having dashboard instruments, on your spridget, emitting only a ghostly yellowed glow then try some LED bulbs from a firm called Ultraleds (you will find them on WWW). Both John Clark and I have tried them recently on our cars. I was most impressed! The LED bulbs are a direct replacement although pricier than the norm at circ £2.50 per bulb.

## **Birmingham Tunnels Run**

This run, like January's Bridges Run, was a run not to be missed. Organised by Bill Mohan the run took participants through the tunnels of Birmingham. I will not mention any more as I dare say it will be reported in detail elsewhere within the covers of *Mascot*. Save to say a thank you to Bill for his fine efforts and mention for Surrey members that at each tunnel entered I sounded my car's Alpine horns in memory of past member Mark Foreman.

**Alan Anstead**

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

*Tel: 01322-384050 (answer phone)*

*S.E. Area (Surrey, Sussex & Kent) Rep and  
Reps Representative to National Committee*



*Before the off at the Birmingham Bridges run*

# Wark's Talk

Due to a family bereavement, we were unable to write a report last month, however Geoff Hunter stepped in and provided an amusing and witty piece for which we are very grateful and we are looking forward to his "Drive It Day" run in April.

This month Mo Wood has contributed the following:

## **"THE WARK'S STEAM TEAM"** *1960s Transport Day – Saturday 21st February, 2009*

The three Ss – sun, steam and spridgits were enjoyed by the nine cars who ventured out for the first run of the season to the Severn Valley Railway 1960s Transport Day. We set off from our traditional meeting place: The Droitwich Little Chef at 9:00a.m. following our leader, John Platt, who is to be complimented on co-ordinating the great day. Turning right across the A38 can be a difficult manoeuvre for a line of little cars. Having brought the traffic to a halt at Stourport on Severn, outside Lidl, where a very nice local came to enquire after our wellbeing, we safely arrived at Arley Station. Roy Cole's car was already in situ and our herringbone parking provided a colourful backdrop for the station.

Within seven minutes the first DMU (Diesel Multiple Unit) arrived, sweeping some of the group off to the first destination of the day: The Engine House at Highley. This building was opened last Easter and is a lively celebration of the railway. Andy Smith, our young male member, was captivated and inquisitive. He subsequently regaled us with his account of the significance of the 'star' on the rolling stock. Mike and Benita Vann, who had travelled the furthest, from Nuneaton, took advantage of a well earned lunch stop. With no time to lose, we were back to catch the steam train to Bridgnorth. Margaret Gunn, on walking stick, niftily negotiated the platform steps and was almost as fast as her son, Stuart's fast midget. It was good to see that despite Alan Couch's recent knee operation. He too was both driving his Frogeye and striding out on the SVR.



The glorious views across the River Severn ended at Bridgnorth station where a rather nice red 1971 Midget was parked. Sadly, John Platt had left membership forms in his car so we missed out on this possible recruit. Feeling suitably refreshed with a "cold un" we were back on the train calling at Bewdley and Bridgnorth.

The joys of the day were people doing their own thing in the environment of God's Wonderful Railway (GWR). Here we saw the best in British inventions: top class travel where GB led the World? What happened to our industry? All entrants also received a leather bookmark to commemorate the event, which will be useful for maps, manuals and *Mascot*.

Fortunately Chris was able to attend the MG Show at Stoneleigh, which was organised and supervised by Dave Colclough who had persuaded Stuart, Andy and Barrie to display their vehicles. It was a very successful and popular stand visited throughout the day by a variety of enthusiasts, both members and non-members. John has always provided a large number of old *Mascots*, which were distributed and the last of the calendars were given as prizes to lucky patrons! It is always a very short show and David called us to task when putting the gazebo etc. away, so that with a bit of dubious parking right outside, we all drove away as the show ended. Many thanks to him and all the other helpers on the day.

**Mo, Chris and Sheila**

# Surrey Area

Tuesday 17th February saw us back at our usual haunt The Blue Ball, Walton on the Hill, Surrey for our monthly club night and a lively meet it was too.

First time out this year for Peter Gardiner's Midget and wearing new seats - the car not Peter. Too dark to examine in the car park. Nigel Saynor braved the drizzle with the top furled on his Frogeye whilst I completed the line up outside with my coupe.

Chris Harding, lamenting the loss of his latest love, should have come in his Spridget and been elated but duty dictated that he come in something a little larger in which to carry the Regalia Did anyone buy? Come on chaps you can't be seen at this year's car shows in last year's Club fashions. And the Club needs the funds!

Whilst Colin tried to excuse himself, over his not yet booking hotels for our September run to Italy, by claiming he had been working hard. Youngsters these days! Don't know what hard work is! Poor Jude, whilst trying to eat her meal, was desperately trying to fend off offers from Jim who wanted to show her his recent knee operation scars. Wrong time wrong place! Sue control your man. And where was the Spridget?

Body builder Ashley arrived with new parts that he had made for Frogeyes (Ashley Hinton Panels 01372-456304). We had planned to visit Ashley's factory at Gt Bookham Surrey on the morning of March 21st.

David Bruzas came to update us on the resto' of the Brabham M.G. Midget and also to bring a Frogeye seat frame for Ashley to template for remanufacture. Never accept "it's no longer available" from your motor factor but contact Ashley whose parts listings seem to swell daily.

Tim & Helen were collecting contact details for our May run to Minehead when we tour Exmoor over the May bank holiday weekend. Any Exmoor members free that weekend?

Mike Gorman brought along a modified oil seal for a "Rivergate" 5 speed (Datsun gearbox) conversion that we had discussed earlier to try to stem his car's oil leak. Resident engine machinist Col Carpenter



(Southern Rebores 01342-713634), with Nay, had examined the engine, subsequently, and thought the problem was blow by caused by incorrect machining of the engine bores. We now have to come up with a solution. Col was later seen, at the bar, with Peter Neale Smith, and brother Alan, deep in discussion about Mega-jolt ignition systems. I don't remember that being a period accessory nor mentioned in Special Tuning pamphlets. Peter's car is currently off the road with its engine out after we recently played 'hunt the release bearing'. Our small, fragmented, findings would have been considered major discovery on the T.V. programme 'Time Team'. Millionaire Chris Banton, fresh in from a couple of months in New Zealand & Australia was still excited by his trip which included a visit to Frogeye Historian Ray English. I should go? I am a pensioner lad! These young whipper snappers! Unusually David and Linda were without their car. No problems I hope. Laziness? Shame on them.

## Reggie Roberts

Reggie died recently (see obituary Mascot 09) and was cremated at Woking Crematorium on Friday 27th February 09. S.E. Area Masc was represented, at the funeral by: David Southcott; Chris Harding; Tim & Helen Ward & self. Condolences go to Gerald & Edwina Roberts.

Reggie was a long term member of S.E. Area Masc with his 1962 Austin Healey Sprite that he had owned from new.

## Alan Anstead

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

*Tel: 01322-384050 (answer phone)*

*S.E. Area (Surrey, Sussex & Kent) Rep and  
Reps Representative to National Committee*

# Scotland Report 9

It had always been my hope to have a Club tour of Scotland using La Carrera Caledonia as a springboard for it. And now, here we are at what is understood to be the last Carrera ever. So this will have to be it and it will be as good as it gets, and that's a fact.

I've been on three of them, but it's three years since my last outing and the Club support got as far as Anita and Mark and Tim and Sarah, Matt and Lizzy and that was it, but I could be wrong, and, of course, I'm not forgetting Bob Miller.

I wasn't going on this three day run again for reasons of expense and age; but, here I am, hoping to do so for the last time.

One of the real live human beings I met on Carrera was Adrian Hall-Carpenter. The first time he and his chum Colin Jarrard were in a Ferrari; then, the next year it was a split screen and wild Morris Minor and the last time I was there it was a Bentley turbo which left the ground, frequently. This year it might be something with six carbs. We just have to wait and be surprised.

Adrian and I sent Xmas cards, but this year I thought I'd have been forgotten. You know the horror of getting a card from someone you haven't written to. And there it was 'Look forward to seeing you on Carrera'. It wasn't until about 14th of January before I sent him his Xmas card saying 'Diminishment financial and strength wise, precludes me etc.' Clear enough, I'd say. But, no; then came a postcard from Greece in February saying I must turn out. Meanwhile, against that background, Linda had been saying the same thing and forcefully too, let me tell you. So, there you have it, with the strangeness of friendship, the propellant.

This sounds familiar-anyone else interested please? It's usually the first Saturday in June starting from Gretna and heading North. You can see what I mean when I referred to the various staminas, including that luxury, time.

Our chum, and Scottish web master, Doug Paterson in his 1500 Spitty is going, and teaming up with other Triumph drivers from the South. Triumphs are always well represented and Doug will have a great time on this, his first run. And our young David in his well worn Spitty with his dad as navigator will be there. It's all pretty good support from us.

To be my usual selfish self, a few other Masc participants would be terrific with us going to Whitby and all which is shaping up into a gang's all going type of thing with Les and Diane thinking of coming with the North West and support from Brian Jeffrey's mob from Lincs, which would be a first meet-up for us. If I've missed anyone, it's because I haven't yet studied MASCOT; but, that will be done. Sorry.

Our Club events have been put together by the two Johns, Betty, Bob, Steve and Dave, David and Doug and we are all delighted at the planning which starts to become real in April with John Kerr's local cake shop run to be put on again. Let's hope the cakes haven't changed, because the shop was for sale last year.

Island wise, we are going to Mull again and then embrace Islay for somewhere dramatic and different. And musical for Bob and Lorraine!

Gary's technical question and answer thing sounds like a good idea. I certainly like the current problem solver series and, in particular, the 20 ways to improve a Spridget series. The number of photos in the magazine is now colossal and to do penance of a sort for the last two Scottish displays, there won't be one from us this month which gives more space for technicals, decorum and sense!

## **Carson and chums**

PS. Very pleased to see Arie back in print, with his obsessions undiminished.

PPs. Sorry to read about Reggie. That strong face will be a loss.

# Organising Tours

The FBHVC, of which Midget and Sprite Club is a member, recently drew attention to the fact that some club event organisers may, unless they organise their tours carefully, fall foul of this legislation.



This guidance, from [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent), explains the types of holiday and holiday businesses to which the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 apply; with particular reference to financial security arrangements. The Regulations cover package holidays, and it is important to understand the definition of a package holiday, in determining whether or not you are caught by the legislation.

The Regulations also cover other aspects of the package holiday business such as advertising, brochures, contracts, surcharges and compensation. You will need a copy of the Regulations to find out what you have to do to comply fully with the law. The Regulations SI 1992 No. 3288 are available from the Office of Public Sector Information website. **What is a package holiday?**

The holiday must cover a period of at least 24 hours, or involve overnight accommodation.

The holiday must consist of a combination of at least two of the following components:

- transport (e.g. flights, trains, coaches and ferries (free transfers from the airport to a hotel would not be included);
- accommodation (this should be significant, i.e. it would include a berth on a cruise ship but not on a cross-channel ferry);
- other tourist services that form a significant proportion of the package (e.g. car hire).

The holiday must be sold at an inclusive price.

This definition may include holidays that the average member of the public would not think of as a 'package'. For example, many people would think of a package holiday as involving a trip of a few days or more abroad but, to be covered by the Regulations, it could also involve a trip inside Britain and should last for at least 24 hours or include overnight accommodation.

Pre-arranged selected (e.g. typical packages from holiday brochures) and tailor-made packages are both covered by the Regulations, provided the combination of components are

organised prior to completion of the contract. This could mean you selecting the holiday for the consumer, where there is no suitable holiday found in a brochure or the customer selecting the components, e.g. the method of travel and the hotel - both are covered by the Regulations.

## What constitutes 'other tourist services'?

If the provision of services (e.g. car hire, entertainment or sports facilities) is restricted to those who have paid for them in advance in the cost of their holiday, or if these services are a feature of the holiday, they are classed as 'other tourist services'. However, if an additional charge is made for the use of the facilities during the holiday, so that their use is optional, it is unlikely that they could be considered 'other tourist services'. For example, if the use of the hotel swimming pool is available to all who stay there, it is not a feature unique to that holiday; but if swimming tuition is included in the price of the holiday, it is, therefore, a component of the package. **Who needs to arrange security?**

The Regulations state that, if you are 'the other party' to a contract with a customer, providing them with a holiday that is classed as a package, you must provide evidence of the arrangements you have made (to secure money to refund customers should you be unable to complete the contract).

The 'other party' can be the organiser, the retailer or both. Bonding can be arranged via a specialised insurance policy or via trade associations such as ABTA, AITO, etc. **What is our responsibility?**

As the 'other party to the contract', you are liable for the proper performance of the whole package holiday. (This means that you have a responsibility for all individual components when put together and sold as a package.)

**Who is an 'organiser'?** An organiser is defined as the person who 'otherwise than occasionally' organises package holidays and sells them, or offers them for sale, either through a retailer or himself. The term 'occasionally' is not defined by the Regulations, but if a package is arranged on a regular basis, even if not frequently (e.g. only once a year), the person making the arrangements is an organiser. **Who is a 'retailer'?** A retailer is the person who sells, or offers them for sale, package holidays put together by the organiser (note that this may be the same person).

**Alan Anstead**

# Home Counties North West



It's bad enough having your savings pushing out a paltry 0.5%; but then to be told that your speedo isn't recording the correct time and, finally, that your pride and joy may not be Classic, brings on a severe case of despair. But all is not lost for, the Spring is sprung, the grass is ris so Spridgeteers get down to bis.

Yes we have a planned gadabout and pub lunch, this time with added coffee stop, on March 15th. The weather man said fine today...ho ho. Was it? Did it? Let Mark fill in the details.

**Chris**

Yes it did happen and what a glorious day. The sun was shining and the roads were clear. We started at the usual place at

the usual time; 7 cars (a Frog, 2 Midgets, 2 Sprites, an A40 and an Arkley).

You could call the trip a Nasty journey from Gravesend to Newport, but that would be misleading! We followed a route through the strangely named villages of the Hertfordshire countryside some familiar but many new to us. We turned towards Nasty just before stopping for coffee in a lovely village, Westmill. The coffee shop was in the centre of the village, on the edge of an open green. In the middle of the green stands an old water pump with a smart timber cover. I don't think the coffee shop used it to supply their water!

The coffee shop proudly displayed a collection of cuttings from the local paper showing all the television shows and films that have featured the village over the years; quite a selection. We set off again avoiding cyclists, various ducks and dogs, who all seemed to be attracted by our cars today. Through Gravesend, on to Newport and then, following a winding route, to our lunch stop The Rising Sun in Hall's Green. A car friendly pub and regular meeting place for a local car club. We had a long table in pride of place in the sunny conservatory overlooking the large garden.

As usual the HCNW team ate and drank well and after a good few hours we all managed to find our way back to the cars and set off home in all directions. As I write this I am sitting here with a ruddy face from the sun and breeze and I think a snooze is the next thing on the list. Bring on the summer.

**Mark**



# Yorkshire Report

I don't think many of us have had the chance to get out and about in our Spridgets recently. Although we didn't get as much snow as more southerly parts of the country there was plenty of salt on the roads. Despite this our February meeting at Thornton Le Beans was attended by Jordan & Tanya in their IOW Frogeye, all the way from Northumberland, as well as a couple of local Midgets and plenty of Spridget folk. In March Arthur organised a short run after a lunch at The Old Post Office, Haigh, just off the M1 at J38 near Barnsley, where we had a good turnout of classics, had a chance to catch up on news and to make some new friends. After this Mark & I went to see a Frogeye that has lost its identity. It is missing number plates and chassis plate (perhaps taken off for security) and it has been stored in a garage in South Yorkshire for up to three years. The user of the garage has died and his sister is trying to see if she can return the Frogeye to its owner. We have a note of all the other identifying numbers on the car and engine and have taken a few pictures including one showing a Winnie the Pooh



March meeting

sketch stuck to the dashboard. Perhaps one of *Mascot's* readers will recognise this. Obviously DVLA will be contacted if all other efforts fail to locate the car's owner.

There won't be a Saturday meeting on 4th April as some of us are likely to be at Donington supporting, or even taking part, in the first round of the MGCC Midget Challenge.

Tim & Sarah are busy route planning for the Hot X Run taking place on Good Friday 10th April. I believe the starting point will be in Tadcaster and that the run will be around 100 miles. The run will be limited to 15 cars so please ensure we can include you before turning up. Drive It Day is Sunday 26th April and I will be organising a Picnic on The Stray, Harrogate. Then on the weekend of June 20th/21st we're looking forward to meeting up with Carson and friends at some stage on their visit to the Yorkshire seaside.

From May to Sept the monthly meetings will be on first Thursdays in the evening. Please contact me for details on 07720 725429 or email [spridget.girl@ntlworld.com](mailto:spridget.girl@ntlworld.com)

Don't forget the Track Day at Croft Circuit with the MG Car Club's MGs On Track on Sunday 16th August (check that date is in your diary). They are also visiting Cadwell Park on Friday 1st May.

Look forward to seeing you soon.



*Is this your Frogeye?*

**Anita**

# What was that last month?

The Dutch report was printed next to Scottish report showing a picture of nude Scotsman? For once us Dutchies were outpowered in obscenity!!!

"I say, quite shocking old chap, quite shocking indeed".

Maybe it was a theme picture?

Spot the 2 Midgets: one was the car and the other...well uhm, it probably was a cold day, wasn't it Bob?

I wandered who made that picture, Carson in his hot-pepper outfit?

Was it a Celtic ritual and why was Bob Miller nude, was he the virgin that had been sacrificed to please the car gods?

If anybody can enlighten us in the Spring rituals of the Scots and know if Bob has survived then please share it with us and contact our editor Gary.

Cold days seem to have disappeared here in Holland so I've been busy in the garage.

Engine out, clutch stuff ordered, flywheel away for balancing and ... buggler, a double leak in my alloy radiator can't be fixed = have to buy a new one), a crack in my exhaust-manifold and signs of delamination of the metal (have to buy a new one too?) and a busted 90degree angle bit for the speedo cable = €€€€€€€.



"Cracked manifold"



"Broken 90 degree cable drive"

Can't sell a kidney because of the alcohol abuse and have already sold my sisters twice. Now what, living on water and bread for another year I guess. Good thing we don't have a global economical crisis at the moment or else I really wouldn't know what to do!

Bastiaan has his Frogeye back on the road again and seemed to have exorcised the demons (a Lucas fuel pump) out of his car, Alex has his on the road too and decided to wait until next winter to build in a 5speed and enjoy this year's season first (very wise Alex, if only I had half your wisdom), Onno just got bad news that his Osseli head is cracked and found some disturbing stuff in side cylinder nr 3 and Boy has some issues with his K engine so had to pull the engine out (hmm, I'm having a deja vu). So at the moment we have 2 1275s on the road, one down and 2 K-Midgets down.

Needles to say our annual Spring-Spridget-beer-festival is postponed till later date.

But as I write this report, car preparations are being made to compete in the Night run on the 28 of March in the Betuwe. This is a Spridget event organised by Michael, Jeroen and Elisabeth form the Dutch Healy club. There usually are 2 or 3 big Healeys competing too but that's only because we need losers.

For those thinking of coming to Holland this year but don't know what time to come: First weekend of September for the Dutch Spridgetweekend! For more info on this year Dutch spridget events: [ariedebest@planet.nl](mailto:ariedebest@planet.nl)

Cheers,

**Arie**

# Notts and Derby Area Report

**M**y update is that there is little to say for 2009 so far...

....that said...my New Year's resolution was to try to contact every member in this area in order to get their views. So far this has resulted in one extra person at the noggin in March with a few others promising to come in future months. The most popular reason for not venturing out is that "the car is still in bits", closely followed by "I don't have a car yet". I have been through the rebuild

stage myself and know what it's like to have the car off the road for 10 years. Were it not for the support of enthusiastic members during this time helping and encouraging me I'm sure it would still not be finished.

So all I can say is come along to meetings and events and you may well find a car or that elusive part or specialist you are seeking. Here's to an eventful year!

**Ian**

*Ecurie Ecosse Sprite  
and Transporter at  
Stoneleigh*



## Market Place

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

**For sale - 3/4" Bore Master Cylinder** from 1098 cc cars, just resleeved in stainless steel and completely refurbished by "Past Parts" - Ideal for Frogeye fitted with disc brakes - No longer available new @ £175.00 plus carriage or collect near Stratford-Upon-Avon.

**John Platt tel 01789 488321/  
email: [john@platt2085.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:john@platt2085.freeserve.co.uk)  
(Warwickshire)**

**For Sale - Frogeye** complete all steel rear outer panel assembly. The wings have been separated from deck, beading replaced and spot welded back together. Lower wing sections and rear valance renewed. It is in excellent condition, primer painted and ready to fit; £575.

**Geoff Leek (Stafford) 01785 613189**

# Silverstone Classic 2009

Friday 24th – Saturday 25th – Sunday 26th July

We are pleased to confirm that this year's Silverstone Classic will be held 24, 25, 26 July at The Home of British Motor Racing. As in previous years one of the main attractions to this event will be the ever growing display of privately owned classic cars which, last year was made up of no fewer than 68 UK based Classic Car Clubs. They are aiming to have 3,500 classic cars on site for this year's event which will feature a full day of qualifying and a programme of 22 races over the 3-day long weekend.

The BOGOF (Buy One Get One Free) offer, 2 tickets for the price of one, will again be available to members of the Midget & Sprite Club displaying their cars on the infield. And they have made available a special £5 discount on all individual day tickets purchased by Club members prior to 30th of April 2009.

Day	By 30th of April 2009	By 30th June 2009
Friday 24 July	£20	£25
Saturday 25 July	£30	£35
Sunday 26 July	£30	£35
3-Day Event Pass	£70	£79

## **Admission tickets include**

**FREE Parking**      **FREE Grandstand Seating**      **FREE Paddock Transfer**

Children under 16 go FREE (provided accompanied by adult, maximum 2 children per adult)

Further ticket options will be announced shortly to include one or both of the Friday and Saturday evening rock concerts. For those purchasing the event only tickets now (as priced above) special discounted rock concert prices will be made available.

## **The Midget & Sprite Club**

has been given a dedicated booking code, unique to the Club.

# **SC09 MSC**

**Please use it when ordering**

For further information please contact the MASC coordinator for this event

**Hubie Albany 01733 265 548**

*Tickets will be on sale within the next 2-3 weeks. We will be advising you of details on how to book very shortly but please keep an eye on the event site [www.silverstoneclassic.co.uk](http://www.silverstoneclassic.co.uk) for more information.*



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