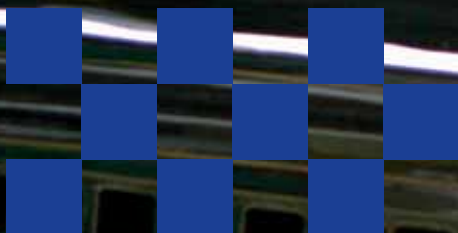


October 2009

£2 No. 307

# 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

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<b>CENTRAL SCOTLAND</b>	<b>Carson Thomson</b> , Tel: 0141 245 6327 day or 013606 22334 evening email: THOMSON.C@sky.com
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>Les &amp; Diane Robinson</b> , Tel: 01772 432138 email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>NORTHERN IRELAND</b>	<b>Robert Holmes</b> , Tel: 02892 689274 email: robertholmes25@hotmail.com
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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**

© Midget & Sprite Club

# Editorial – Drip Trays and Anniversaries

Was last month's Mascot worth the wait? Please accept my apologies for its late arrival. Did it make a louder than usual thump on the doormat and have you read the Limited company bits and pieces. If you didn't send back your voting slip for the new committee, it's too late now.

This month's editorial will be punctuated with the mantra “Don't forget your drip tray” as I'm under strict instructions from our membership secretary John Platt to remind everybody who is bringing their Spridget to the AGM at Coventry Museum of Transport, that they must place something under their cars (which will be on display at Millennium Place in front of the Museum). A drip tray is what's needed, they won't let you park there without one. I'm aware that your Spridget is the one that doesn't lose any oil from under the engine bay, but they won't believe you. So what I usually do is to use a cheap throw away foil roasting dish with something like a stone placed inside it to stop the thing blowing away. A piece of old carpet, cardboard or any unwanted piece of clothing that you received last Christmas will do the job just as well. As long as you don't mess up their plaza with Mr. Duckham's best 20/50. Come and join us at the AGM on the 18th and *don't forget your drip tray*.

This month sees a couple of MASC area related anniversaries. Firstly after nine years, the East Anglia Area (formerly known as Cambridgeshire) are celebrating their 100th report in Mascot. Secondly, the Hampshire Area are celebrating their eleventh Birthday this month. They are one of only a handful of areas along with Scotland, Birmingham and London to have their own website. You'll have to turn to their report on page 32 to find the web address or check the links on the main Midget and Sprite Club website. Congratulations (and my gratitude) to both areas on their continued success and support of Mascot. You've got a way to catch up with the Bristol Area, whose scribbles and Terry in particular are mentioned in the Doomsday book. Hopefully Terry will remember to bring his drip tray to the AGM.

Another Anniversary this month is a personal one for me as my Frogeye will be 51 years old on the 8th of October. The poor thing had only two days to establish its place in British automotive history before it was shipped off to France to make its way in the world. That's no way to treat a two day old. It took another nine years to find its way back to these shores; arriving home on the 1st of April 1967 (the significance of the date has not escaped me). What adventures it had between then and my custody in August 2001 can only be guessed at, due to it being rebuilt and re-registered with an age related plate just before I took ownership. Since then it's had quite a few adventures both here and abroad which will continue six days before its 51st Birthday when the old girl will be let off the leash to gallivant around an airfield at RAF Marham. I've calculated that the old Frogeye will have done in excess of 300 miles on that Saturday alone, with 120 miles of that being at race speeds. That seems a suitably disgraceful way for her to enter her sixth decade.

Happy Birthday “Gaps”.

The following weekend she will be joining her friends at the AGM, proudly sitting outside the Coventry Transport Museum ... And I won't forget her drip tray.

Have a good month

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: Chris Seargent's beautiful Frogeye photographed by Rob Povey.  
Photograph © Rob Povey Photography

# Club Nights

- 1st Tuesday **Essex Area** – Now meet at **The Bell**, Beckenham Road, Tolleshunt Major, CM9 8LL. For further details contact Jane Gates Tel: 01255830 509 or email: jgjanegates257@googlemail.com
- 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 **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at the **The Green Man**, Middleton Village, 8.30-8.45pm
- 1st Wednesday **NEW! Oxford Area** – Meet at the **Blackhorse Pub**, Gozzards Ford, Nr Abingdon. 7pm for those eating or 8pm for those not. Contact Grahame Gibbins at gibbins@hotmail.com or grahame\_gibbins@unipart.co.uk
- 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 Thursday **Yorkshire Area** – See below
- 1st Saturday **Yorkshire Area** – Contact me, Anita 01423 862738 or 07720 725429 email spridget.girl@ntlworld.com for details of the October 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**, Steps, 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** –New Venue! Now meeting at **The Fox and Goose**, Greywell, RG291BY. Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.

- 4th Sunday **Kent Area** – Meet at **The Moat**, Wrotham Heath at 12:00 for lunch.  
Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- Last Monday **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Barge Inn**, Seend, Nr. Devizes, about 7pm except  
on Bank Holiday Mondays when it will be the Bell Inn at Yatton Keynell near  
Castle Combe, 6.30pm. Contact Andy Cross on 01225 743554 or e-mail  
andy@cross743.freerve.co.uk
- 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
- Last Thursday **South West Wales** – Meet at the **Fox & Hounds**, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen,  
SA33 5ND. Contact David Hill, Tel: 01239 811307 or email david@hill.be
- 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 October,  
User name: Micro Password: Blister

## Events

From David Hill & Webmaster Toby Anscombe

### Events organised for 2009

#### October

Sunday 18th MASC AGM at Coventry Transport Museum, 13:30 for 14:00 start.

#### November

Friday 13th Classic Car Show at the NEC. Warwickshire will be there. Contact: John  
Platt, Tel: 01789 488321 or email: john@platt2085.freerve.co.uk

Friday 13th to Sunday 15th Classic Car Show at the NEC. East Anglia Area are planning to be there.  
For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810

Friday 13th East Anglia Area are going to the dogs at Peterborough Greyhound Race  
Meeting. For details please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810

#### December

Wednesday 9th Warwickshire Area's Christmas Dinner at the Green Dragon. Details from  
Sheila Yates, Tel: 01608 665066 email: chrishe@tiscali.co.uk

Sunday 13th East Anglia's Christmas Dinner (Actually lunch) at The Cat. For details  
please contact David Dixon on 01733 222810

Tuesday 15th South East Area's Christmas Party. Details from Alan Anstead,  
alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

2010

July

South East Area are going to the Le Mans Classic 2010. Yes really! These event take advanced planning to secure accommodation. There is a provisional list and I will be seeking non refundable deposits from around May 2009.

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

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

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

## Mutual Assistance Directory

What a shame for all the people who had their holidays here in West Wales. July and August were terrible, weather wise but so far, September has been fantastic! I wonder what sort of summer we will get next year. This changeable weather does make it difficult to organise events, particularly outside ones. I felt sad for the organisers of the local classic rally who had a lousy day.

Well, would you believe that this issue of Mascot marks the 100th MAD article? My, how time flies. 100 issues, that is nearly 10 years worth. Hopefully, MAD has been of

use to some members but if nothing else, I do believe that it has brought club members closer together and engendered a feeling of mutual assistance between club members.

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!

Enjoy your pride and joy.

*David Hill*

**The rare  
Austin Sprite,  
see page 16 to  
find out why**



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# New Members

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

3734	Mike Bennett	Cheshire	Healey Frogeye
4164	Larissa Doswell & Ian Dodd	Lancashire	Frogeye
4165	Andrew York	Kent	Sprite
4166	David, Carolyn & Scott Jones	Lancashire	Frogeye
4167	Tim Kirkham & Anna Thomas	Merseyside	Frogeye
4168	Dale Lodge	Hampshire	Sprite Mk 3 & Austin Sprite
4169	Rosemarie Humphreys	Surrey	Midget 1500
4170	Paul Gross	Berkshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4171	Mike & Angela Gray	North Yorkshire	Midget Mk 3
4172	Ashleigh Bradford	Shropshire	Frogeye
4173	Shane White	Wiltshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4174	Helen Crocker	Hampshire	Frogeye
4175	Howard White	Cambridgeshire	Midget Mk 2 & Austin Sprite
4176	Brian Camp	Bedfordshire	Midget 1500



*Larissa Doswell & Ian Dodd's Frogeye*

*Dale & Freda Lodge plus Nelson! With their Mk3 Sprite and their Austin Sprite*





*Rosemarie Humphrey's  
1500 Midget*

*Rosemarie and her  
Midget meeting an  
Ex-MGB owning Royal  
at Windsor*



*Shane White's RWA Mk3 Midget*



*Mike & Angela Gray's Mk3 Midget*

*Brian Camp's  
1500 Midget*

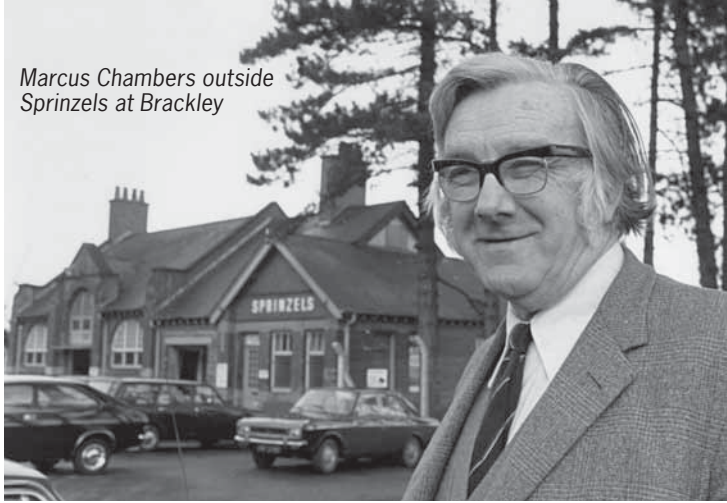


# Marcus Chambers

1910-2009

Marcus Chambers died in early August, shortly before his 99th birthday. He will perhaps be remembered mostly for his seven year stint as Competitions Manager and founder of the BMC team at Abingdon's MG Car Company, but really there was so very much more behind this very talented gentleman. Born in 1910 from a very distinguished family – his father was an Admiral in the Royal Navy – he grew up in England, Australia, Canada and France where he learned to be fluent in French and also found his wide ranging interest in architecture, painting, photography and, of course, motor cars. He was a skilled mechanic and his stories of the twenties and thirties are full of the famous names of motoring history including Rolls Royce, Bentley, HRG, AC, Norton, AJS, Alfa Romeo and Maserati.

Marcus Chambers outside Sprinzels at Brackley



At the 1938 Le Mans 24 hour race, he showed he was also an accomplished driver by finishing tenth overall in an HRG, a team he later managed. Throughout his worldwide travels he kept notes of anything that interested him, as well as photographs and sketches, so that his books – “Seven Year Twitch” and “Works Wonders” give a wonderful and detailed account of motor sporting history, places visited and people he met. From an early age he processed all his own film and his vast portfolio of photographs was recently acquired by one of Motoring’s largest libraries and pictures are seen regularly in magazines giving a super view of the golden age of Motor Sport.

With Stirling Moss



During World War Two he joined the Royal Navy and became skipper of one of the Coastal Defence Motor Launches before joining the post war Overseas Food Corporation in East Africa where he met his wife Pat. On returning to the UK, John Thornley – boss of the MG Car Company, asked him to start the Competitions Department using a wide range of the Austin and Morris products. While these were mostly pretty average motor cars, and his team of drivers was almost all gifted amateurs who could afford to race and rally, he turned the Abingdon team into one of the most talented and determined in the Industry. MG, Riley, Wolseley, Austin, Morris, and Austin Healeys were rallied as the various divisional directors forced their cars onto the programme. Class wins were the main target and Team prizes and Ladies awards also featured in the

results but it was finally the department's development of the Austin Healey 3000 which provided Marcus with the first outright wins in International events, Pat Moss and Anne Wisdom's terrific victory on the tough and rough Liege-Rome-Liege and Donald and Erle's perfect performances on the Alpine Rally. In 1959 Marcus drove the first Mini himself on the Norwegian Viking Rally and finished to show that he had lost none of his driving skills. When he decided to leave and join his friend ex-rally driver Ian Appleyard's Jaguar business, he recommended Stuart Turner as his replacement, a brilliant decision for Stuart brought the Healey and the Mini Cooper S to further fame and glory.

Soon becoming bored with the humdrum life of the motor trade, Marcus took the job of competitions manager at Rootes (later to become Chrysler) and in spite of a management with little money and an indifferent attitude to motor sport, Marcus achieved some surprising successes including victory in the first post war marathon event from London to Sydney with a Hillman Hunter. Disillusioned with his bosses' attitude, he resigned at the age of sixty and came to work with me, setting up and running the new car storage and preparation facility in Brackley Town's old railway station near the famous Silverstone race track until his retirement in nineteen seventy six. He continued restoring classic cars for many years and also enjoyed painting watercolors, photography and the restoration of two lovely old houses in Northamptonshire.

I first got to know Marcus in 1957 when he invited me to join the team with my own Austin A35 on the trip to the Sestriere Rally. The Suez crises had left much of



Europe devoid of petrol, so we had to pick a rather odd route through the French and German border region in order to find fuel. This included much of the area I knew as a rep for a decal printing business, supplying many of the small breweries with ceramics for their publicity beer glasses so my choice of restaurants and hotels luckily agreed with his gourmet food tastes and also with those of his mostly wealthy drivers, which certainly got me into his good books. A subsequent

visit to Abingdon for lunch with George Hulbert, Speedwell's engineering genius showed another side of Marcus, as he and George spent most of the time talking guns, ammunition and bullet weights rather than the modified A35s we were there to discuss!

Marcus had become one of my very best friends over the past half century and I spent many weekends at his home. He also found my first cottage close by, and later discovered a six hundred year old Priory farmhouse which became my permanent home. It became a regular date to spend Christmas Dinners with Marcus, Pat and their children – Nicholas: now a respected barrister, Sarah: a talented educator, Hugh: formerly a director of the ProDrive Subaru Rally team company, BAR Formula One team, and now of the British London Olympic organization, and Erika who later lived in the world of International Intelligence.

Although we have lost a very special character, he has left us his autobiography "With a little bit of Luck" published by Mercian Manuals which gives us a detailed account of an amazing life lived to the full.

**John Sprinzel**  
August 2009



# Update on the Anti-Aqua Frog

Firstly my thanks to all who have responded in an effort to solve this conundrum. However the Premier Crus Burgundy still lies in the “cave”. Despite numerous experiments the problem persists. The programme of experiments continues but is thwarted by a spell of semi-decent weather (Indian Summer? – we shall see.) Various suggestions have been followed but to date I have firmly established, with very patient help from Rob Batley, that power remains as far as the coil when the engine dies. Indeed at the Treffen in Germany I wired the positive side of the coil to the positive terminal of the battery thereby bypassing the ignition switch completely but to no avail. Terry Horler’s theory is thus discounted but again thanks for the response, it was certainly a possibility but my wiper spindle holes are sealed with RTV silicon. The next experiment is my strobe light taped to the scuttle in front of the windscreen in readiness to see whether power remains at the plugs on over-run when the motor dies. I have to disconnect it during this fine weather as it has a somewhat psychedelic effect especially at night.

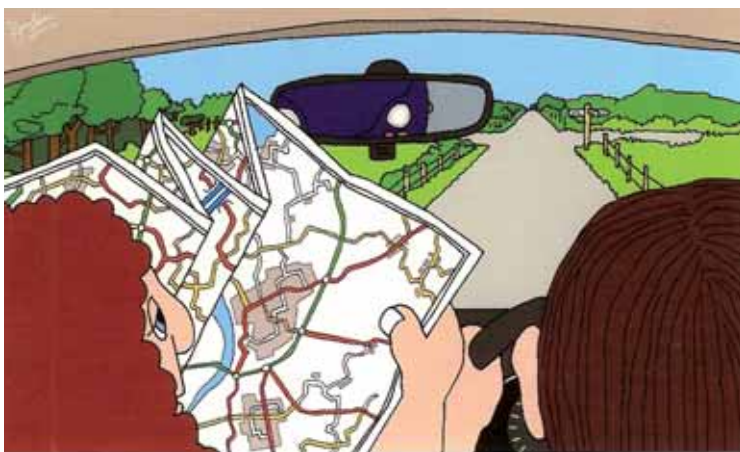


*Seen last year at Gaydon in the dry*

Tomorrow we join Warks crew on Mike and Benita Vann’s Fun Run from Market Bosworth. I will be studying the weather forecasts and if there is the slightest hint of rain I will be in the “big un”.

**Geoff H. 2565**  
11 Sept 09

This cartoon was sent to me by Geoff Hunter (so ladies, that’s who you can blame). When I contacted the artist Bruce Aiken to ask for permission to reproduce the cartoon “Wiggly Road” in *MASCOT*, he very kindly agreed. It also turns out that he has had three Sprites over the years.



*We want a wiggly yellow road crossing a big red one*

You can view Aiken Graphics full range of funny cards (beware as some of them are rude) at [www.aikengraphics.co.uk](http://www.aikengraphics.co.uk)

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Part of last year's stand at the NEC.  
© Tim Saunders

## Classic Motor Show

13/14/15 November 2009

**W**arwickshire Area Group are once again organising the MASC stand at the NEC in November.

This year we have had good and bad news, the good news is that we have been allocated a stand 13 metres x 9 metres sufficient to display some 7 Spridgets, but the bad is that we have drawn the short straw this year with a 1 metre concrete roof pillar in the centre of the stand! We are currently working hard on how best to disguise this.

The problem as always is which cars to show. Already arranged are a Frogeye Sprite, a

Mk 2 Sprite, a Midget 1500, an Arkley and our first Tifosi Rana with others still being confirmed.

See the NEC advert in this copy for details of booking online. Bring all your advance ticket stubs to the stand and the club will benefit £1 each commission.

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**John Platt**

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

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# Sprites I've Known

## Part 1

When I joined the club a request went out for a photo of me and my car with a bit of chat to illuminate said picture. This, of course, led to much in the way of personal reminiscence, so herewith a life in Spridgets (as the man said "it's life Jim, just not quite as we know it). I'm going to drag you back to the early '70's; a young man is out for a walk in Richmond Park with his girlfriend and her mother (don't ask). I, for I am that young man, spot a BRG Midget and a red Sprite in quick order – "I'm going to get one of those", says I, "what on earth for" said her mother, proof indeed that the ad was right – your mother wouldn't like it. I sold my car (a Sprite engined Morris Minor) but bought an MGA (which I still have), the first Sprite came a few months later when a fellow member of the MGA register mentioned a Frogeye for sale. Reg no 800 EKR, she sported a fastback hardtop, (Lotus Elite mk1 type side windows), semi elliptic leafsprings, and a 998 formula junior engine mated to a smooth case sprite box full of Lotus Eleven s/c c/r gears. Rear diff was a 3.7 from a Riley, the cam an 88G229 from a 997 Cooper and she made a truly fabulous noise. The engine was 'good' to 8000 at which point the valve gear got a bit stressed, still 90 in third, top speed about 105 – not helped by those headlamps.

New girlfriend likes the car so she bought a Mk1 Midget, reg VNJ 365, 948cc, later 803 (the bottom end went bang, and the only engine that Ashley Hinton, by then a good chum, had available was an ex Morris Minor 803, so in it went). Nice little car this, only replaced when the rear suspension decided it didn't like living where it was supposed to and parted company with the car (she drove



*800 EKR with a young Ashley Hinton standing behind*

home in my newly acquired BRG Mk3 1275 that evening – marriage seemed inevitable after that!). As is the way of youth, the Frog was replaced with a Mini Cooper (1968, 998, white with a black roof, thank you for asking), in turn replaced with another Frogeye. Reg no 822 FKP, this time an 1152 Oselli engine and wide wheels (hey this was the '70's remember) – dreadful bump steer and that engine was not much to write home about, a swine to start with a big Weber. So, sold it, bought a Morris Minor convertible (put a Sprite engine in it – a theme is emerging here) which in turn went to fund a '65 Sprite (HPL 40C) – 1098cc and proof that lots of fun could be had with small amounts of horsepower (although I did fit a stage three head, LCB, modified the suspension – you know the story). Barbara replaced her dead Mk1 with a white Mk3 (1275) – I replaced the gearbox, I replaced the gearbox again – what a job, bleeding the clutch took forever. When



*EKR800 with its fastback hard top*



*803cc engined Mk1 Midget VNJ 365*



822 FKB with the Oselli engine



The fast 1098 Sprite HPL 40C

we went camping we had to go with the roof down to get the gear in.

Yet another Frogeye, 1310 cc came along, might have overtuned that one a bit – ate three gearboxes in ten months, sold it. An MGB followed, sold that and dragged the MGA back into service. After marriage and kids (drove them to primary school in the 'A') I bought my wife an MGB GT for a 'significant' birthday (so she could get the kids in the back) we ran it for a few years then swapped that for a 1974 RWA Midget, bright red, looked the business but jumped out of top on overrun – possibly the slowest Midget we ever owned (including the 803 version). It never ran

well so, it too, was sold. By now the kids had cars (don't you just hate endlessly fixing Minis that have been comprehensively thrashed) until my younger son got a Land Rover (I may have encouraged this, ahem). We've just sold that, I'm back working on the MGA and James has announced the desire for a Midget (the wheel turns full circle once again) and I mentioned, ever so casually, that I've always fancied building a Sebring replica. The Midget and Sprite club beckoned, we heeded the siren call. A new chapter begins here...

PS. I do have photographs of some of these old nails (er, appreciating classics) but most were taken with the cheapo camera of the day and I'm not sure they'd reproduce very well.

**Andy Duff**



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# A Rare Item Indeed

## Part 1

### The Austin Sprite Boot Badge

I recently saw an auction on eBay which caught my eye. And this has motivated me to write a series of small articles on rare items connected with our cars. The first is about the Austin Sprite Boot Badge.

While at first glance this boot badge looks quite unremarkable, in fact I'd go so far as to say that it is in much less pristine condition than many owners would like their car's badge to be. To a select group of Spridget owners this badge is gold dust and the kind of item which they are not likely to shout about until it's in their hands. You see while tens of thousands of MG Midgets and Austin Healey Sprites were built; only a relatively small handful of Austin Sprites were made. The Healey name was dropped from Sprites built between January 1971 up until they ceased production in July 1971. A total of only 1022 Austin Sprites were built and that means only 2044 Austin Sprite Badges left the factory attached to cars. The mathematicians among you will deduce that each car had two badges. The grill badge and the Boot badge. Both of them different. While there would have been a small surplus made, I've never heard of them being offered



for sale as new replacements. That leaves the Austin Sprite owner who has lost his badge with a problem as the badges are almost irreplaceable. When one comes up for sale they usually go for far more than one would expect for a bit of plastic to adorn the front or back of a Spridget.

The one in the picture on the left recently attracted 13 bids from seven separate bidders and finally sold on the online auction site for £72.00. While this isn't a fortune and I have seen them go for three figures, this must be compared for the almost (but not quite) identical Austin Healey Sprite badge on the right, which can be picked up new for around £20.00.

In this case the buyer paid £52.00 more for a badge with one word less!

So if you've ever had to replace your Austin Healey Sprite or MG Midget Badge, spare a thought for those few unfortunate among us who don't have that luxury.

**Gary**

*Austin Healey Sprite badge image  
© Rob Povey Photography  
www.robpovey.co.uk with thanks.*



*The Austin Sprite  
badge*

*The Austin Healey  
Sprite badge*



# Spridgets on the Big (and Little) Screen Part 3

*This month's offering comes from a TV series that could only have been made in the UK in the '70s:*

## The Sweeney

### The Sweeney TV series 1975-1978

53 episodes of 60 minutes each

### The Films

**Sweeney!** (1977) A no frills film in keeping with the series, the genre and the time.

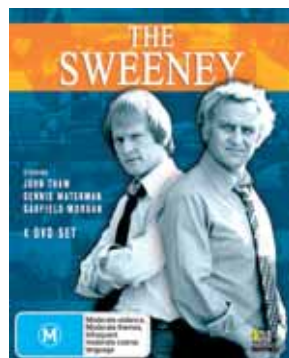
**Sweeney 2** (1978) "They're back – tougher than ever!"

The British series which revolutionised the crime fighting image of Police forces on UK television in the mid 1970s. Jack Regan or 'Regan' (from the 1974 film of the same name) played by John Thaw, is a hard edged detective in the Flying Squad of London's Metropolitan police (called 'the Sweeney' from the Cockney rhyming slang 'Sweeney Todd' = 'Flying Squad'). He pursues villains by methods which are underhand, often illegal themselves, frequently violent and more often than not successful.

Made by Euston Films, most of the exterior filming was shot in locations in and around West London and the Docklands. This being the 1970s many of the street scenes and car chases feature loads of period vehicles including our beloved Spridgets. In fact in some cases MG Midgets especially had starring roles. Here in an episode from 1975 called "Hit and Run" the Midget can be seen centre screen. Is this a false plate or did/does this car actually exist with this registration number?



*A 1972 MG Midget MkIII in the episode, Hit and Run (1975)*



Midgets could also be seen in other episodes, sometimes appearing more than once. I'm not sure if these were regular cars which just happened to get caught on camera or vehicles actually placed there by the film crews.

Here you can see a couple of shots of a Blue Mk11(?) Midget in an episode from 1976 called "Lady Luck".



*MG Midget Mk11 in the episode Lady Luck (1976)*



In the second spin-off Feature film made in 1978 the imaginatively named "Sweeney 2". We see one of the stars of the show Carter, played by Dennis Waterman, in a slightly blurred shot, strolling past a line of cars including another Spridget. It's almost impossible to see if it's a Sprite or a Midget



A Mk3 Midget in Sweeney 2, (1978)

but it looks like a Mk3 Midget to me (let me know what you think).

Whenever there was a car chase which ended in a crash scene, the cars used would invariably be 3.8 litre 'S' type Jaguars. This is because the stunt drivers found them to be the safest cars to use. They would be fixed up, resprayed and re-used a number of times.

Because they are synonymous with the Sweeney and gangster movies generally, I thought it only fair to include an image of one of the Jaguars which appeared in the show. As mentioned you probably would have seen it in various guises during the time the series ran.



The other make of vehicle which featured continuously throughout the series was Ford. The baddies, when not trying to escape in their Jags could always be relied upon to turn up at a "blag" in their white Ford Transit. While similar white Transits would often be used by the Flying Squad when lying in wait to ambush the villains.

The Sweeney seemed to always drive some Ford or other. Usually Regan would be driven around in his bronze Consul/Granada but also occasionally in the later episodes Cortinas too. I'm not any kind of expert on Fords so I'll just add the photos and you can let me know what is what.



Finally, a selection of other Spridgets which appeared in the Sweeney. The first one, that looks like a Mk3 Midget, although from a different episode "Big Spender" (1975) may well be the same one that appeared earlier. Perhaps it belonged to one of the film crew.



The next one from an unnamed episode looks to me very much a Mk1 Midget passing as the character in the shot walks along. I suspect that the location is not far from Putney or Barnes in West London.



Finally, and one which is quite heart breaking for me to see, is from the first Sweeney movie simply titled "SWEENEY!". You can plainly see sitting atop a load of junked cars in a breakers yard somewhere in London, a yellow Mk1 Sprite with a very badly dented bonnet.

Did you own this car and if so what is the story behind the big dent?

Austin Healey Sprite Mk1 in Sweeney!, Movie, 1977



Anecdotally, many of the famous catchphrases used by Regan and Carter (e.g., "Get your trousers on – you're nicked" and "We're The Sweeney, son, and we haven't had our dinner yet") were the result of the programme's researchers studying the way real members of the Flying Squad talked when off-duty in pubs near New Scotland Yard.

Next month I'll try and dig up some other film and TV images of Spridgets on the Big (and little) screen. I've been given some suggestions to check out but I'd be happy to of hear more.

Gary



## ... WCD 482, The Rebuild ... Part 1

*D. O. B. 22nd Dec 1958. Died During 1973. Reborn: 20th April 2007. Name: 'Froggy' What else?*

TBU 397 was the first Frogeyed Sprite I owned back in 1972. I bought it for £70; it had wooden sills, a hideous amount of rust and a cagged up bonnet. The engine was completely knackered and the gearbox jumped out of just about every gear. Despite all this I persevered with it, fitted a fibreglass bonnet, backend and sills, put a stage three rebuilt Morris minor engine in it and the result was a lethal rocket. After three neglectful years of ownership I took it for an MOT. The mechanic asked me if I was having a laugh and told me that it was a death trap'. Despite this, I sold it for £90 and promised myself someday I would have another one but next time it would be perfect!



*TBU 397 My first 'Frog', a heap of junk but fond memories*

So, thirty odd years later, I purchased WCD 482...

### One big block of rust



I bought it, the block of rust, from a nice chap in Birmingham for £900!! No bonnet, no engine (to talk about) and numerous bits missing. However apparently it was a bargain.

Apparently It hadn't been on the road for 34 years!! Obviously waiting patiently for me to come along.

Barely recognised by the DVLA (although I had all the paper work and the green log book) I engaged the services of 'MASC', the Midget and Sprite Club, to authenticate it.

Within a few months I had a brand new V5 and so the 'car' became officially 'sorn-ed'.

### Acquisition of a bonnet



So now I had to find me a bonnet – not as easy as you might think. My Father eventually found one in 'Practical Classics' down in South Wales. £950 they wanted... more than I paid for the car

but they insisted it was rust free and un-bent. So off we set, my wife and I, with my useful trailer on a gloomy wet unmemorable day. Hours later, many miles from home, in the middle of nowhere, we found an out building containing one primed, reasonable looking bonnet. Naturally haggling was out of the question, nevertheless I still bought it.

### Let the renovation begin

I decided to work from back to front for no particular reason. Many suggested to have the whole car sand blasted but I feared I would have no car left at the end so I opted for 'Nitromors' paint stripper, wire brush attachments and a good chipping hammer. As it happened, the bodywork had strangely either completely rusted away or was relatively rust free, this made the rebuild reasonably straight forward.

A lower rear panel, lower rear wings and complete boot floor were welded into place.

Whilst at this stage, parts of the rear suspension were replaced – shocks – radius arm – etc and new quarter elliptical leaf

springs 'slotted' into place (if only it was that easy). New drums and every part of the braking / hand braking system renewed. Bearing and seals in the back axle renewed, all de-rusted, Hydrate 80 treated, primed and painted.

A word about 'Hydrate 80'

*To prevent this being construed as an advert, I won't mention the manufacturers of this wonderful product. I'm not saying that it is any better than some other rust treatments but I have faith in this stuff – a total of three litres have been used on the car. Yes, as per usual, you do have to get rid of the rust and get down to shiny metal if you possibly can and then wash the metal but once this stuff is applied the metal should never rust again. It makes an excellent 'etch' primer equivalent and does the usual trick of turning metal (including the rusty sort) black and stains your fingers in the process. It fills you with confidence and is easy to apply.*

### The middle

Someone at sometime had fitted new sills but not in the right place so they had to be detached and reattached. The doors required a little welding and then correctly hanging. The interior was gutted and floor welded where necessary. The rear spring mountings had previously been strengthened with a weld and bolt on kit, saving me a substantial amount of work. The rear side front foot well floor had to be replaced along with both outer side panels. When all this was done, the interior, including the boot was de-rusted and primed. This bit I hated – there were better places to be than cooped up in a resonating metal boot for hours on end; chipping, welding, fabricating, etc, etc – what a stupid design!



The multi coloured back



Applying the Hydrate

Of course this car is notorious for cost cutting, a thing British car manufacturers seemed to do with a passion in those days. No boot lid, no door handles, locks, overtaking mirrors, wind up windows or windscreen washers. The headlights were originally supposed to be pop up but to save costs they decided to make them fixed and hence created the 'frog eye' look. Originally it was described as an ugly car and it is on the list of most ugly cars... they don't know what they're talking about!

Of course I'm skirting over an area here which took me weeks if not months to sort out. The chassis rail for instance containing the jacking points had to be plated in several places. Behind the seats is a long sealed box which is an integral part of the car's strength. Sealed boxes have a knack of collecting water and so rust. This box on WCD 482 was no exception. The top of this structure is sometimes used for the seat belt mounting points. I decided at an early stage to dispense with seat belts in preference to being thrown clear. In the unfortunate event of a roll over or side impact, no matter how sturdy the seat belt would be, in this car it would not prevent decapitation or a crushed rib cage.

### **The front**

It may as well have been dipped in salt water for the last thirty years from the state of it. Only one thing for it, cut off all the bad bits and see what was left.

Both entire inner wings were removed along with all the old rusty bits and pieces that once were heaters, windscreen wipers, brake pipes, master cylinders and so on. Fortunately the chassis rails were solid – only coated with surface rust. At first I thought they were both bent upwards slightly with fatigue but eventually found out that they were supposed to be that way. Apparently, the reason for this is so that the bonnet fits better! Something I can easily believe.

The foot well fronts were patched, a couple of bulk head holes were sorted and then two new inner wings were welded on. Apart from the steering rack, all the old front suspension and brakes were unserviceable so completely new running gear had to be purchased and fitted...

There are a few areas where I've deviated from the original spec of the car (so I



*New inner wings and primer*

suppose concurs goes through the window!). Front brakes are one. In my opinion, changing the original front drum brakes to disc is not only a sensible upgrade but should, where possible, be recommended. Apart from the obvious advantages of increased braking power, more reliable braking and not having to constantly adjust the shoes for wear, the parts are readily available and easy to fit to the original suspension. The later Midgets and Sprite had disc brakes and use the same mountings. Strictly speaking, the master cylinder should be changed for one with a bigger bore because of increased fluid flow but in practice I found the original 7/8th master cylinder is perfectly OK (provided the brakes are 'bled' properly) and produces almost 'servo like' braking.

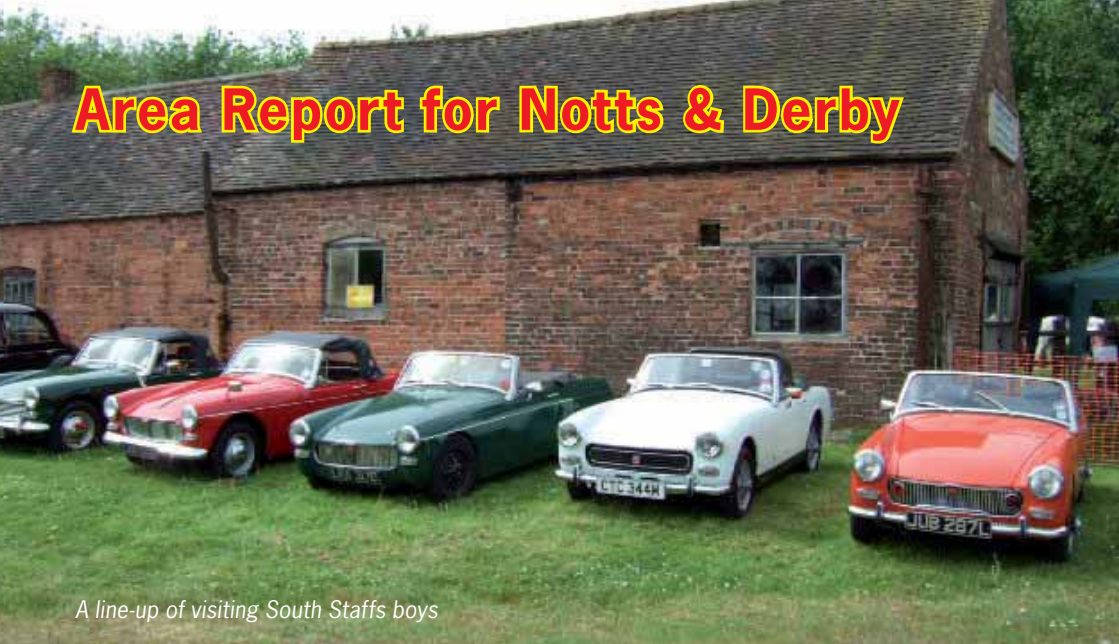
Next month I will tell you about "Phase Two" commencing with the engine and gearbox.

**Words and images by Bill Cornwell**  
*Stoke-on-Trent*



*Nice new disc brakes*

# Area Report for Notts & Derby



A line-up of visiting South Staffs boys

Unfortunately I missed our August area meet as we were on holiday in Cornwall. Despite reminding people in advance as usual, only one car turned out for the night. So where were the rest of you? Certainly not stuck in the M5 traffic jams with me!

Anyway, upon my return I did a bit of calling round and mustered some interest in having a short drive out to make the most of the remains of summer and the daylight hours. My intentions were made known to the South Staffs group, who always seem to have a bit more petrol in their tanks, and we all arranged to meet on the banks of the River



My Sprite in wet

Trent at The John Thompson in Ingleby. As the sun dropped below the horizon we counted up the headlights and calculated that we had 9 1/2 cars in the car park. (ok whose headlight was out?) It would have been more but for a misfire from one of the Staffs cars who had to turn tail for home. Conversation covered a variety of topics, but one of note was that club members seem to be getting older along with their cars, and short of a rebuild and botox what could we do to encourage the younger generation into classic motoring? One prospective new member called me recently with a possible suggestion – he would like to share a rebuild of a Midget or Sprite with his 11 year old son to encourage both their interests and build the father + son relationship. So if anyone knows of a suitable (square bodied) donor car requiring a rebuild, please let me know and I can pass on the details. Perhaps the rebuild could be covered in *MASCOT* from the family viewpoint.

Good to see the Staffs crowd again. Might make it a Sunday lunch next time.

Next meets at The Sitwell scheduled for Oct 1st + Nov. 5th (or perhaps not?) Call me.

**Ian Cooke**

email: [ilc@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:ilc@bgs.ac.uk)  
tel: 0115 938 3838

## Wiltshire Area Report



*The lovely Mildred in front of the White Horse  
Grahame's inspirational engine*

The revived Wiltshire group springs into life and then chokes on its breath over the Summer, it seems, but we sure 'ave enjoyed ourselves! For me, the highlight of the last meet at the Barge was meeting Chris Tunnickcliffe, who, as well as being a Frog owner, is well known to me through his Daily Driver reports in the A35 Club magazine (I'm into all types of A Series cars. MASCers will know that last winter's club outings were often in my family "Frogeye MPV" or '57 A35 to give it its real name). Chris uses his Austin on his daily journeys to and from Reading, from Chippenham, without most of the creature comforts we are used to, and didn't hesitate to tackle the snow last winter, before sensibly turning back on the worst day. A man after my own heart! His Frogeye has been "under restoration" for decades it seems. The last Monday date isn't ideal for him, or some others too, but we do hope he can make it again soon. If any Wiltshire member has a preference for the monthly meetings call me please to let me know.

After a day of watching pricy sportscars racing at Castle Combe, never as entertaining as the Midgets earlier in the year, the latest meeting was our occasional visit to the Bell at Yatton Keynell, where it was back to the usual attendees. It was great to see Malcolm's Midget now running better, and Bristol escapee Alan Lo entertained us with jokes about what he would buy if he sold his Mk 1 Midget – no, please! Get a Reliant or a Smart like Terry Horler! Anything! But keep Mo.



A couple of weeks back we joined a number of others for the new launch of the Oxford, at the "The Black Horse" pub, Gozzards Ford, near Abingdon which was a good excuse for a trans-Cotswold blast. Great to meet you, Grahame and others, and I really admire the restoration of your Mk 2 Sprite. (Engine view, for my inspiration, attached) I hope we can join up with your Oxford people regularly as we are only just separated by some lumpy bits with a Roman Road over them (and Swindon ... oh well).

Happy Spridgeting all! We will be at the Barge on the 28th of September and the 26th October – all very welcome!

**Andy**

email: [andy@cross743.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:andy@cross743.freeserve.co.uk)  
tel: 01225 743 554

# A Very Sad Frogeye

On 27th of August I attended Watson's auction of cars & automobilia at Heathfield in East Sussex. During my inspection of the vehicles I observed a late entry – a very tatty looking Frogeye. On my arrival it was still in a secure compound but it was later, very ignominiously put on display with the aid of a lorry load strap and a fork lift truck, which did little for the already frail chassis! There were virtually no sills and as usual most of the floors were missing along with all the near side passenger foot well side and a lot of the forward section of the H-Frame. Inside was a pair of spare doors, starter motor, dynamo and some instruments.

Another Frogeye owner and I struggled to open the bonnet, only managing to raise it a few inches: the headlamp pods were beginning to rust out. It had an engine on 1¼ SUs and what appeared to be an original dynamo complete with tacho drive. As a result of our efforts a pile of ferrous oxide



appeared on the ground. Using a tissue, I managed to wipe the lichen away from the rear number plate to reveal it was 483 JHW. Come the sale it was knocked down for £250 plus buyer's premium and VAT giving a total price of £293. The car by the way came with no documents.

On talking with our editor he told me it sounded very like a car he had seen on eBay the previous evening. Sure enough he checked and there it was. In fairness it was advertised as suitable for spares or a project definitely not for the faint hearted. It seems it attracted seven bidders and eventually sold for £748.50.

Is the buyer a MASC member, or did one of our number used to own an OEW Frogeye registered 483 JHW? Please let Gary know.

**John Baggott**

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# Dorset Area Report

## **We attended the CCOTP Classic Car Run on Sunday 23rd August.**

This run started at Highcliff Castle after about 2 hours of displaying our vehicles and giving people a chance to look around the castle (included in the event entry fee) or to have a walk along the beach or have a picnic in the grounds as well as meeting old friends.

The run to Farmer Palmers at Organford was about 50 miles with the only problem being a road closure near Fordingbridge leaving entrants to find their own way for about 3 miles.

On arrival at Farmer Palmers it was time for tea and cakes in the café followed by a look round at the animals including a litter of KuneKune piglets.

The weather on the day was very warm and sunny and the run proved to be very enjoyable with 9 of our cars attending made up of 5 Midgets, 1 Sprite, 1 MG-TD, 1 MGB Roadster & 1 VW Camper van.

## **We also attended the Hampshire Pageant of Motoring on Sunday 30th August.**

Our attendance at this event turned out to be a bit on the damp side following our promising early morning hood down trip across the New Forest to meet up with 2 other cars at Cadnam for a small convoy into Broadlands.

The weather stayed dry for the first part of the morning allowing us to walk around the various exhibitors on site and to watch the Jason Smyth Adrenaline Tour in the main arena. It also stayed ok for everyone to have a picnic lunch alfresco although some of



us foolish enough to wear shorts found a different use for our picnic blanket.

After lunch we had a tour of the rest of the exhibits and watched the Parachute Display Team who managed to land in the arena despite the strong winds. With the weather getting progressively worse, some of us left at 1400 to return home and once again we managed to drive topless through the drizzle back to Salisbury. Once home the rain did not stop for the rest of the day

We had a turnout of 12 vehicles for this event made up of 8 Midgets, 1 Sprite, 1 MGB Roadster, 1 Healey 100/6 and 1 VW Camper van.

**Ian Beaver**

*email: [ian.beaver@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.beaver@btinternet.com)*

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Meeting at the Black Horse Pub

**W**ow at last it has happened!! The inaugural meeting of the Oxfordshire Midget and Sprite club took place on Saturday 29th August at the Black Horse Pub, Gozzards Ford near Abingdon.

The event was well attended with 10 cars turning up (with drivers + passengers of course) even if most of the Sprites and Midgets were from other areas. Having started from small beginnings we can only hope for greater number to come!! (One can only hope).

The pub is on the test route that all cars built at Abingdon had to be road tested on, so for all of the them it would have been a return visit, the food and drink went well and we were even joined in the car park by a TC Midget for a while.

It is proposed to hold a monthly meeting at the Black Horse Pub on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 7.00pm onwards for a pub meal and natter, all welcome (starting on October 7th).

We are also considering, if there is enough support to hold occasional meetings at weekends.

Many thanks to Gary Lazarus and John Platt from the committee, who came along and gave us their support.

**Grahame Gibbins**

Email: [grahame\\_gibbins@hotmail.com](mailto:grahame_gibbins@hotmail.com)

### **Editors note**

*It was great to be able to drive down a road that my Frogeye had last travelled just under 51 years ago, before it was unceremoniously shipped off to Paris, France (not Texas).*

*It's very exciting when the Club has a new area and one which meets just outside Abingdon makes it even more special.*

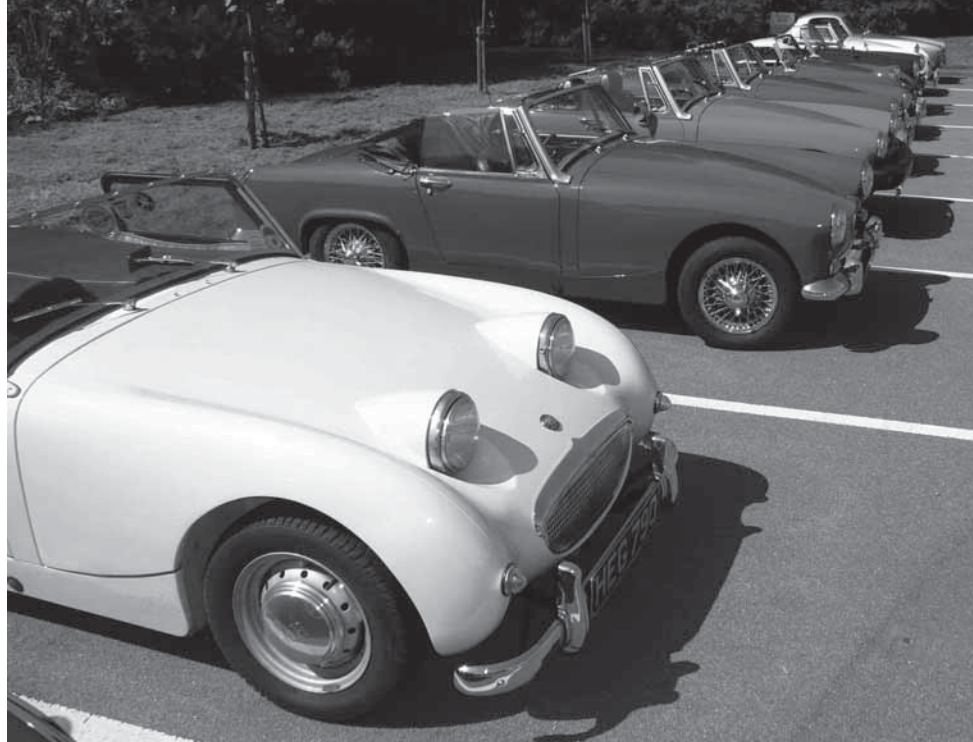
*My thanks to Grahame for making us all feel so welcome. Also for arranging such wonderful food and weather.*

## **Home Counties North West**

**S**o that was the summer? We had a few things going on in the Home Counties. The main event was our monthly run. As often happens it was a 10am start in Hatfield, but for the first time Maggi and Roger Byford were in charge. After a briefing and an explanation of the tulip instructions (we don't normal do things this professionally in the

Home Counties!) we set off with reasonable gaps between us.

Within a few miles of our tour around the Hertfordshire countryside we approached a left turn that was clear to Jen and I, but from the three Spridgets parked up just passed the junction it was clear others were not quite as sure as we were. By the mid journey stop we



were all back together again, although the choice of two outlets selling tea and cakes had us confused. Never mind we all enjoyed the refreshment, even if some of us missed the view and the wasps.

Back on the road and the journey continued through the Hertfordshire lanes, with a brief 2 mile foray into Bedfordshire (accurate instructions these). As we drove the weather got warmer and sunnier and by the time we arrived for an alfresco lunch at the Chequers Inn in Redbourn it was seriously sunny. Sunglasses and sun lotion should have been used by all! In all, 10 cars, 60 miles, a great drive and a good day with good company; just what owning and driving your Spridget is all about.

There are two other events to mention. The pub night at the end of August was another wet and cold night. One member was brave enough to bring his car along, Matthew Smethurst, a first timer, but it turned out his every day car was off the road so it was an easy choice. We do seem to have the worst weather of the month on the last Wednesday, but don't let that put you off coming along.

Finally, on the 6th September a few of us attended the Capel Manor Classic and

Vintage car show in Enfield, North London. Five cars attended the show and for those of us who couldn't manage the early start spaces were saved for our arrival.

It's a nice show set in the grounds of the horticultural college. It's not the biggest show, but incorporates the annual rally of the North London and Middlesex Morris Minors Association and also had dedicated areas for one of the MG Clubs, as well as the 1100 and A30 and A35 Clubs. Of course there was also the usual collection of general entries that these events attract. I had a great time, but Jen was less enthused by my explanation of the wide range of A series engine applications, and it seems no matter how hard I try to explain that an Allegro is a nice car to keep on the road she just won't have it.

On the 11th October Chris is organising our final run of the year. Starting in Hatfield, where else, if you fancy coming along get in touch with Chris (details in the contact section), you will be most welcome.

**Mark**

*email: markdhall@aol.com*

*tel: 01296 660 103*

# Dating your Car by its Windows

Based on the original compiled by Neil Cairns. Updated October 2008

Edited for *MASCOT* by Gary Lazarus

Austin Healeys and MGs made in the 1950s to the late 1970s can be dated by the 'TRIPLEX CODE' etched into or screen printed onto the toughened glass. This also works for any other make using TRIPLEX glass. Note that it dates the GLASS, so is only an indication of the cars age, assuming the glass is original.

If you are not quite sure of the year of your car, but the decade is known, just look for dots above and below the TRIPLEX TOUGHENED or LAMINATED logo on the glass. Unfortunately it is complicated by the code system changing in January 1969.

Before January 1969 one dot above T, R, E or X gives the quarter of the year the glass was manufactured:

T = Jan, Feb, March

R = April, May, June

E = July, Aug, Sept

X = Oct, Nov, Dec

From January 1969 the code indicated the month not the quarter, and although the same four letters were used there could be one, two or three dots used:

Jan	. TRIPLEX (dot over the T)	Jul	: . TRIPLEX
Feb	. TRIPLEX (dot over the R)	Aug	: . TRIPLEX
Mar	. TRIPLEX (dot over the E)	Sep	. : TRIPLEX
Apr	. TRIPLEX (dot over the X)	Oct	. : TRIPLEX
May	: TRIPLEX (double dot over T)	Nov	. : TRIPLEX
Jun	:. TRIPLEX	Dec	: TRIPLEX

But which year? Nine letters make the word TOUGHENED, one dot below a letter gives the year of the decade:

T = 1, O = 2, U = 3 and so on. However, if you see no dot (or possibly a dot under a space **after** the last letter), the year is zero.

Say your car is a 1950's Sprite, then TRiPlex TOUGHENED, with one dot over the 'R' in Triplex, and the other under the last 'E' in Toughened, indicates 'April/May/June 1958'.

That's simple then!



## East Anglian Report

The main event for last month was the BMC / BL rally at Ferry Meadows near Peterborough. We arrived in good time and were delighted to see the brilliant light blue Frogeye (belonging to one of our good friends from the colonies) already in residence, no mean feat having travelled 50 miles or so and found the correct (as yet unbannered) new location for our club stand. We set up the gazebo and banner (and new secret weapon, a portable BBQ) in the hope of attracting more Spridget, and soon had a veritable field full of gleaming examples, all with the hoods down (as nature intended) including Ian's racing green Frogeye all the way from Coventry (great to see you again Ian), the blue Frog I already mentioned, a selection of Spridgets and even an Arkley. Not a bad turnout considering quite a few of the regulars were away on holiday or had other commitments.

I had hastily fabricated a set of legs for my newly acquired folding BBQ the night before the event (amazing what alternative uses you can find for the MIG welder) in an effort to avoid igniting the field causing a forest fire and cremating 600 classic British cars (mind you I might have scooped the front cover of *MASCOT* with the resulting photo). The event itself was the usual mix of British cars mainly from the fifties, sixties and seventies ranging from the very ordinary (including some that have had some very bad press over the intervening years) to some that were very special indeed. You just know there is a Reliant Robin club somewhere out there, populated by gleaming examples of the plastic pig, each one being the owner's pride and joy. In a way it is good that all of our motoring heritage attract enthusiasts who

preserve them and prevent their extinction, so we can marvel at why anyone in their right mind would have bought one in the first place. For my sins I must admit to once owning a tin snail (Citron 2CV) a car I still have a soft spot for, and I even had a Reliant, although mine was a Scimitar.

Getting back to the plot, the day was warm and sunny (as always) but maybe just a bit breezy, the auto jumble was very good and specifically targeted for BMC / BL cars, If any of you have trudged around the huge Newark auto jumble in the certain knowledge that with so many traders someone somewhere has got a lorry load of exactly what you were looking for, and still come home empty handed, you will really appreciate how brilliant this is. I think everyone had a brilliant day (some of us even got a little singed in the sun), Pat won the raffle (as usual) and then all too soon it was teatime and people started to drift away to the accompaniment of toots and waves. The only downside for us was that on the way to the event the Sprite had developed a strange noise (a bit like a bearing giving up) and now as we queued to leave the venue (nose to tail in gleaming classic cars) the noise was getting much worse and becoming embarrassingly audible.

Before I sign off for another month, there is one small milestone that I would like to record in print and that is that this is the 100th area report for our area that has been printed in *MASCOT*, and believe me we have come a very long way since we started out 9 years ago.

See you all at the Mad Cat and beyond.

**Dave Dixon**



## NW Area Report



Last month saw our first club wedding. Congratulations to Neil and Shelly who got married on 11th September, we all wish them they very best for the future. Perhaps now they can stop being all lovey dovey at club nights and act like a normal married couple, sorry Neil but we did try to warn you. Anyway we wish you well and at least Shelly can now get a free haircut.

On 16th August Andrew and I went to the classic car show at Knowsley Hall, I think it's the first show to be held there. It was very quiet, although there was a reasonable turn out of cars on display there can't have been more than a few dozen members of the public, very odd. Isn't it funny sometimes how coincidences work out, Andrew and I both set off later than arranged (unknown to us both) travelling from different directions yet whose car was in front of me as I pulled up the drive, yes it was Andrew with senior navigator Oliver – spooky! Andrew was lucky to make it that day as the previous week his head gasket had blown so it was a frantic few days to get it sorted. Unfortunately for Andrew his head gasket blew again a few weeks later while going home from Oulton Park. This is very odd and to be honest we are not sure what the problem is. Everything was assembled correctly; the head had been skimmed but to get again so soon there must be something

amiss. Up until now he has done more than 6000 miles with no problems, all very odd. We have been talking recently about a suggestion that Neil proposed. This is to move our winter meeting nights to a Sunday afternoon. I think that now married he has to follow orders and Wednesday is now his ironing night. I'm lucky in such that I was able to negotiate mine to be on a Tuesday, on the understanding of course that the dusting was done first. Seriously, this will hopefully give us the opportunity to use our cars more during this time of year. The weather might still be grim but at least it will be daylight. It's certainly worth a try so the proposal is to have the first one on the 15th November, I will confirm this next month. However its sod's law that this day won't suit someone – probably us!

We will also try a different venue, hopefully somewhere nearer Leyland so again I will confirm next month. It's possible we will have a different venue each month although I can already see the confusion now with us all going somewhere different especially as organisation its to say the least not a strong point within the NW area!

Talking about organising skills, I had completely forgotten that October club night is the now legendary 'Ian's quiz night'. It's only after Lynn mentioned it that we even gave it a thought. So the pressure is on our quiz master now to get something sorted, but I'm sure it will be equally as good as previous years.

Once again this year we will be having a Halloween run. On our events list this is down for Sunday 26th October. Now, those of you who are reading this and actually showing the slightest bit of interest will realise two things; the 26th October is in fact not Halloween weekend and neither is it a Sunday. So in light of this glaring error that nobody as of yet has spotted I am now proposing Sunday 1st November, although this is yet to be agreed with everyone. You are probably thinking that this sounds a good event, I wonder what route the run will take. Well don't ask me, at the moment I haven't got a clue. What did I say about organisational skills?

See you at the Kilten on 14th October, which should hopefully be the 2nd Wednesday of the month. And, don't forget this will be our one and only intellectual evening of the year with the annual 'Ian's quiz night'.

Les

# Hampshire Happenings – 11 Years On

August was a busy month as we took advantage of the fine weather to visit some of our neighbouring regions. Following on from our trips to Home Counties and the Ace Café we decided to visit Surrey.

The journey to The Blue Ball in Walton on the Hill was delightful despite a small hiccup when John's car cut out unexpectedly. The bumpy road had caused a lead to come loose from the rev counter but we were soon under way and had no further problems.

London, Wiltshire and Warwickshire. After lunch we gathered in the car park to peer under bonnets and take some pics before setting off for a leisurely drive home in the sunshine.

We all enjoyed the Summer BBQ hosted by Lyn and Alf, held in aid of our 'Gazebo fund' remember the last one 'took off' on Easter Monday? It has now gone past the point of no return and we desperately need a replacement for next season. After a good feed Andre entertained us with a Rubens Tube that he had made by following instructions he found on YouTube. It is a novel and fascinating way of making gas jets 'dance' in time to music. The main requirements are: a length of plastic water pipe; some strips of gaffa tape; two speakers; an MP3 player; a calor gas cylinder and a box of matches – get the picture?

Unfortunately our luck with the weather finally ran out and our trip to The Hampshire Pageant of Motoring at Broadlands in Romsey was cold and damp for most of the day. The day was retrieved by a kind invite from John and Ellen to join them in Totton after the show for a warm up and BBQ. And it gave us an opportunity to visit the elusive 'Pixie' in the garage.

We are looking forward to the Surrey Classic Vehicle gathering held at the Rural Life Centre in Farnham on September 20th, organised by the Surrey Classic Vehicle Club.

**Jenny Green**

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



Alf in driving mode!



Right hand page picture shows (left to right): John Foard MkII OSJ 396, John Ferguson MkI "Pixie" 4461 PX, Bryan Hewitt MkI "Vivian" VYN 681, Terry Langridge MkI WAX 961 & Alf Budgen Mk1 505 GBH"

Again our own meeting (Pie Night) was well attended, with Gary (The Editor) paying us a visit for the first time. We made plans for a Summer BBQ and talked about a lot of things that had nothing to do with cars. Jonn had brought along some back issues of MASCOT to show us newer members and by chance Terry noticed that our meeting was 11 years to the day from the very first meeting of the Hampshire Region. He recalled how discussions on future 'doings' had centred around driving cars and drinking beer. Nothing much has changed and we are still trying to mix the two whilst staying within the law – any suggestion? We enjoyed a lively evening and 'Gaps' had a good and uneventful drive home along the M3.

Luckily Terry & Harriet finally managed to get their clutch problems sorted out in time to attend the first meeting of the Oxfordshire region where we met up with members from

# Bristol Area Report

Stuck for ideas, we now have a new theme for our club nights. 'Who can make the most spectacular entrance?' Like all good things, some one needs to lead the way, or in this case, be the tail end charlie. We had a goodly gathering of Spridgley things at the Rose and Crown at Pucklechurch for our September meeting. Being a pleasant evening, we all busied ourselves in picking holes in each others Spridgley things almost too preoccupied to notice the absence of Andy Cross. Then, the familiar sound of Andy's Sprite Mk11 was heard as it decelerated from 7500rpm to idle and then to nothing. Yes, Andy had arrived and promptly broke down in the car park.

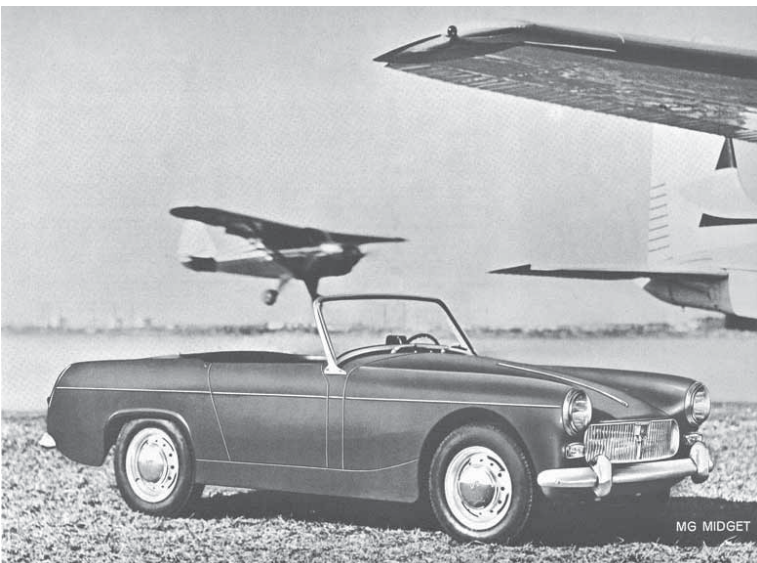
The bonnet was raised, lowered, raised again, lowered, the glowing motor reluctant to start. When it did, the lights started flickering and flashing. Clearly, the Sprite was having an electrical trauma. The various flickering and flashings and high voltage discharges were observed in the fading light by a microlight pilot circling overhead. Totally confused, our flying friend must have mistaken us as his ground crew signalling him to make a landing. Twas only when 10 feet or so of altitude remained that our pilot realised that we were not the nearby airfield and that the

bonnet of a Ford Mustang really isn't long enough to make a safe landing on. (Although we would have been pleased to have seen this demonstrated) Selecting emergency take off throttle the microlight narrowly missed the roof of a Luton van. So low that we could clearly hear the pilot utter "B\*ll\*cks" over the noise of his engine. Indeed, the Luton's Ariel was seen to be wagging as his legs passed either side of it. So, can anyone better this next month I ask? You will have to be there to find out.

As to the meeting, good to welcome new member Tom from Bath who took away the 'Newest Spridgley thing at the meeting trophy'. A poor recompense as Tom is the only one paying road tax amongst our number. Shock news from Alan Lo "Who would like to buy the oldest Midget in the village?" Alan was almost flattened in the rush. Evidently, Alan is totally disheartened with his Midget as he only bought it when he believed that a head gasket change was just but a 90 minute job – apparently not it seems. I did offer to supply a brass plaque to affix to the engine to state that I have worked upon it as a friendly gesture to help up the price. I received something of a less friendly gesture in return. Actually, Alan confessed

to feeling victimised by having the oldest and slowest Midget of the Bristol group. It took us most of the evening to convince Alan that this wasn't the reason that he should feel victimised. Didn't seem to cheer him up much though. Can't wait for next month, Bristol meetings are really exciting(ish).

**Terry Horler**



Spooky how closely this 1961 BMC USA Mk1 Midget brochure predicts the Bristol air accident near miss nearly 48 years later



Sunshine and Spridgets at the Moat



Masc Street

## Kent Report

### Kent Meeting

My spirits are risen! Is it the weather or my constant bullying. After a fine turn out this month for the Surrey meet I was doubly pleased when a dozen Spridgets turned out for the Kent meeting at the Moat. A bonus at the Moat is, that being near to Brands Hatch, to sit outside on a fine day is also rewarded by the constant stream of interesting cars and motor cycles that pass by. Ron & Marilyn Edwards brought their Spridget and also Peter McCarthy, who was to be Ron's co-pilot on the forthcoming Miglia '09 Tour that is but three weeks away. An opportunity to introduce him to Peter Gardiner and John Clark who would also be taking part. Ian & Sharon Stanfield showed for the first time. Phil Selwood brought his car for the first time to show us. As soon as his club membership form is submitted a picture of it will no doubt grace these pages.



### Herne Bay Classic Car Show

Herne Bay Council are keen when it comes to holding Classic Car Shows for this is the second, this year, that we have attended representing Masc. Last time, at Herne Bay, we celebrated Jane Coveney's birthday, that coincided with the event, with a birthday cake. At the last Kent meet Paul Coveney was frantically trying to find someone whose birthday coincided with this event so that another Birthday cake could be consumed. His investigations were to no avail. No club member, that was attending, had a birthday that day. A bit of research found that 29th August was the birth date of the actress Ingrid Bergman, in 1915. It was also her date of death, on her birthday, in 1982. And so a birthday cake was purchased, and consumed, in celebration of her life. Andy Barras, who lives in the street that we occupied, cooked some 'nibbles' whilst Paul & Jane Coveney set up a picnic table across the street almost outside the well named Mascot Bakery. They were soon surrounded by members taking lunch. Fourteen Masc cars occupied the street (thirteen Spridgets and an MGB – it is his first car so we shall convert him to Spridgetdom later) – the line up spoilt only by the presence of a Ford Escort and the people carrier belonging to the Dixie Ukulele band that entertained us throughout the day. Herne Bay offered much to do on this warm sunny day as elsewhere various bands played music to suit all tastes. Some members were even to be seen on the beach testing the waters.



Alan Anstead

# Surrey Meeting



*Outside the Blue Ball with some of the Hants area cars*

I think that it was a record. Someone contact Mr McWhirter! Sixteen Spridgets turned up for this fine evening, at The Blue Ball, Walton on the Hill Surrey.

Mike Gorman, John Clark and I arrived in convoy. John and I were overseeing Mike's maiden voyage with an engine that had fired up, only that afternoon, after I had rebuilt it with a new camshaft and other bits.

Barry & Jenny Green, in their blue Frogeye had come over from Hants Chapter together with John Fuard in his primrose yellow Ashley fastback Frogeye. I don't usually see many primrose yellow cars and then like London buses two come along when Norman Conrad, a non-member, dropped in, in his early Spridget. Rarely seen members Dave Anness and John Roberts paid us a call with their respective Spridgets. Hope to see more of them in future. New member Andrew Duff brought a petrol pump that he was attempting to repair. Lots of advice from those present but most seemed to be directing him to a nearby dustbin. He subsequently informed

me by e-mail that he had accepted the advice and bought a new petrol pump. Long may it tick! Ashley Hinton, as ever, had new parts for someone. This time the lucky recipient was Nigel Saynor who was to be seen, with a number plate plinth held against the front of his Frogeye, trying to visualise the fittings.

I gave the Landlord notice that we would be absent for September as most of the regulars to this meet would be away on our Miglia '09 Tour or at the included Circuit des Ramparts, classic motor race, at Angouleme, France.

We shall return to the Blue Ball in October.

**Alan Anstead**

Area Rep for Surrey & Kent

Tel 01322-384050 (answer phone)

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

## **Editor's note**

*On reading this report and in a moment of madness I had a mental image of Andy Duff turning up with the type of Petrol Pump you would have seen at an old petrol station!*

# North West Area at Oulton Park Gold Cup

## 30 & 31 August



*L – R: Bernie’s mate – sorry! Peter Vass, Ian Jones and Bernie Higginson taking shelter*

A select band of Spridgeteers gathered at the picturesque Cheshire circuit for a weekend of racing that featured historic Formula 1, 5 litre V8 powered F5000s (appearing a mere 40 years after your correspondent witnessed their first race here), 1970s sports cars, saloons, sports racers, F3 and Ford – 18 races in all.

Naturally the hoods were up as Peter and I arrived to find Bernie (no, not that one), Barry and Andrew with Rachel and the boys who were suitably kitted out in F1 style overalls. Ferrari team drivers both. The club banner was in place, the flag was fluttering above our pitch and the awning was soon erected alongside. Coffee was taken (too early/cold for beer) and the racing commenced. Later in the day Rachel produced cake for all in celebration of Andrew’s birthday. It was

a shame that we had to huddle under the awning to enjoy it!

One of the highlights of the first day’s racing was the performance of Derek Walker in the Historic formula Junior race. Derek is perhaps the winningest (as US race-speak has it) driver at Oulton Park but on Sunday had to carve his way through the field from the back of the grid to a podium finish. Earlier in the year Derek addressed a packed meeting of the club and impressed us all with his enthusiasm and talents. This race confirmed our opinion of the man.

The weather deteriorated during the afternoon and we had to show some generosity to members of lesser clubs that had failed to provide shelter. And then things got worse ... our drive home was through very heavy rain and the birthday boy had to abandon his Frogeye when the head gasket gremlin struck for the second time this year.

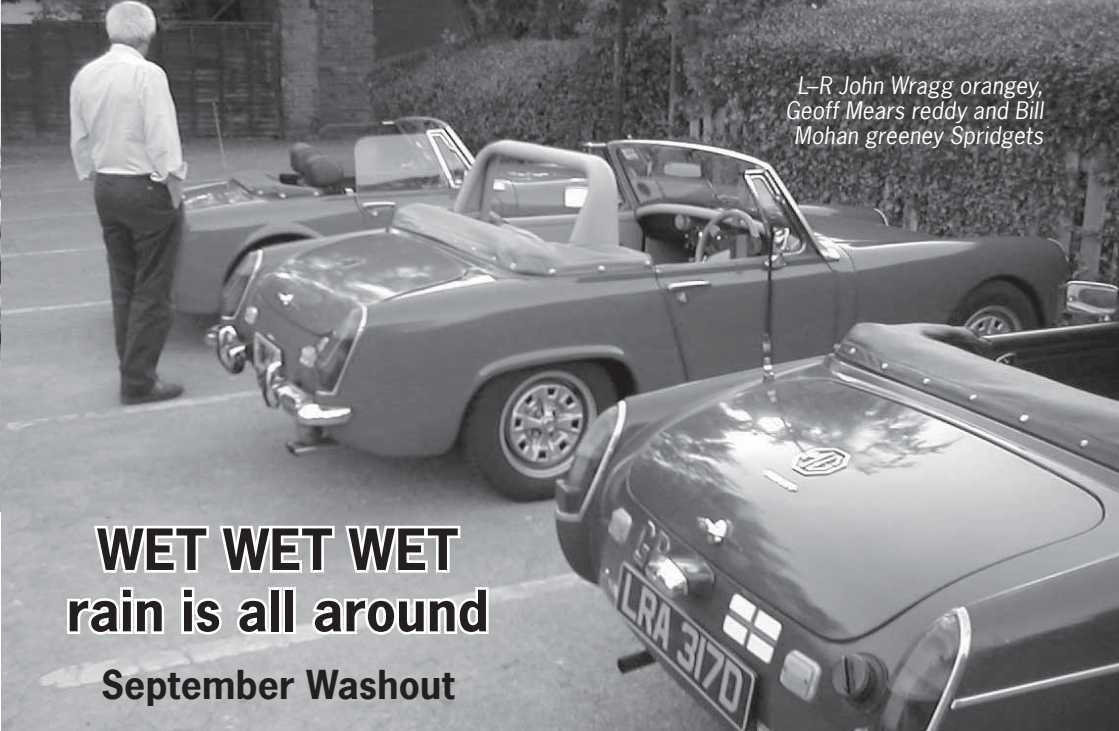
Andrew had to use his Bavarian machine on Monday, which meant that his MASC pass was declined, he was refused permission to join us and was required to pay for circuit admission. Now that’s commitment!

We enjoyed another day’s racing and the company of Mike and Karen. A team effort also produced a barbecue in the afternoon but a low turnout forced some of us to eat rather more than expected. Next year there will again be FREE tickets, great car club displays, exciting racing and possibly some tomato ketchup. All we need then is good weather and you!



*Flying the MASC flag*

**Ian Jones**



L-R John Wragg orangey,  
Geoff Mears reddy and Bill  
Mohan greeney Spridgets

## WET WET WET rain is all around

### September Washout

I went to the meeting in the family Mondeo, the rain was torrential and didn't favour me with the one speed, wet knee wipers that equip Lara. Entering the car park I couldn't see a single example of the Abingdon car-builder's art the only MG on the place was Trevor's ZT and I didn't blame any of us for leaving our babies at home (not even me!)

The usual wide ranging discussions, including how to make my telephone work and if I should... In all a convivial evening "down the pub", guess what? The rain was drying up as we came home ... typical!

We did however have plans for using Spridgets the following week, as several of us were about to join Ian Cooke and some of his friends from Notts/Derbyshire at the John Thompson pub and brewery, in Ingleby, which overlooks the River Trent near Derby. Ingleby is so small I'm amazed that Ian ever found it for us. The day was warm and sunny and the evening retained its warmth when we met at our usual marshalling point at Bassetts Pole, in the very useful car park of McDonalds. Mark and Louise and Steve and Matt were making their own way up to Ingleby and three of us met at MacFlurries. Andy's Sprite being off the road with gearbox failure, I gave him

a lift in Lara and we were soon joined by Geoff and John in their Midgets. As we were leaving I had a call from Matt, Steve's car was struggling and so they were turning back for home and safety. The M42 is no place to sit around hoping for help. After an interesting drive around the lower reaches of Derby we found the John Thompson and there were quite a decent number of cars awaiting our arrival, including our very own Mark and Louise (no nom-de-plumes now Louise, I still don't know who Karen was, sorry. Call it a brainstorm.) I almost didn't get into the car park, 'cos I found an opening blocked by dragon teeth type blocks that didn't show from the low down driver's seat in Lara. Phew that were close! Still we had a great "natter" with Ian and friends and sat comfortably in a friendly family run pub, complete with "pub dog" a nice black Lab who wanted to play ball games. Some of Ian's lot left first, having to run up north to Mansfield way, followed by our John who had the long run back to Kinner to tackle. The meet-up was another success and I hope we can arrange more of the same, the Notts/Derby boys know quite a few decent pubs and we ought to expand our knowledge too ...

**Bill Mohan 1067**



## Warks Talk

*Undercover on the ferry*

On the 17th August, 5 cars made their way to Liverpool Docks to catch the Isle of Man Ferry, where we met Sue and Roger in the sixth car. The crossing was an extremely bumpy ride, but we arrived safely and drove to our hotel, the Mount Murray Hotel and Country Club, where we checked in before driving the TT route, which was being prepared for a race in September. The circuit covers the central part of the island and passes through some beautiful countryside and over Snaefell, not that the racers would appreciate the views. The hotel was very comfortable with an extremely well appointed sports suite, so we made good use of the pool and Jacuzzi during our stay. Phil, our PE teacher, challenged Chris to a game of squash, which Chris hasn't played for 16 years, but has, now, almost recovered from the experience. The next day was clear and bright, so we drove to Ramsay, where we took the Manx Electric Railway, more like a Victorian tram, which follows the coast giving sea views unattainable by car, to Laxey. Laxey is renowned for Lady Isabella, the largest surviving waterwheel in the world, which stands in the Glen Mooar Valley. From Laxey we caught the Snaefell Mountain Railway to the summit. The wind made it a little cool, but the views were wonderful.

Although the forecast for the Midlands was sunny and warm, the next day was cloudy with showers on the Isle of Man, so with our hoods up we headed south to Castletown, the old capital, stopping at St Michael's island on the way, where the party was caught sheltering from the wind and rain in the lea of Derby Fort. With inclement weather, museums were a welcome distraction and, as members of the National Trust, free to us. Castle Rushen, thought to be one of the best preserved Mediaeval fortresses in Europe, detailed life as it used to be in the castle. Castletown has a number of other museums, but Rosie Willis was very disappointed to find it lacked a shopping centre. From Castletown we drove to Calf Sound where we were treated to a very good view of the seal colony and then to Port Erin for a walk along the beach, where we actually had some sunshine. By the third day, the rain was both heavy and steady, but still warm and sunny back home, so we set off for Peel, with its castle and House of Manannan, Mananna being the island's mythical sea god. The Celtic, Viking and maritime past of the island was detailed in the museum, with life-like, interactive displays. From Peel, we drove into the mountain, where the rain and mist descended

until we were unable to see the car in front, so could have been anywhere. On our final day we drove to Douglas, where we had time to wander or visit the Manx Museum, before catching the ferry home. The weather could have been better, but the island is fascinating with lots to see and do and we had good company to keep us smiling at all times. Our thanks go to Alan and Rosemary Couch for organising the tour and leading us around an island, which seems not to believe in signposts.

Last Sunday was the Coventry Motoring Festival, with over 600 cars attending, 4 of which were driven by club members. David and Linda, who live near to the venue, Memorial Park, kindly provided breakfast. The drive covers 65 miles of the country lanes, which surround Coventry, not including the extended route to Church End Brewery for lunch, and is well published so that inhabitants hold street parties and line the route to watch the vehicles. The route also takes in MIRA for those who want to drive the test circuit, and Toad of Toad Hall, with Badger were spotted on the track. It is a fun event and back at the park there is time to view the vehicles, watch the various displays and entertainments or even shop in the craft fair.

This weekend is Mike and Benita's Fun weekend, followed in October by the Severn



*On the Electric Railway*

Valley Motoring Festival and the Cheltenham Steam Rally.

We were pleased to welcome some visitors and potential members to our meeting. Alan introduced Lt Colonel Steve Aki, an American visitor, based in Germany who owns a Midget. After four years of pestering, David and Linda succeeded in persuading Alwen and Roger to attend. Roger has owned his Frogeye from new. We also had some young blood in the form of Neil and James, who have recently purchased a MG Midget 1500. John ensured that they all left with complimentary magazines and membership forms.

**Chris and Sheila**

#### **Editor's Note**

*I would have included a photo of Spridgets driving in the fog but it was just too foggy!*



*Jim and Rosie with Barrie and Margaret behind*

## Directions to enter the display area of the Coventry Transport Museum

*See the diagram opposite*

To reach Millennium Place you will need to exit Coventry Ring Road into the City Centre at Junction 1, which takes you into Tower Street. Then take the 2nd left into Silver Street, where you will see the rear of the Museum (roller shutter door with large car mural), turn left into Cook Street and then right into Chantry Place and continue down the cobbled lane until you reach Millennium Place at the bottom of the hill. Bollards will be removed prior to your arrival.

Please note that it is a requirement that you bring a drip tray (I use a disposable foil roasting tray) or a bit of old carpet to place under your car when parked in Millennium Place. They won't let you park there without something under your car to catch the inevitable drip.

## 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

**MK1 Midget YMO 612.** This is the earliest production Mk1 Midget on the road today; she is in her original shell, engine and gearbox with complete history from new. The car was restored between 1999-2001 including the body, interior trims, engine and many mechanical parts; further exterior respray in 2005. Malcolm Green wrote an article about the car in 2002 and she also appeared in various International magazines. As there are many accessories and extra parts that can go with or without the sale, offer from £8,995 would be considered. MOT until September 2010. You can find detailed information about the car at <http://www.mobuzzing.net>  
**Contact: Alan Lo 07753 867806 (Bristol).**



**1961 Frogeye all steel 948;** MOT Aug 2010. Unleaded Engine, S/S exhaust, new brakes, tyres, sills and floor. Clean standard car £7,000 ono.

**Christine Shaw 01405 762376 (East Yorkshire)**

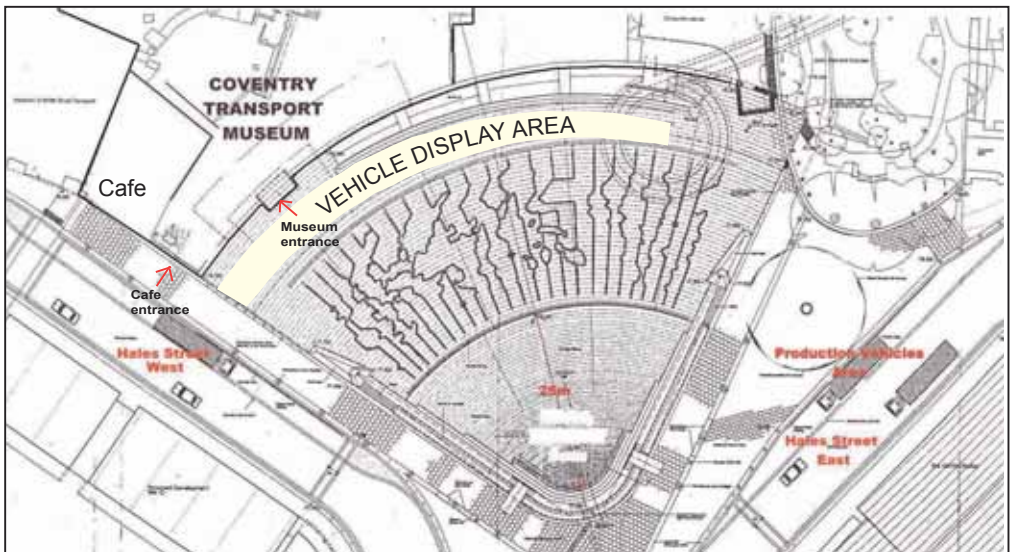
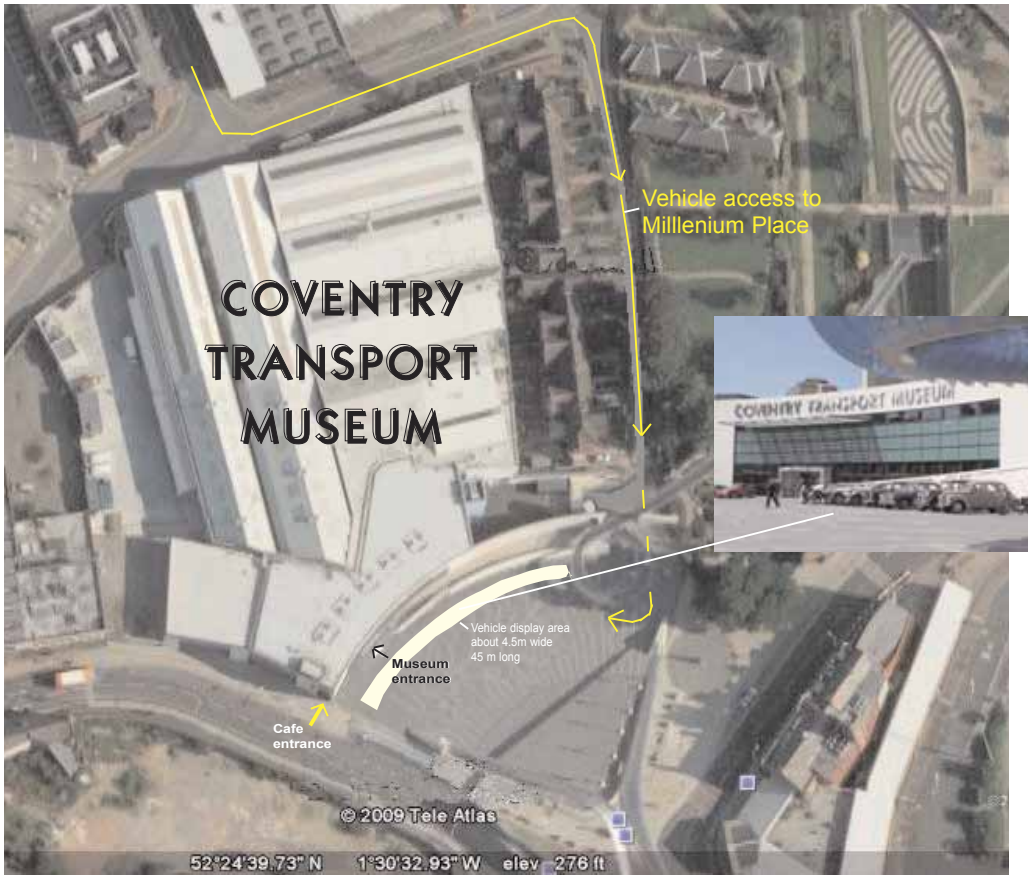
**Rostyle wheels** with large central cross from July 1972 Midget. 4 off suitable for renovation or eecon exchange. Free for collection from Chelmsford area.

**Colin on 01245 258338.**

**1971 MG Midget RWA 1275,** Tax Exempt, MOT Aug 2010, not concours but solid, many new parts (tyres, battery, brakes etc) £2,750.  
**01684 592483 or 07915 143174 (Worcs).**

### WANTED

**Midget steel wheel** for use as a spare.  
**Maurice Stacey, 01594 834469. (Forest of Dean, Gloucester area).**





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Grille - Chrome Plated.....£142.00

## TRIM PANELS



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Door Pockets - Black / Blue / Red Pair.....£49.95

## BADGES



Part No: XBAD101 - MKI  
Bonnet Badge.....£16.75  
Part No: XBAD103 - MKII/MKIV  
Bonnet Badge.....£11.95  
Part No: XBAD117 - MKI - MKIII  
Boot Badge - Midget.....£5.75

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Our upholstering service means that all of the hard work trimming these seats is done for you by professionals leaving you to just bolt the seats into your car. If you require material or colour samples please give us a call and we will be happy to post them to you.

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