

Mascot



The Magazine
of the
Midget & Sprite
Club





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

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN	Alan Anstead , Tel: 01322 384050, email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
GENERAL SECRETARY	Philip Sellen , 40 Amberley Way, Wickwar, Wotton-under-Edge, Glos, GL12 8LP. Tel: 01454 299222 email: P.N.Sellen@bristol.ac.uk
TREASURER	Natalia Flynn , Tel: 0121 559 3103, email: natalia.flynn@hotmail.co.uk
EDITOR	Gary Lazarus , 40B Hungerford Road, London, N7 9LP. Tel: 0207700 5696 email: editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk
AREA REP'S DELEGATE	Alan Anstead , Tel: 01322 384050, email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
MEMBERSHIP	John Platt , 2 Pear Tree Gardens, Bearly Road, Aston Cantlow, Henley-in-Arden, Warks. B95 6HT Tel: 01789 488321 email: membership@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk
GENERAL MEMBER	Mark Hall , Tel: 01296 660103 email: markdhall@aol.com
	Tim Saunders , Tel: 07968 261990 email: yorkshiremasc@googlegmail.com
	Alan Couch , Tel: 01564 773302, email: roalan@talktalk.net
	David Dixon , Tel: 01733 222810, email: e-dave@ntlworld.com
	Geoffrey Hunter , Tel: 01562 851544, email: hunters360@btinternet.com
	Jim Willis , Tel: 01527 402804, email: jim.willis@tiscali.co.uk

OFFICERS

CLUB ARCHIVIST & TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION MEMBERS ADVERTISING	Terry Horler , 63 Littledean, Yate, Bristol, BS37 8UQ. Tel: 01454 881770
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE CO-ORDINATOR	Alan Lo , Tel: 0117 9572617 Mob: 0775 3867806 email: alan@mobuzzing.net
CAR REGISTER	David Hill , Llyserfan, Beulah, Newcastle Emlyn, Ceredigion. SA38 9QB. Tel: 01239 811307 email: david@hill.be
REGALIA OFFICER	Bob Clarkson , Tel: 01902 842643 email: raclarkson@tiscali.co.uk
TECHNICAL ADVISOR	Mike Grout , 55 Park Road, Spixworth, Norwich, NR10 3PJ. Tel: 01603 890211 email: mike@motorparts.freeserve.co.uk
WEBMASTER	Mark Boldry , email: mark26r@hotmail.com
TRADE ADVERTISING	Toby Ancombe , 7 Lysander Court, High Road, North Weald, Epping, CM16 1HF. email: tobyanscombe@taratec.co.uk
	Richard Flynn , Tel: 0121 559 3103, Email: richard.flynn@live.co.uk

AREA REPRESENTATIVES

BRISTOL	Terry Horler , Tel: 01454 881770
EAST ANGLIA	David Dixon , Tel: 01733 222810 email: e-dave@ntlworld.com
DEVON	Vacant
DORSET	Ian Beaver , Tel: 01722 326840 email: ian.beaver@btinternet.com
ESSEX	Jane Gates , Tel: 01255 830 509 Email: Gjjanegates257@googlegmail.com
HAMPSHIRE	Terry Langridge , Tel: 01252 626063 email: Hampshire.spridget@ntlworld.com
HOME COUNTIES	Chris Jackson , Tel: 01707 261567 chrispatj@btinternet.com
NORTH WEST	or Mark Hall , Tel: 01296 660103 markdhall@aol.com
KENT	Alan Anstead , Tel: 01322 384050 email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
LINCOLNSHIRE	Vacant
LONDON	Gary Lazarus , Tel: 020 7700 5696 email: garyfrogeye@gmail.com
SOUTH STAFFS & NORTH BIRMINGHAM	John Collins , Tel: 07970 213084 email: green_mx5@hotmail.com
SCOTLAND	Betty Kerr , Tel: 01357 300355 email: Deansgrove@aol.com
NORTH WEST	Les & Diane Robinson , Tel: 01772 432138 email: lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk
NORTHERN IRELAND	Robert Holmes , Tel: 02892 689274 email: robertholmes25@hotmail.com
NOTTS/DERBY	Ian Cooke , Tel: 0115 938 3838 email: ilc@bgs.ac.uk
OXFORD	Grahame Gibbins , Tel: 01865 383199 grahame_gibbins@hotmail.com
SOMERSET	Dave Bearne , Tel: 01823 412004 email: david.bearne@barnwoods.co.uk
SOUTH WEST WALES	David Hill , Tel: 01239 811307 email: david@hill.be
SURREY	Alan Anstead , Tel: 01322 384050 email: alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
SUSSEX	David Southcott , email: dandlsouthcott@btinternet.com
WARWICKSHIRE	Alan Couch , Tel: 01564 773302 email: roalan@talktalk.net
WILTSHIRE	Andy Cross , Tel: 01225 743554 email: andy@cross743.freeserve.co.uk
YORKSHIRE	Caretaker Area Reps: Sarah and Tim Saunders , Tel: 07968 261990 email: yorkshiremasc@googlegmail.com

Also see the Club Nights section on page 2 for new areas and contacts.

Compiled by Richard Flynn (richard.flynn@live.co.uk). 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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May Editorial

I hope your April was as good as mine, and quite a memorable one what with the weddings and all. As both William and Kate as well as Lois and I tied the knot.

Judging by the amount of area reports that I've received and the number of events being held around the country, the Midget and Sprite Club must have some of the most active members of any classic car club in the UK. But what constitutes a classic car or Historic car and how do you define its usage?

According to FIVA (**Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens**) their definition of an historic vehicle is

**“A mechanically propelled road vehicle:
which is at least 30 years old;
which is preserved and maintained in a historically correct condition;
which is not used as a means of daily transport;
and which is therefore a part of our technical and cultural heritage.”**

To my mind this can't be right. As you would fall foul of their definition if your classic is used as a daily driver but is still in historically correct condition. What about a car which isn't used as a daily driver but has modern safety features such as disk brakes on Mk1 Sprites and Midgets, halogen headlights or dare I say it, seatbelts?

To my mind the definition prescribed by FIVA and adopted by their UK representatives the FBHVC (**Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs**) smacks of elitism and is something which thankfully is unheard of within the Midget & Sprite Club. Our cars can never be described as elitist and MASC members seem to be delighted to crawl all over a new member's Spridget irrespective of which Sprite or Midget Mk it is.

My own classic has had a very busy month starting by taking home silverware with a First in Class (and 2nd place overall) at the Bovingdon Brakefast Autosolo, excellently run by the Harrow Car Club. Along the way "Gaps" beat two Subaru Imprezas, a rally prepared Ford Escort Mexico an MX5 and a motorbike engined Trackday Special. It was only beaten by a very well driven Honda Integra Type R. Not a bad result for a 52 year old Classic.

Bank Holiday Friday (the non-wedding one) saw Lois and I sedately pootling along country roads near Tring in "Gaps" to be followed the next weekend by the Frogeye and I once again competing in another Sprint meeting, this time at North Weald Airfield, where we came 2nd in Class.

The Frogeye taking a day's gentle drive through the British countryside sandwiched by two days of flat out driving at race speeds, that's my definition of a classic car.

Have a great month.

Gary & "Gaps"

Next month's deadline for articles and reports to be included in MASCOT, is Monday the 16th of May.



Gaps wins Silverware

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.

Cover image: New MASC members Wayne & Elaine Williams 1972 Midget. Photograph © Wayne Williams

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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: gjjanegates257@googlemail.com
- 2nd Tuesday **London Area** (Congestion Zone) – Meet at **The Ace Cafe** at 7:30pm. together with the Classic Cars Magazine night. Details: Gary Lazarus on 020 7700 5696 garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at **The Green Man**, Middleton Village, 8.30-8.45pm Contact: John Collins, Tel: 07970 213084 email: green _ mx5@hotmail.com
- 1st Wednesday **Oxford Area** – Meet at the **Blackhorse Pub**, Gozzards Ford, Nr Abingdon. 7pm for those eating or 8pm for those not. Contact Grahame Gibbins at grahame _ gibbins@unipart.co.uk
- 1st Thursday **Notts/Derby border Area** 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
- 2nd Wednesday **Warwickshire** – Meet at **The Green Dragon**, The Green, Sambourne, Redditch, B96 6NU, at 8.30pm as usual.
- 2nd Wednesday **North West Area** meet at **The Kilton**, turn off M6 at Jct 20 onto A50 towards Macclesfield. Pub 4 miles on left. Please note new venue.
- 2nd Wednesday **Bristol Area** will meet at **The Rose and Crown**, Pucklechurch at 8pm. All Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas members welcome. Contact Terry Horler on 01454 881770
- 2nd Thursday **East Anglian Area**. Previously the Cambridgeshire Area meet at **The Ferry Boat**, at Holywell, 8pm
- 2nd Saturday **Yorkshire Area** – meet each month at **Ye Jolly Farmers Inn**, Dalton near Thirsk YO7 3HY – please note new fixed venue – more information at <http://yorkshiremasc.blogspot.com/>
- 3rd Monday **Dorset** – Meet at **St. Peter's Finger**, Lytchett Minster, Poole, BH16 6JE 7.30pm
- 3rd Tuesday **Scotland** – Meet at Holiday Inn Express, Keith Street, Hamilton 7:30pm. Contact Betty Kerr on 01357 300355
- 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 **Selsey Arms**, Coolham, RH13 8QJ from 19:00. Contact David Southcott at dandlsouthcott@btinternet.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 Angel**, Addington Green, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5BB 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.freemove.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** – Venue changed. Please contact David Hill for details of new venue, Tel: 01239 811307 or email david@hill.be
- Northern Ireland robertholmes25@hotmail.com. If enough interest, will arrange a meeting.

Club Website

www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

Members Only pages User name: Micro Password: Blister

Events

From Richard Flynn & Webmaster Toby Ancombe

April

Thursday 28th South West Wales Area. **Meeting at The Railway Inn**, Llumpunsaint, Carmarthen, SA33 6BU. 8pm
Details from David on 01239 811307.

May

Sunday 8th SW Wales Area are going on the **Milford Haven Classic and Vintage Run**. Meet at Milford Marina, 10am. Details from Joe Mayne on 01646 693835 but please check asap as numbers limited.

Sunday 15th Warks Area May Prescott Hill Climb. Contact: Graham Storry graham.storry@amcoservices.co.uk

Sunday 15th East Anglian group Visit to the wonderful **Stondon Transport Museum** (20 miles north of London see web site) and pub lunch, plus convoy run from a convenient starting point/s (depending on location of participants) Please contact Mick Hall on 01223-263697 for details.

26th SW Wales Area are meeting at **The Royal Oak, Saundersfoot**, SA69 9HA. 8pm Details from David on 01239 811307.

June

Sunday 12th **Midget 50 at Burghley House**, Stamford, Lincolnshire Register at the web site and order tickets at www.midget50.com or call the ticket hotline 01954 231125.

July

Saturday 2nd –
Sunday 3rd July **Brittany week-end** “discovery of the Emerald Coast: Le Mont St-Michel – Le Cap Fréhel” for Midgets, Sprites and derivatives. A 300 km tour in two stages with the charming village of St Briac (near St Malo) as a base. Details from Thierry Schimpff, Member n°4386, thierry.schimpff@wanadoo.fr Tel +33 (0)6 86 41 50 56 or David Dixon e-dave@ntlworld.com Tel 01733 222810

16th SW Wales Area's **Run around Pembrokeshire**. Meet at car park on A40 just east of the roundabout where the A478 crosses just north of Narberth. 11am Details from David on 01239 811307.

Friday 22nd –
Saturday 23rd –
Sunday 24th July National / international MASC event of the year at **Silverstone Classic**, the biggest and best classic sports car event in the world including dedicated MASC members infield parking area, celebratory lap of the circuit for Midget 50th birthday, over 6000 classic cars, classic racing and lots more. see further information on Silverstone classic website and elsewhere in *MASCOT* for booking info or contact David Dixon e-dave@ntlworld.com Tel 01733 222810. Note heavily discounted tickets available to MASC members.

28th SW Wales Area are meeting in **Cenarth**, at car park on B4332, 100 yds from junction with A484, just south of the bridge. 8pm Details from David on 01239 811307.

August

20th/21st SW Wales Area are going on the **MGOC Snowdonia Run**. Details from David on 01239 811307.

25th SW Wales Area are meeting in **New Quay, Ceredigion** at 8pm. Details from David on 01239 811307.

September

10th – 20th **MIGLIA 2011** For M.G. Midgets, Austin Healey Sprites, & derivatives only. For more Details contact Alan Anstead Surrey / Kent Area Rep. alan.anstead@btopenworld.com Tel: 01322- 384050.

10th SW Wales Area are going on a **Carmarthenshire Run**. Meet at Morrisons Car Park, Carmarthen at 10:30. Details from David on 01239 811307.

October

Sunday 23rd **MASC AGM 2011**. Coventry Transport Museum Millennium Place, Hales Street, Coventry CV1 1JD. 024 7623 4270. 1:30pm for 2:00pm start.

November

Friday 11th
to Sunday 13th Join Warwickshire at the **Classic Car Show at the NEC**. Details from John Platt on 01789 488321 or email john@platt2085.freereserve.co.uk

New Members



Keren & Philip Green's Mk3 Midget



Dean (Dixie) Corless' Midget 1500

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members

4434	Brian Roscorla	Cornwall	Frogeye Sprite
4435	Philip & Keren Green	Worcestershire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4436	Jeannette Carter	Nottinghamshire	Midget Mk 2
4437	Michael, Daniel & Lorna Pope	Buckinghamshire	Frogeye Sprite
4438	Michael Neights	United States – PA	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4439	Andrew Dawson & Emma Johnson	Kent	none yet
4440	Wayne & Elaine Williams	Gtr Manchester	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4441	Peter & Pamela Warwick	Warwickshire	Sprite Mk 4
4442	Lee Davies	Surrey	Frogeye Sprite
4443	John Wilkinson	North Yorkshire	Frogeye Sprite



*Mike & Lorna Pope
with their Frogeye*



John Wilkinson in his Frogeye Sprite



*Wayne & Elaine Williams' 1972
Midget (see front cover)*



Midget 50

Just five and a bit weeks to go

With just five weeks to go excitement is increasing throughout the Spridget world for the 12th June, and Midget 50.

The *Practical Classics* magazine sponsored road run starting from the MGCC's HQ in Abingdon on the Saturday preceding Midget 50, is generating much interest. However with spaces limited to just thirty, you'll need to act fast if you want to take part. The format is to arrive at Kimber House, meet with your fellow road runners over coffee, be shown around the surviving MG landmarks in the town, then following lunch set off for Lincolnshire. With hotels arranged near Burghley, Sunday will see participants being shown around the Practical Classic's offices before driving the final twelve miles to the event. Sound good, then <<http://www.greatmagazines.co.uk>> is where you need to go.

The concours and POO competitions are gaining more entries everyday, and with superb prizes up for grabs from Mike Authers, Moss International, and Meguiars, its not surprising. Some folks seem reluctant to enter concours competitions, believing they must remain with their car throughout the day, or at least while all the cars are being judged, however this isn't true, for if you don't want to leave you car unlocked, just have a quick word with the judges, and arrange a time to be present.

More trade support in the way prizes has come from MGBhive, who have kindly donated some very exciting prizes for the Gymkhana competition, so not only will you have a great laugh taking part, but could go home clutching a worthwhile prize.

Now some camping news, the site at Tellington Lake will, if there is enough interest, set aside an area for all Midget 50 campers enabling you to camp in a group. You'll need to book pretty soon though, for they will of course continue taking usual holiday bookings, and might run out of space! To ensure your area go to <http://www.tallington.com/park/camping> and mention Midget 50 when booking – very important.

Make a note not to forget plenty of pocket money, for with traders in attendance, there's sure to be some bargains to be had, remember too we have an area for autojumble gear, so if you want to clear out the garage and make some money at the same time, give John Clark a call on 01227 368638 to arrange a space.

And finally, if you haven't already its **01954 231125** to get your tickets.

A note from Midget 50



Coming to Midget 50?

Have you some unwanted spare parts to sell?

Why mix the set of carbs with the picnic?

You can take a small private seller's pitch and get them noticed.

Just £10 and all in aid of the Air Ambulances Organisation

Call John Clark on 01227 368638 for booking forms.



Douglas Wilson-Spratt

DWS was the very first winner of a rally with the Sprite, a club event the weekend our favourite little car was announced. From then on this wonderful gentleman was very faithful to the marque. We competed on many rallies, from club, to National and International, and Doug was one of the original owners of a full bodied Sebring. Peel's did the bodywork, but the rest of the mechanicals were put together at his Leighton Buzzard Delta Garage. The softly spoken and courteous Douglas was most unlike other folks in the motor trade, but he was obviously well liked and very successful. After a couple of seasons – I believe in 1962, he opened a London operation specialising in Sprites, with Jim McManus as partner, and another Sebring enthusiast, Peter Jackson in the workshops. Jim had been manager at the Grosvenor Street Austin Healey Showrooms while I ran the Speed Equipment side of the business and was also an excellent competitor in Driving tests with his own Sprite. It was here that the WSM Sprites came onto the scene. Douglas and I were always good friends and competitors, and the last occasion together was at Goodwood, when we shared the spectacle of "our" cars competing in the Fordwater Trophy, while standing on the roof atop the pits at that fabulous circuit. He will be missed.

Aloha

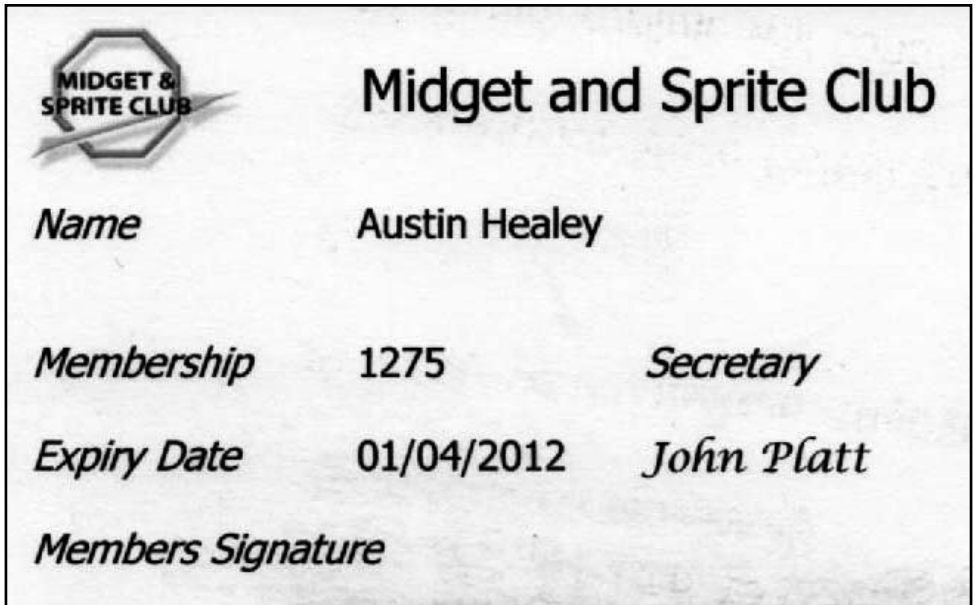
John (Sprinzel)

Membership Matters 1

After many years attempting to merge the club database onto membership cards at a sensible price and to ease my arthritic hands, I am pleased to announce that Stuart Watson has perfected a system that will produce printed cards as the sample below, which are now in circulation. In future we will issue one card to include all family and joint members.

Huge thanks to Stuart for this and also to Roger Orgill / Phil Sellen for their previous help in bringing to conclusion more professional cards and a great step forward.

John Platt
(Membership Secretary)



A sample of the new membership card

Membership Matters 2

As we now have approx 93% of our membership on-line we will be making much more use of this facility to communicate with members and to reduce costs. We will now be inviting you to renew by email and also send email reminders as necessary.

It is now very important that you notify the membership secretary at

membership@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk whenever you change your email address.

Do we have your latest email address?

Those not on-line will continue to be contacted by post.

John Platt
(Membership Secretary)



The Rack at the Back

Words and images by Mike Ward-Sale

First of all, before we go any further, if you are one of those people who approve of boot racks (some don't) and are also thinking of fitting one, then read on, if not, stop right here and find something else to read, because what follows is undiluted geek-speak. You have been warned!

Early in 2010, Rachel and I decided that, due to a lack of adequate boot space, it might be good idea to fit a boot rack to our white 1969 Mk IV Sprite.

At the time I was the photographer and website editor at Sussex Sports Cars, in Lewes. This meant that I was in an ideal position to assess the pros and cons of the different types of rack in both general use and still in production, at the time.

Coming from a design background, it seemed only natural that I should carry out a properly organized construction and design analysis of such a diverse product, as any mistakes due to lack of research could prove costly.

By pure coincidence, that same week, we were attending the excellent Spridget Club Christmas bash at Rowfant House, in Sussex. During the festivities, I was talking to our secretary David Southcott, about fitting a boot rack, (as one does) and during the ensuing conversation, he brought up the subject of the position of the upstanding restraint bar, which stops the luggage, picnic basket, or whatever from going 'walkies' during transit. Should it be fitted with the bar at the front or the back?

I was surprised by this, as I'd always assumed that it went at the back, but being a pedantic old cuss, said that I would check the matter out and get back to him.

After what seemed like an age, spent trawling through the 10,000 odd pictures of sports cars, stored on my hard drive, I came up with the approximate date of the crossover point, at which the restraint bar did indeed appear to migrate from front to back. I duly emailed the story and various evidential photographs to David. He wrote back, congratulating me on an impressive bit of research and said that it would be a good idea if the piece could be expanded into an article for MASCOT magazine.

As I was in the process of carrying out a one-man consumer research project into the subject of rack design and durability, it seemed like a good idea to combine the two.

So, as they say, here we go.

Having combed through the websites and catalogues of a large number of classic and vintage accessory factors, it became obvious that due to the number of different types available, it was necessary to get things properly organized into some sort of categorical order. This basically involved breaking the choice of racks down into three constructional groupings:

The first of these was the ubiquitous 'removable' aluminium clip-on version, usually fitted with 2 or 3 aluminium or wooden load-bearing slats, with the whole assembly

resting on four overly large rubber feet. This concept will be all too familiar to anyone who had a roof rack, in the fifties, sixties and seventies.

As it was originally designed for "occasional use" only, it had an annoying problem, in that it was inclined to work loose, if left in place for any length of time. This was due largely to its unholy and interdependent trinity of adjustable bolts, fixing brackets and rubber feet, which were prone to vibration, movement and slippage, during normal use. Sadly, rust was their only saviour.

In addition; the rubber feet tended to become perished, with age, the wooden slats were prone to weathering, wear and probably worst of all, the varnish began to flake off, as can be seen in the Blue Midget detail photo.



The weight advantage of the aluminium construction was sadly undermined by these shortcomings, with the result that it was the first design to be discarded from our options list.

Also contained within the first group, was an almost identical, stainless steel version. Once again, due to the aforementioned problems with common components, it too proved to be an almost equally undesirable option and therefore suffered the same fate.

The second design in the grouping was the chrome finished, mild steel design, this time fixed by either four or six chromed steel bolts, seated on two bands of rubber strapping. This type was a permanent fitting, which requires the boot-lid to be drilled in the required number of places and was by nature a 'get it right-first time' installation.

This type had a lot going for it: good structural rigidity, attractive initial appearance, minimal maintenance and reasonable resistance to weathering.

Sounds like a winner then. Well, yes and no, whilst it had a lot going for it, the achilles heel was the chrome. Being a high friction application, once the chrome had become degraded and the mild steel exposed, rust pitting would set in.

Additionally, corrosive moisture tended to collect in front of the bracket upstands, causing the inevitable localized rusting, as shown in the dark blue MGB photo. The result could look awful and was prohibitively expensive to rectify. In consequence, this too had to be dropped from the list.



The final surviving and by now 'last ditch' candidate was the all stainless steel version. This seemed to be the most expensive option. It had almost the same structural and mechanical properties as mild steel, excellent rust resistance, good wear and weathering durability, the appearance of 'polished' satin chrome and was very easy to clean and maintain.

Like the previous type, which it resembled, it was fixed by either four or six bolts, but in this case they were of the stainless steel socket button head type, seated on two bands of rubber strapping. It was also a permanent fitting, which required the boot-lid to be drilled in the required number of places and was again a 'get it right-first time' installation. As shown in the White Sprite and Red MGA photos overleaf.

In order to allow for a degree of thermal float in the fixing holes, it was advisable to drill them slightly over-size. Having done this, the holes in the rubber strapping were cut equally over-size, using a very sharp leatherwork hole punch, before being trimmed back to match the length of the fixing brackets.

This job is made much easier, when you're married to a bookbinder.



Happily, this one ticked all the boxes and obviously had to be the rack of choice.

To be fair, however, this was only if cost was not of primary concern, as these units *can* cost about twice as much as the other options – although not always.

For some reason, if you're buying one for an MGA or MGB roadster, the chrome version can be significantly more expensive. It's a funny old world. Actually, very funny indeed – if you happen to be buying one in France, yes you've guessed it, they're the same price. Ho, Hum.

So, the decision was made, the all stainless steel version was the winner, but an unexpected problem arose, in the fitting department.

"You're not drilling that boot lid" was Rachel's firm, but unanticipated response.

This came as a bit of a blow, but as always, 'Nil desperandum' came into play, there was an alternative, albeit it a time-consuming one.

If that boot lid can't be drilled, then you can always buy another one and then drill that one, then simply store the unmolested original and sacrosanct one, in bubble-wrap, on the shelf.

So, with all fingers crossed, I set about a trawl of the Spridget spares columns on ebay.

My luck was in, an orange bootlid, which was in good order, was found and bought for a

mere £30. The downside was the 110 mile round trip to Essex, to collect it.

To cut a long story short, the new one was stripped, etched, re-sprayed and waxoiled. Meanwhile, a new lock and badge were sourced and then fitted.

Costs were beginning to spiral, but luck was again on my side.

Just as I was about shell out over £150 for new one, an identical brand-new rack, still in its original packing, was spotted on an ebay auction. This was bought, with a 'ring-fenced' bid, for £80.00, plus £12.00 carriage and the bootlid transplant was soon a done deal and looking almost as good as I'd hoped.

The stainless steel GB letters are still awaiting fitting, when I can decide exactly where to put them so that they look just right. Pretentious – Moi?

The next requirement was the wickerwork picnic hamper which, according to my research, could cost anything from one to two hundred pounds – 'How much?!!!'.

Once again however, a mixture of luck and serendipity was lurking in the shadows and saved the day. A brand new, four place setting hamper was found at the Lewes Town Hall Tuesday market, for a whopping £8.00, yes, really, I kid you not.

All that remains to be bought now, is a pair of interconnected leather hamper-straps, which can cost another ninety odd quid, in the catalogues. Hopefully, we will be able to source them for a lot less, from the ladies who make up the buckled belts for us and our fellow members of Commercial Square Bonfire Society in Lewes.

We should then at last be ready to pootle off to the Goodwood Revival Meeting, with the car really looking the part. This should be a fairly relaxed trip, though, thanks to the recently fitted Frontline Type nine, 5 speed gearbox and the Kenlowe fan.

I will now return to the aforementioned matter of the luggage restraint and its personal 'standing' in the wonderful world of luggage racks.

After a great deal of sifting through my own files, it appears that the position of the restraint is often governed by the tiny drainage hole, which can sometimes be found on the underside of the main luggage support panel bar, directly below the centre point of the upstand.

There is it seems, an easy rule of thumb.

If the rack tips, out of the horizontal, towards the driver, then the restraint is mounted at the front, to allow the hole, if present, to be at the lowest point and also stop any sudden forward movement of the luggage, hamper or whatever.

Conversely, if the rack tips towards the rear of the car, then the restraint goes at the back. "Simples"

So, when did it all change, what happened to turn the world of luggage-carrying on its head.

As I said earlier, my research is based around the 10,000 pictures of sports cars, stored on my hard drives.

Having examined the selected shots in detail, the actual historical crossover point, seems to have centred on 1955, when the relatively short-lived and 'old school' MG TF 1500 was supplanted by the 'new look' and iconic MGA roadster.



I have selected and cropped a number of pictures, to illustrate the transition and also show the differences between the different designs, constructional materials and inherent problems, where applicable.

I should also point out that, although I have specifically selected the MG brand as the delineator of the, fin d'une ère, this date does seem to apply equally to most other makes of sports car in production, at the time. See for example the photo of the Austin Healey 100 M. So don't flood me with 'corrective' emails, pointing out that 1955 may be a year or so out, please, please, please, it's only a 'ballpark' date!



Austin Healey 100 M

So finally (or almost) after thinking that I'd finished writing this piece, I spoke to the owner of a Morgan, at a Sussex club meeting, who told me that hers was fitted with the upstand at the back, like most of the other Morgans in the pub car park. But just to buck the rule, she mentioned that when she bought a rack for her MGB roadster, the supplier strongly advised her to fit it, with the upstand at the front, to protect the driver and not at the back, as is usually the case with the majority of other MGB roadsters on the road today.

So there you are, it's not written in stone.

Whilst on the subject of the timeless and delightful Morgan marque, I was amazed to be told that, not only do the company decree by design, that the upstand is at the rear, but that the boot rack should encompass a separate built-in stowage facility for the removable side screens as well – see the red Roadster photo. Does this company understand classical sports car construction, or what? I rest my case.

Finally and come to think of it, with the benefit of hindsight, there's just possibly another reason for the change from front to back.

It could be that due to the strain caused by a vast improvement in 0–60 times, during the 1950s, there had been an increase in the failure rate of ageing luggage straps, resulting in the contents of the jolly old Fortnum & Mason hamper being sprinkled across the poor old A1, or wherever, along with the odd bottle of Bolly, Dom Perignon or Petrus.

Dashed bad show, don't cha know, What!!!

Mike Ward-Sale

We have ignition! Ready for lift off!

It's about that time of the year that the covers will be coming off and coming out of hibernation. I am, of course, referring to M.G. Midgets and Austin / Austin Healey Sprites but it could so easily refer to the owners such is the response I am getting from Surrey and Kent members when seeking applicants for tours and shows this year.

Anyway in order to make that initial start back in to life easier and hopefully ensure a trouble free years motoring lets have a look at the ignition system.

Have a look at the main chassis to engine earth strap. It should be under the car between engine and chassis. There is no photo because I have good clothes on and don't feel like getting on my hands and knees with a camera. Which reminds me of a short conversation I had with John Larrington a while ago. John "You've got new jeans on". Me "How did you know that" John "There is no oil on them yet". You'll recognise it when you see it (the strap not the oil on my jeans). If it is frayed then replace it. If it is in good condition take it off clean up the ends and bolt it back where you found it. It may have been moved by a previous owner to somewhere where it can't snag on road debris. You can sometimes find them bridging the front rubber engine mounts joining engine metal to chassis metal.

Now let us look at the ignition coil. It should be mounted on a plinth presenting itself before the spark plugs / distributor. If you have a really old sprite it may be riding piggyback on the dynamo. They were removed from this position because of problems associated with vibration. A defective coil can sometimes give peculiar running problems and is sometimes often overlooked. If it is knackered it will produce a lower voltage and a weak spark. You will need a multimeter for this. They don't have



Components generally associated with the ignition system

to be expensive - about a tenner. To test the primary winding connect the red lead to the positive terminal (+) and the black lead to the negative terminal (-). On our cars we are looking for about 3 ohms (are 1500's ballasted? Then about 1.6 ohms)

To test the secondary - HT - High Tension winding connect the black lead to the negative (-) terminal and the red lead to the centre HT outlet. Set the multimeter at the correct position to take a reading 8K-10K ohms (non-ballasted 7K - 10K ohms) (picture). Both tests should be done with the ignition off. The photos show a check on a spare coil that I have, ready if the need arises, bolted under the bonnet.

Clean and gap the spark plugs or replace if necessary. Some Haynes manuals, as may others, often show a colour chart of sparking plug colours so that you can evaluate whether your carburettors need adjusting.

Next stop the distributor. One way to evaluate your HT / plug leads is to run the engine during nightfall and watch for arcing. If your engine bay lights up like Blackpool illuminations, with blue arcs abounding in the region of / from the plug leads then the leads need replacing. Can't wait for nightfall then try holding them although I would advise against this method if you are frail or fitted



Checking low tension



Checking high tension

with a heart pacemaker. Then again you might get a kick out of it. If you are bitten by mega volts then change your plug leads. Inspect the outer insulation for cracks and cuts.

The cap should be clean and dry and definitely not cracked. Also look inside the cap for any tell tale signs of arcing or tracking.

Check the rotor arm. Not so long ago this was a major source of problems. Firms such as Distributor Doctor and Aldon Automotive are now able to supply better quality alternatives to the commonly available reproduction rotor arms (1) repro' (2) uprated (3) red rotor which have been routinely failing and leaving people stranded.

Such is the problem of poor quality automotive electrical ignition parts that some historic motor sport classes now allow for electronic ignition systems to be fitted to overcome reliability issues. This move also removes the problem of condensers and

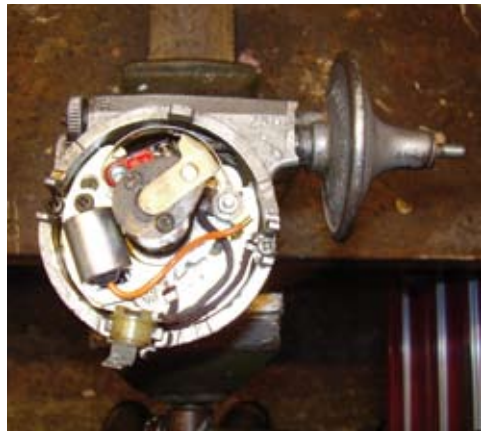


(1) repro' (2) uprated (3) red rotor

contact breakers completely but the rotor arm, dependant upon electronic ignition type used / allowed will still usually remain.

Apparently recently manufactured rotor arms have been failing because the typical mix involved in the moulding process, nowadays, contains more carbon blacking and is therefore more conductive. It has also been found that the rivet that holds the brass contact inlay into the moulding is slightly longer than the original bringing it too close to the spring clip on the underside. The high tension current, averaging 30,00 volts, is always looking for the easiest route to earth and shorts out, from the tip of the over length rivet, through the reduced thickness, of more conductive plastic and the spring clip on the underside of the rotor arm, to earth out down the distributor shaft. This results in no spark at the spark plugs. This problem sometimes rectifies itself on cooling but then reoccurs with increasing frequency until the rotor permanently short circuits.

Distributor Doctor offers "Lucas red rotor arms" which are modelled on the original



Distributor set up in workbench vice

1960s design but made of modern materials on the latest machinery to a very close tolerance and reputedly will not let you down. The integrally moulded brass inlay dispenses with the troublesome rivet. The increased insulation properties of the body makes them suitable for use with high voltage coils and electronic ignition kits. The spring steel clip on the underside in conjunction with a revised internal tolerance assures a really snug fit even on old and slightly reduced diameter mountings.

For more detail see
www.distributordoctor.com
& www.aldonauto.co.uk

The contact breaker / points and condenser are next in line for attention. I prefer to take them out and throw them away and install a Pertonix / Aldon Ignitron electronic ignition kit that discreetly fits in the distributor but for those that want to cling to the old technology then if the condenser is working it's probably a good one and best left alone. Swiftune produce a condenser that is deemed an improved design but costs i.r.o £25. I have no experience of these condensers. The points should be correctly gapped as per manual but you wont succeed if the contacts are pitted or have a pip resembling mount Kilimanjaro they will need replacing but when removing do make a note of the relationship of the insulators and washers. I prefer to adjust



Baseplate set up for roadside replacement



Spark tester

points with the distributor, removed from the engine, clamped in a workbench vice. If you go this route then do mark the position of the distributor in relation to its clamp before removal so that you can return it exactly to its former position with out upsetting timing settings. When replacing the distributor and before attempting to replace the cap do ensure that when fitting you have hold of both cap securing clips and that you have not trapped one behind the starter motor.

If you follow my lead and fit an electronic ignition system do not get rid of the points and condenser but mount them on a spare base plate and carry, assembled with correct points gap, just in case the electronics should fail. If such a situation should arise then you can return your car to a points system at the roadside.

Now that everything has been checked and adjusted run the engine with a set of Ignition system high tension / spark testers. You will see only one in the picture. When I bought it years ago you just got one whereas nowadays you can get a set of four for about £12. Hopefully all will indicate a good spark and the engine will be running with the regularity of a sewing machine. However these testers are great for fault analysis. If they flash in sequence but the engine runs poorly then the problem may be the spark plugs or a blocked fuel line. One or more of the testers not flashing may be that rotor arm problem, as discussed, a distributor cap fault, or a defective plug lead. If all the testers do not flash then it could be the coil, distributor, contacts, or coil HT lead or maybe that time to put the kettle on and to phone a friend!

Alan Anstead



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Not an article on replacing Master Cylinder rubbers

For some time, on my Sebring rep, I have had a weeping clutch master cylinder. The clutch always worked and it was really just the slightest weep that the job just kept being put off. Eventually finding nothing else to do one day I decided to sort the issue. I thought, also, that if I could take some pictures that it might help our editor if he were short of copy. I had the clutch master cylinder on the bench in no time, and stripped.

This was not to be the cheap option. Under a magnifying glass the two rubbers were in perfect condition. Not so the cylinder bore



Bore wear in clutch master cylinder



Master cylinder internals showing seal (arrowed) and clevis pin



Master cylinder, remote bleed valve and container for bleeding



New master (clutch) cylinder fitted



Remote bleed valve with protective cover

which had a barely discernable, to the naked eye, scratch that could be felt with a finger. So this will be short as I fitted a brand new master cylinder but the photo will show how easy it is bleeding a clutch system with a remote bleed valve (see *MASCOT* January 2007 at www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk/

members for how to fit such a remote bleed valve). An assistant is not required as pumping is done by just pushing the actuating rod, by hand, into the master cylinder. I replaced the actuating arm clevis pin as it had seen better days.

Alan Anstead

Letters



Hello Gary

I thought you might like the attached photo of me with my lovely Mk 1 Sprite 624 CDL, complete with Ashley bonnet and wire wheels. The photo was taken in 1971 during a Scottish touring holiday, my wife and I had married in 1970 so this was our first holiday since our Lakeland honeymoon taken in my battered old trials VW Beetle.

At the time we were living in south Westmorland, I found the Sprite advertised for sale in the Westmorland Gazette, it was at Capernwray Hall, near Carnforth and was the property of a young New Zealander who had been completing religious studies as a resident of the Hall. Basically his visa had expired and he needed £180 for his flight home, so that's what I paid him for the Sprite. He told me that he'd bought it in the Isle of White, hence it's very sound body condition. Interestingly it appeared to have also had an Ashley fastback hardtop originally as well (there was a distinct semi circular mark on the boot top panel) I also suspect that the car had been specially painted Jaguar dark

metallic blue probably from new. The engine was a bit ropey but I soon fixed that with a top end overhaul and new main bearings. I replaced the gearbox (nicked first gear) with another box from my local breakers yard.

On our Scottish tour we covered sixteen hundred miles in the week, the only problem we had was the water pump bearings failed as we were driving out to Mallaig. I found a car breakers near Fort William and he had twenty or so A series water pumps in those old Smiths crisps tins. He asked £2 for the water pump. I then pointed out that my tools were all down in the tail of the car and I'd have to unpack everything to get at them so he loaned me the requisite spanners and made my young wife and I a cup of tea whilst I changed the water pump. Happy days!

Best regards,

David Alderson, Northamptonshire

Hello Gary,
Thought you might be interested in this. The photo attached shows a yellow 1979 MkIV Midget. It

belongs to a friend of mine and as of today has covered just 1500 miles from new. As you might expect it is totally original and just like it has come out of the showroom. Not many original ones like these about.

Neil



If you have any memories, tales or questions for insertion in *MASCOT* please send them to me at editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

Work in Progress – The first Chapter



As it arrived

In February 2008 I had a phone call from a person living not far from my home asking me if I wanted to buy his 1974 MG Midget. He had owned the car since 1979 having bought it from his sister who had, in turn, bought it new in 1974. He explained that the car had been dry stored in his barn for some 20 years and he felt it was now time to move it on. He had heard that I was a Spridget enthusiast and that was the reason for contacting me.

I arranged to go and see the car which was some 50 miles from where I lived. Having found his house which was a typical Welsh smallholding in a fairly remote part of West Wales, I was taken into the big stone barn in front of his house. There sat in the corner was the white 'N' reg chrome bumper Midget looking rather forlorn. We managed to push it out into the light and I could immediately tell that this was a car that would need a lot of tender loving care and welding! It wouldn't start and so I had no idea what state the engine was in. The milometer showed 76,000 miles which he said was genuine and I had no reason to disbelieve him. We agreed the price of £300. It was worth every penny of this, even in its current state.

Having loaded it onto the twin axle car trailer I had taken with me I paid the money and took it home. Not having any particular plans for the car at that time my intention was just to put it in my car port until I had decided what to do with it. Before the family arrived home I decided to try and get it running. I put some fresh petrol into it, cleaned the plugs, adjusted the points, checked the oil level and fitted a fresh battery. Amazingly 3 or 4 turns of the key had it firing up and running. I was

chuffed. When I looked at the oil pressure it showed 65psi on the gauge. Even better.

Then my 19 year old daughter arrived home and before I could say anything else she laid claim to it! "Oh do it up for me dad, it's lovely". What does a dad say to his daughter in such circumstances? So there and then I agreed. I sent the log book off and it was returned in her name. Now the pressure was on. I was already involved in the restoration and conversion of my K series Midget. Now I had another to do! I promised to start it once I had finished my own car. It was a deal. I pushed the car into the far end of the car port and covered it with a cover.

I finished my K series in March 2010 and so was reminded by my daughter to get on with her car. So I did. Now I was thinking that I would just do enough to get the car up and running and through an MOT. I could then continue with a rolling restoration. Ha ha, I was clearly being delusional!

Now I have restored quite a few Spridgets over the years and this one was no different.



Katie starts the dismantling



Stripping the interior

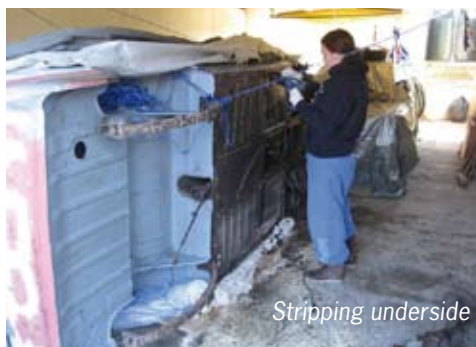
I soon appreciated that all the usual areas required attention. My daughter offered to give a hand and thought well if Lizzie Bartlett can restore a Frogeye, my daughter could help with the restoration of this car. And so it started. We stripped the interior, which was in very good condition, from the car and stored it away. Thankfully the floors weren't too bad and just needed some localised repairs. The sills however were shot. I replaced both inner and outer sills. The inner footwell panels needed repairs as did the lower door hinges, A posts, rear wings, inner rear wings, boot floor, arches being the seats etc etc. The front wings were also badly rusted at the bottom where they meet the top of the sills. The nearside wing was a revelation. I couldn't believe what I saw when I removed this wing. Having removed all the fixing bolts it still wouldn't come away as it had been welded to the top of the n/s sill. Not only that, someone had previously repaired this wing by placing two pieces of 2" x 2" timber between the wing and the footwell panel. This had then been filled with plastic padding. What a bodge.

I spent the next several months making, replacing and repairing panels on the car and making it sound. It was still a rolling shell at this time but as work progressed I just couldn't bear the thought of going this far and leaving the rest looking tatty. So I decided to strip the car totally. Out came the engine and everything in the engine bay, followed by all the front suspension and back axle until all I was left with was a shell. Well I had been here before with other cars so why make this an exception? Anyway my daughter wouldn't be able to insure at a reasonable cost until she was 25 anyway. This would buy me some time!!! In the meantime I have sourced other parts for the car including good second hand front wings, good bonnet and front nose cone. The car is being de-bumpered as I like the look it gives.

With the car stripped and now upside down my daughter and I prepared the under floor



Engine removed



Stripping underside

area removing all underseal. I have since primed it and applied stonechip. I have stripped the paint from the engine bay back to bare metal and applied etch primer followed by a number of coats of Polyurethane 'Direct' primer (similar to epoxy primer but more resilient). In the meantime I have also started to clean up all the suspension parts and back axle and repainted the same.

This is the stage I have reached to date. My target now is to get the shell ready for respray in August when I have a week off. I will take the shell down to my friend's bodyshop where I will work on the car there and have it sprayed by him at the end of the week. It will be sprayed in a dark shade of British racing green in 2k paint. This will match nicely with the tan interior.

As you might expect my daughter is delighted with the progress and can see light at the end of the tunnel. Me, well I love restoring cars and I adore Spridgets. I couldn't wish to be doing anything better.

In Chapter 2 I'll update you on the progress following the respray.

Neil Thomas, Pembrokeshire, (Member 3617)
Neil K on BBS



Sills needing a bit of work

1 x MG Midget minus 1500 = 1275



Well it all started back in December 2008; I'd had a break from classic cars but thought that I would have another one. I decided to get a midget, as I'd nearly bought one a few years previously. I couldn't really afford a roadworthy 1275 so I went for the 1500 model. After doing some research into buying one i.e. the rot spots etc. I went to see some.

The first two that I viewed needed too much money for the problems that they came with. So I kept looking and then I found this one. There were only three pictures in the advert so I phoned the person up and had a long chat asking lots of questions about it. I liked what he was telling me so the next morning I went and had a look. It was about an 80 mile round trip so I was hoping the guy had been honest with me. I eventually found the place as it was out in the sticks. I started to look around the car and it ticked all the right boxes, especially for the money he was asking and it also had six months MOT left on it. Don't get me wrong it was a long way from being a show car but it was very presentable and it came with a folder full of history.

I took it for a test drive and apart from a bit of crank rumble from that Triumph engine and a bit of an oil leak everything was good. So on that note, I made him an offer and we shook hands. I returned a few days later and picked it up and I was very pleased. I ran it for a couple of months as it was, but I hated those rubber bumpers and decided to take them off.

After a few alterations to the front indicators and grille it looked better and the weight it

saved was good too. I then put on a set of minilite alloys and it looked even better. I ran it like that for about another 9 or 10 months until the MOT ran out. The car sat around my friend's garage for a bit until I decided whether to partly or fully restore it.

After a bit of thought and some persuasion from my good friend Nick Punter, and as I had a little money saved, I decided to do a proper nut and bolt restoration, but to my own specs as I knew how I wanted it to look. As I said from the start I really wanted a 1275 so that's the way I went with it.

In May 2009 the strip down began at Nick's garage. It took a few months to finish as I was only putting in about four hours a week to start with. However when it was stripped, Nick set about the welding. Luckily the car was not that bad as back in 1998 it had had a lot of panel and body work done. However it still had to have repairs to the lower "A posts" and work to the quarter panels, the boot floor and the fitting of a new front valence (to name but a few).



While Nick cracked on with all that, I was busy tracking down a 1275 engine to be rebuilt to go in (I love these engines I think they are great) to replace the Triumph unit. The aim was to make it look like an early 70's car. I'd managed to get an engine off a popular auction site and got it home, stripped it down ready to go to the engine shop for a full rebuild. It was rebored, and had the crank reground. A new cam shaft, new mains, big ends, pistons and rings, unleaded head were fitted and then a nice lick of paint.

I bought a 1¾ SU on an MG Metro tubular manifold and decided to fit a type 9 five speed gearbox to the engine, which meant buying a bell housing kit from frontline developments. When that arrived, I started to cut out the cars original cross member to allow for the new bolt in one and the tunnel had to be cut and rewelded for the new gear stick position, In between all of this I was busy at home in the shed cleaning and repainting anything that could be re used, such as the heater box, rear axle, brake drums, pedal box, callipers, brackets, dash and so on. The pedal box had all new seals fitted and the callipers were totally refurbished with all new parts. The front suspension is all new with new lower arms, springs poly bushes, bearings etc. And the rear got new 1275 springs with lowering blocks poly bushed and refurbished shocks all round.

Other things included a new fuel tank, new dizzy (electronic) with uprated coil, oil cooler, electric fan and a new 1275 radiator. Some of the engine bay wiring had to be extended for the alternator as it's now on the other side of engine. Wires had to go in for the new fuel pump and fan. And I had to cut down the front chassis rails for fitment of the new grill.



After the respray

It was now late July/August 2010 and I had to think about getting it painted. I could have sent it out but I didn't have the money, so Nick suggested a home respray. At first I thought no way but the more I thought about it the more I came around to the idea, especially as the car was now in my Grandmother's double garage and Nick had the compressor and spray guns. So I decided to have ago myself. After all, if it went wrong I would just flatten it off and start again.

First of all I etch primed the whole car, then stone chipped the under side. A few coats of high build primer and then finally on with several coats of old English white. After it was done I couldn't believe how well it came out with no runs at all and only a little bit of orange peel. Talk about beginners luck.

The next few months was the bit that I had been waiting for, when slowly the car was put back together. It's now February 2011 and the car has passed its MOT and I can't wait to start enjoying it.

I have got it looking exactly how I'd wanted it to look with the budget I had, and with my L reg plate to go on, to the untrained eye it will be just like any other early 1275 midget.

Marc Morgan



The new front suspension





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Midget 50 Special Regalia Item

With MIDGET 50 fast approaching, now is the time to order your regalia for this great day at Burghley. Initially, the Midget 50 organisers arranged for high quality teamware supplier Topsigns of Hexham to produce a shirt, sweatshirt and cap complete with the exclusive MIDGET 50 logo using the event's red, white and blue colour theme.

Now, additional arrangements have been made with Topsigns to enable you to order your regalia in any style and colour from their extensive range of garments AND include the unique MIDGET 50 logo. Also, why not treat your Spridget to a Customised Show Registration Plate incorporating the Midget 50 logo as a souvenir from this special day?

Just visit their website at www.topsigns.net/clothing/shop and select your preferred garments.

Phone or email Topsigns with your order, stating that you need the Midget50 logo to be applied. Topsigns will advise you of the price for each item you order when you either phone 014340609999 or email paul@TopSigns.net

Please note that embroidery and a charity donation to the Air Ambulance Organisation will be part of the price that TopSigns quote to you and it will include postage and VAT.

Goods will normally be despatched to your address within 14 days.



MASC AGM 2011

**Coventry Transport Museum, Millennium Place,
Hales Street, Coventry CV1 1JD**

024 7623 4270

Sunday 23rd October 1:30pm for 2:00pm start

This popular venue is again where we will be holding our AGM this year. If you haven't visited the museum, you are strongly advised not to miss out on this jewel of transport history. In addition to marvelling at a wonderful collection including more than 240 cars and commercial vehicles, 94 motorbikes and 200 cycles over the ages, you can also join us at this year's Annual General Meeting to hear your committee report on the activities of the past year.

Make it a date in your diary; we look forward to seeing you there.

Home Counties North West Report



We are not lost!

The Sun has had his hat on in the Home Counties for a while now; lovely Spridgeting weather! Our first road run of the year was held on 20th March, before the sun had properly woken up.

6 cars (5 Spridgets and an '85 5 series BMW) set off from Hatfield's Tesco superstore and made our way slowly across country for a coffee stop at The Farmers Boy in Brickendon, who opened up for a very welcome cup of coffee. We then followed a winding route across some lovely countryside and great driving roads to the lunch stop. Chris and Pat had picked an interesting venue for us; Church Farm in Ardley.

They describe themselves as 'a mixed, high welfare, ecological and low carbon food and farming enterprise' which as far as I can tell translates into 'very tasty sausages!' All the principal ingredients are grown or raised on the farm and we enjoyed a tasty lunch in what some would describe as a lovely summer house. Others may say it was a fancy shed, but the food was great never the less! We were joined for lunch by Lily and Vic who weren't able to join us on the run. After lunch Lily was very pleased to show us her new modern car. It is her first with remote central locking and she was very proud to show us how it worked... nice car Lily!

We said our goodbyes and made our way off home in smaller groups. Thanks to Pat and Chris for organising us.

Our next outing was a trip to visit the Hampshire Chapter for Drive It Day. For many

reasons our numbers dropped from the original interest and in the end we had just two cars making the trip. Keith and Ann and me and fellow member Steve (who's car was up on blocks at home) met in Amersham and enjoyed a warm and sunny Sunday drive to Hampshire. Keith had planned an enjoyable winding route via Windsor, through the Great Park, and Ascot then on to Hook. The sort of drive and weather Spridgets were invented for.

We arrived early and were the first non Hampshire cars on site. As always we received a warm welcome and it was good to meet up with old friends including Chairman Alan in his Frogeye. There was a good attendance and a few interesting non Spridgets to look over as well.

We set off home and I managed to follow our route back with out any errors. However, Keith and Ann, after a stop at a cousin's on the way home, did not do quite as well. Keith was so confident he knew his route home he locked the map safely in the boot, but I understand that a green Midget was reportedly seen circling the perimeter road around Heathrow airport for a short period of Sunday evening!

Don't forget if you live near by we still have a monthly get together in the newly refurbished Chequers Inn, Redbourn. Hope to see you there.

Mark

hcnwmasc.blogspot.com



Well the best-laid plans often fall victim to circumstance and so it was with my scheme to reconnoitre all the best pubs in the area sampling the food and the beer in an effort to find a new base. I think what went wrong is that the sun came out (if that can ever be wrong) and although this should have made this arduous task a lot more fun, I hadn't bargained for other commitments and only being able to snatch brief moments of local sunspriting and then mostly without the female end of the audit team. I thought that the result of all this (with my impending trip to France) was to be another month in the Mad Cat, however Graham came to the rescue hence our new home (at least for the May meeting will be the Ferry Boat at Holywell.

While I think of it, if any of you have not yet bought your Silverstone classic tickets there is bad and good news, the bad news is that the deadline for early bird tickets has passed however the good news is that if you use the MASC secret code C11035 there are still substantial discounts to be had, in fact you have only dipped out by about a fiver a day (so you have not missed the boat). So far we have 49 cars booked 15 of which are for all three days, with the biggest turnout on Sunday so we should have a brilliant parade lap.

Another brilliant event on the programme this year is a visit to Bletchley Park on the

7th August for which we have already had enquiries from the Home Counties mob (welcome aboard guys) so I think it has just become a joint venture (brilliant). Hubie is organising this one from our end (see events pages for details). The next event is a visit to Stondon Transport Museum with a pub lunch at the Crown in Shillington. If you are coming please let us know so we can book numbers for lunch.

The April meeting was a frantic affair with 16 events being discussed and added to our programme, I am not sure what our newest recruit Stuart Thompson thought of the frenzied discussions (its not always like this honest). I think Mick has done a great job of motivating us and generating such a full events programme.

Stuart needs to be congratulated for being the only person (including me) to brave the elements and attend the meeting in a proper car (and a very nice red frog indeed see photo) and all the way from Saffron Walden (well done that man!).

I am writing this just before dashing off to Plymouth to catch a ferry to Frogeye cottage (more frantic last minute stuff, but deadlines is deadlines). Please don't forget change of meeting venue for May meeting to the Ferry Boat at Holywell.

See you all at the Ferry Boat and beyond.

Dave Dixon
e-dave@ntlworld.com

Scotland Area Report

Unfortunately I have to advise you that Carson, the doyen of Scottish Midgetry, has informed the Scottish Group that it is his intention not to renew his Midget and Sprite Club membership. Having recently retired he has advised us that he and his wife Linda now intend to follow other interests. I would therefore take this opportunity, on behalf of the Scottish Group and I'm sure MASC as a whole, to thank Carson for all that he has done over the years. He was for a long time the Scottish contact, has organised and taken part in many runs and made massive contributions to the MASCOT magazine and we wish him all good fortune in the future.

John T is progressing well with the work on "Tango." The car is now back on all four wheels and the engine has been running for the first time in some six years. The interior has been sprayed, as have the inner wings. The next task is the fitting of the front wings and he and Betty are already having discussions regarding the interior including choice of carpets. All looks well for it being back on the road this season.

Between 1st and 4th April a party of four representing two clubs, MASC and Blackwood Classic Car Club, travelled to Germany for The Techno Classica Essen. On the Friday we flew from Edinburgh to Weeze where we collected a hire car and drove to Düsseldorf. Both Saturday and Sunday mornings saw a drive from Düsseldorf to Essen for the doors to open at 9:00am. Each day then comprised a full 9 hours in the show areas. This proved to be just sufficient time to be able to see all of the exhibits once only. There were 23 exhibition areas in total comprising both inside and external locations. It was my first time at this show and it really was huge.

Some of the headline numbers were:- more than 120,000m² of show space, in excess of 1,150 exhibitors, 2,500 vehicles for sale, 300+ parts vendors and more than 220 Club displays. The cars on show were superb. It literally got to the stage where we were saying to one another "Just another Ferrari/Porsche/Mercedes" (delete as appropriate). Not only were the cars mind blowing, so were the price tickets on them! I'll give two examples. A 1960 Frogeye with hardtop. The car appeared to be solid, but was far from concours. There were rust bubbles at the base of both 'A' posts and the rear corners



Frogeye at Essen for 9,200 Euros

of the bonnet. An engine was sitting on the passenger seat, I don't know whether it was a spare or from the car, but it certainly wasn't improving either the upholstery or the seat bolster! The asking price was 9,200 Euros (approx. £8,760). The other example I could identify more directly with was a 1972 MGB. Under the artificial lighting it was very evident that the bonnet paint was all microblisters, the paint on the boot was badly chipped and the rear upper edges of the doors and rear wings were scratched from the hood fittings. The rear bumper was badly scored, the interior was tired going on tatty and the Rostyle wheels were really scruffy. The asking price? 19,000 Euros – Gulp!

After leaving the show on the Sunday we drove into Holland to Arnhem, scene of Operation Market Garden (Film "A Bridge Too Far") The Monday saw us visit the Airborne Museum at Hartenstein, then the Allied cemetery followed by crossing The John Frost Bridge, which replaces the one that was fought over. It was an excellent trip and if any of you are thinking of going I can heartily recommend it.

Next weekend, April 24th sees the first run of the Group so all being well that should form the basis of next months report.

In the meantime I hope all the Groups are starting their programme of runs and wish you all well.

Scottish Contact: Betty Kerr 01357 300355
Deansgrove@aol.com

John Pardo

DRIVE IT DAY 17th April from WARKS

(Soon to be HEART OF ENGLAND)



south Worcestershire/ Warwickshire residents some half hour after the start at Lower Broadheath thus enlarging this happy band to 24 cars and 47 souls. Craven Arms is in the Welch Marches country six miles north of Ludlow and although the map was clearly marked we managed probably four different routes between us. I'm admitting nothing other than to accept that the Managing Director had not really benefitted from her early morning cuppa and was still somewhat dormant by the time we reached Martley.

Thus took place, a completely

Early Sunday morning the sun had got his hat on, hip hip hip hooray as those of you who remember Judy Garland and The Wizard of Oz will recall. Switch on the one eyed monster for the start of the Chinese Grand Prix, make and deliver the managing director's cup of tea to ease the path from dormant to "with it", and watch the start - great stuff, Hamilton and Button rob Vettel of the lead, switch to DVD record and check everything ready for the off from the Little Chef, Hagley, our chosen Start Point

On arrival find that many are keen to get going so it is a chase round to get everybody signed in (there are better methods than this fandango) and bar one who keeps disappearing, we managed it. Thank you John for pre-registering the SSNB gang who were daft enough to risk joining us. The mixed band of intrepid is finally ready to go and the 10.30 kick off has by now become 10.50. But what a turnout. We in Gods country can usually attract a good crowd and together with invited "strangers" because we are an amenable lot, the vehicles present were a little varied. If you squint a lot a Mercedes SL, a Peerless, a pair of Healey BJ8s and a Daimler dart look just like a Spridget.

The route map was supplied to pre-arranged buffet lunch at the Stokesay Castle Hotel, Craven Arms. As arranged we picked the

unscheduled diversion, and also for those unfortunate enough to be immediately on our tail. Nevertheless the B4214 Bromyard to Tenbury Wells is a superb Spridgety road so I think we were redeemed to some extent.

Those who followed the map passed through the town centres of Stourport, Tenbury, Ludlow and Craven Arms, since the objective was to demonstrate to as large a public as possible the strength of the Classic Car Movement and Midget and Sprite Club in particular. Posing in ones Pride and Joy was a bonus.

The buffet lunch, mostly taken outside in the continuing pleasant weather, was for most of us Jim, followed by a visit to Stokesay Castle an English Heritage fortified manor house which proved fascinating. I didn't care for the lack of central heating as was the norm in the 13th century but at least the stone and elm boarded floors didn't need carpeting nor did they need to worry about burst pipes.

The cultural shock was followed by a return run through Curve Dale, a greatly favoured valley between the Clue Hills and Winlock Edge via Bridgnorth, (more posing) to Chez (read shack) Hunter for tea and a variety of home made cake crafted by the MD. Didn't she do well ! Wide awake by then of course.

Geoff Hunter

Yorkshire Area Report

The glorious spring sunshine brought out the midgets (and the sprites) in April, when we got to see Ken's Mk I Midget "Little Red", along with Pete & Lou's Mk 3 Sprite "Ariel", both for the first time. Rob's paint job on his K-Midget is slowly progressing as well, with one side shiny and one side matt – doing all the work outside, maybe with the good spring weather by May he will have been able to finish the job! After the meeting we had an impromptu little Spridget drive south to Tadcaster to make the most of the lovely day.

Drive It Day saw six Spridgets come out to play on a glorious day, although unfortunately a weeping brake hose on Sebrina (only spotted the day before) annoyingly meant that we had to come in a "modern", safety first being paramount. It was great to meet up with Ian & Claire, John & Jeanette, Frank & Val, Harvey & Lesley, and Trevor & Pam, providing a colourful range of cars from frogeye to 1500. We were also joined by Harvey & Lesley's son in his rather large 1966 Dodge drag-racer, which made the Spridgets look even smaller than usual!

We started with a tasty carvery at the Royalty on Otley Chevin before an informal drive north to the privately owned Clifton Castle near Masham, which was holding a charitable open garden. This was a rare opportunity access some beautiful walks along the River



Dodge & Sprite

Ure which are normally out of bounds, and the homemade cupcakes were pretty good too. Geoff & Hilary in their frog, who had been chasing behind all day, caught up with us there.

Our next meeting is on Saturday 14th May at Ye Jolly Farmers Inn, Dalton near Thirsk, where we hope to see you. Their homemade pies are ace and so is the company!!!!

Some of you may also be interested to know that MGs on Track are holding a track day at Croft Circuit on Friday 22nd July. They traditionally welcome Spridgets to join their MG entries and you can find more details on their website at www.mgs-on-track.com.

Keep up to date with what's going on at <http://yorkshiremasc.blogspot.com/>

Sarah & Tim Saunders



Driving through Helperby

NW Area Report

Diane and I have, what I think is rather unjustified, a reputation of always turning up late for meetings. Therefore, for the April meet we decided to prove a point and planned get there extra early and also have a bite to eat.

So what happens? Almost everyone else had the same idea so we were still more or less last to arrive! I just couldn't believe it.

When we ordered our food we were told rather apologetically that there would be at least a 40 minute wait, is that all we thought – not bad going for the Kilton. You must bear in mind that the place was more or less empty. However, in true Kilton style it still took over 2 hours before we had finished eating, how on earth they stay in business is beyond me.

One of the things the NW area had mused over for a while was buying an 'event shelter' (gazebo with a domed roof) to take with us to events. Every one was willing to contribute so we took the plunge and bought one. In fact the response to fund this was so good we went one step further and also bought a club sail banner – it looks really good and professional. We are very much in danger of looking like a proper club now!

On 16th April we went to a classic car show organised by Bridgemere Garden World near Nantwich. Originally we had 12 cars lined up to go but unfortunately 3 had to pull out; Mike D had gearbox problems, Janet and Rob



were on baby duty and Neil and Shelly had to call off. Mind you, with Neil not going then at least I didn't have to take the dust sheet I had to cover up his MGB GT! Unfortunately his Frogeye is off the road at the moment while he repairs the spring hangers.

We met at the Little Chef near Barthomley, from here we drove in procession to the garden centre with Lee leading the way. He was best choice to go first as his exhaust is so noisy that there is no way we can lose him.

Those present were Ian and Jane (yes he did have the top down, unbelievable I know but you will have to trust on this – it really did happen!), Pete, Lee, Andrew, Mark, Dennis and Daniel, Fraser and Lesley, Bernie and Lynne, and of course me. Diane didn't go, she had two of the grandkids all day and initially I was going to stay at home with her but she very kindly said I could go to the show – now call me suspicious but I can't help thinking that it will be pay back time at some point, is she planning something?

After a short run we duly arrived, parked up and hoisted our new banner then just relaxed and chatted all day in the glorious sunshine, very nice.



Bridgemere show line up

There were quite a few cars, plus bikes, commercial vehicles, military vehicles and stationary engines on display.

Now, I am not sure if it's just me missing something here, but what is the point of the stationary engines? The owners unload them, start them up and leave them running all day just to annoy anyone who just happens to be within earshot – please someone tell me what is the point behind these.

Talking of pointless things, I'm not sure I understand the attraction of driving around the Cheshire roads in a Jeep fitted with a rocket launcher or machine gun, not to mention middle aged couples walking round in military uniform, usually American. But hey ho, I suppose it's a good job that we are not all the same.

Now I don't really want to be in danger of offending anyone (what do you mean it doesn't normally bother me) so will stop before I go on to mention the people who own big American cars and dress like cowboys.

Anyway, we had a really good day, plenty to see and the weather was good. We were given some vouchers to use in the restaurant, enough for a coffee.

For the May meeting we are having a tech talk on rebuilding a gearbox.

Finally, just to give you the heads up, the June meeting will not be at the Kilton but once again will be at The Plough at Euxton (near Leyland / Chorley, just off M6 junction 28)

See you at the Kilton on 11th May.

Les

Yesteryear Run 16th April 2011



Chris & Mary Flinders in their Midget

Remembering last year, we made sure our umbrella was onboard the frog and headed for the 09:30 start at Cottenham village green to join 300+ other vehicles for the annual charity run through the villages of North Cams.

From a Scot 'Flying Squirrel' to a Beyer Peacock steam lorry, not to mention 4 frogs including new member Stuart Thompson in his 1959 frog-eye plus Chris/Mary Flinders in their MG midget (see photo).

Mary was the first to support the roadside vendors, something we should have done since our coffee flask had discharged most of its contents into the cockpit en route.

Things were hotting up, partly to do with delays in progress but mostly the unfamiliar

sunshine, causing petrol evaporation to a several cars. A Silver Shadow we were following in Swavesey just before lunch, was making strange noises when suddenly it back fired so violently that Maggie quite jumped in shock and we were engulfed in a cloud of fumes. Our friend driving his GT6 for the first time had to stop frequently with carburetion problems and Ray Smith in his Bently special also had to change plugs do to overheating.

However, real ale came to the rescue to wash down the fumes and quench the thirst, as MAGPAS organisers once again arranged the fine Tring Blond Bitter.

In Long Stanton we converted three people to the joys of Spridgely things, by taking them on a detour, admittedly they were only aged ten, nine and eight, but hey, new blood!

The numbers of enthusiastic spectators along the route was quite impressive and no doubt attributed to the glorious weather as well as the cavalcade, and worthy cause.

We hope that donations this year will be a record to top last years figure of £14K bringing the total over the 18 years to approx £140K helping this great voluntary scheme for emergency medical services in the community to continue.

Many thanks to the dedicated organisers of the event giving pleasure and benefit to many.

Graham Kirkup

SS&NB Report

Firstly a big CONGRATULATION to Gary and Lois on their recent wedding from the SS&NB area. We wish you every happiness and a wonderful future together.

Well I started April with great trepidation... all due to the change of venue for our monthly club night, would anyone turn up? Had anyone noticed the change of venue in last month's MASCOT? Would they like it better than our usual venue?

With these worries, I set out not knowing what to expect, and was in fact running late, not a great start to the night! But on arrival I was greeted by a car park with Spridgets in it. In fact this was one of our best attended meetings that I can recall, we had 15 Spridgeteers present.

The staff made us feel very welcome and we weren't frowned upon for grouping tables together, in fact the only distractions came from having a large television on showing some football match or other.

A vote was taken and it was decided to make the Nether Whitacre Ex-service and social club our new venue (full details in the front of MASCOT).

Andy had turned up prepared with a list of possible events for us to attend as an area group and was going to register us a space at the Catton Hall classic event on May 1st. Geoff Hunter from Warwickshire had emailed



Austin in the K Series

me inviting us to join his group for a run on April 17th Drive your Classic day. I will have more details of these two events next month.

So hopefully we will see some of you out and about in the coming month and it will give me something more substantial to write along with some pictures (the only one I could find this month is 11 month old Austin getting to grips with the K-Midget, I'm just glad that he can't reach the pedals!)

John Collins

Mail to: green_mx5@hotmail.com

Tel: 07970 213084

Market Place

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

For sale: Sprite MK1 Radiator, sound £35. 1958 original sidescreens none perspex, celluloid not cracked, £20 pair.
Contact Reg, 01889 271037 (Staffs).

For sale: Spridget 1275 cc engine, good oil pressure, not unleaded, c/w flywheel but not carbs, starter motor etc – Can be heard running and driven if you are quick! £400.00 ono.

**John Platt Tel 01789 488321/
Email: johnplatt1275@btinternet.com
(Warwickshire)**

For sale: Ashley hardtop for Mk2 Midget and Mk3 Sprite. '64to '66. Stow away hood type cars. Recently restored with new seals, painted BRG two pack paint, also headlining in black brushed nylon. All bright work painted satin black. Can be seen on page 31 of the March 2011 MASCOT, or email me for pics. Offers in excess of £300.

Phone 07976 780828.

Email bernie.higginson@virginmedia.com

Warwickshire Report



On the Mountain Road

This may not be the title for this area much longer; as discussions at our last meeting indicated that it does not represent our membership and among the options considered were WWW - Warwickshire, Worcestershire and West Midlands and The Heart of England, as the Tourist Office describes us.

Once Christmas was over, my thoughts turned to the first run of the season, which Chris and I have traditionally organised. This involves much looking at maps and use of the internet, in particular Google Maps. The aim is to find a distance which can be travelled in a day, with the possibility of a stop that would include something of interest to investigate. Also the ability to travel along scenic, country roads, rather than main roads, with motorways definitely excluded. I also try to find an area that, to my knowledge, the group has not explored before. As we have tended to go south, north or west, I considered an eastern direction with Suffolk and Norfolk in mind, but concerned that the distance might be too great, finally settled on Pembrokeshire in Wales. The date this year was an issue, as Easter falls at the time we usually go and when mid-March was decided upon, the title Wet and Wild Wales quickly followed.

Planning then began in earnest and my computer, with Google maps, became my best friend. Chris and I had travelled along the Elan Valley and the mountain pass to Aberystwyth before and felt that it was such a spectacular and beautiful drive, with Red Kites

flying above a common feature, that we would use this route as the basis of our run. Having outlined a route, an overnight venue has to be found. Having located possible venues on line, I phone the hotels directly, as the response I receive to my call makes all the difference. If they are friendly, accommodating and offer us a reasonable deal for dinner, bed and breakfast, they win the selection process. I always work on the basis of 12 cars with 24 people, although this year we were 14 cars, and in previous years have had more. The group is then given the details of the hotel and those that wish to join the trip make their own booking and let us know they are coming.

The route then has to be finalised for both days. Tourist information sites are a useful source of information for interesting places and areas that are worth driving through and I plot my route on Google accordingly. "Comfort stops" help prevent tiredness, hence improving safety but, as we are driving in the middle of the countryside, venues need to be organised to ensure they are open and prepared for a sudden influx of people. Using Google timing and search engine I find venues at appropriate intervals and, as with the hotel, the phone call makes the difference. A general order or a pre-order from their menu is usually required, but this means that they have the food ready for our arrival and time is not lost waiting for service. Phone calls can warn venues of delays or modifications to timing, but a firm booking does mean people need to turn up. With venues in place, and the route finalised, the route map has to be



Chris and Sheila in the Trees

written. Google street view enables this to be more accurate as you can check roads, sign posts and the appearance of turnings without going there. The final stage of planning is to drive the route to check the accuracy of route details and we make a weekend of it, joined by Alan and Rosemary, visiting all the venues and staying at the hotel. The drive directions proved completely accurate, but mileages needed altering, and some local features to help identify turnings were added.

The Saturday of the trip was sunny and warm and the title “Wet and Wild Wales” seemed inappropriate and, with spring flowers in full bloom, the “Daffodil Drive” would have been better. The route took us from Droitwich, to Shobdon, where coffee awaited us and from there across country to Rhayader and along the Elan Valley. With 14 cars, we split up into two groups of seven, and while our group stopped for a photo opportunity, the others passed not noticing us. We, naturally, expected to arrive at the lunch stop after them, but were concerned when we arrived first without passing them. However, although Alan and Rosemary had driven the route before, one tight turning had been missed, which left out a hilly wooded area and took a longer route.

After lunch, we drove to the Georgian fishing Village of Aberaeron. Unfortunately, for Alan Corbett, his alternator wasn't working and his battery was flat. He should have come in his Sprite instead of his MGC. After the usual helpful advice, a loose lead was replaced and the alternator hit with a hammer, but not beaten into submission, so Alan's trip to Aberaeron involved borrowing a battery booster to get his car going and buying a battery charger to replenish the batteries overnight. From Aberaeron, we headed to the hotel to arrive in time to watch the England versus Ireland rugby match, with the Welsh all cheering for Ireland, or have a swim in the spa before dinner.

By Sunday, the weather was more typical of my expectations of the Welsh climate and we were greeted with a brisk, cold wind and rain, precisely “Wet and Wild Wales”! We set off in good time to arrive in Solva for coffee at the expected hour. Unfortunately, even before leaving Cardigan, Alan Couch's car broke down and the second group was delayed while the problem was tackled. It proved to be the condenser failing, but this took a long time to sort out and they headed straight to the lunch stop. Group one continued on the



Tim and Yvonne in the Elan Valley

proposed route, keeping in touch with the progress of the road side repairs by phone, as and when mobile signals allowed. The route took us across the moorlands of the Preselis Mountains, which are really large hills with the blue stone boulders, used to build Stonehenge, strewn around. The scenery here is quite magnificent, unfortunately, we were driving through fog and none of it could be seen. Coffee in Solva was in an art gallery/coffee shop and the owner had cleared space in the gallery and put out more chairs to accommodate the large group she was expecting, and, fortunately, was very understanding about the fact that a breakdown had prevented half the group from turning up.

Lunch in the Red Lion, Llangadog, is to be recommended for the quality of the food, they have won prizes for it. Our food had been pre-ordered and was ready for our arrival, with a section of the restaurant set aside for us. The group split up at this point, missing out the drive through the Brecon and cross country to Monmouth. Only 3 cars followed us to our final stop at the Travellers Rest, where again an area had been reserved for the large group they were expecting to turn up and generously accepted that there were only eight of us. Unfortunately, the final part of the run was not without incidence either, as Jim's car refused to pull when under load, and the roads were very hilly. A new coil and a check on connections solved the problem. Chris' car also developed a rattle from its dynamo, which was concerning but not a problem, and has since been corrected. A final accolade must go to Andy and Kate for being the only couple, apart from Chris and I, to complete the entire route. My thanks also to Yvonne Stancombe for her picture of Chris and I in the trees.

Sheila Yates

Surrey Area

A foggy night did not put off the more hardy members of Surrey and Sussex groups. None so hardy as Alex & Jess who arrived well wrapped up but with hood stowed on the Frogeye. I had cheated and turned out in the Sebring Coupe rep with heater and a hard top to ward off the cold. Old age is beckoning - beckoning I said! The frogeye crew have more youth on their side. It was handy that they brought the Frogeye along as Steve Casson could look at, and compare bonnet hinges, twixt Frogeye and Sebring Coupe rep, as he weights up what to do with his Sebring rep that is currently undergoing construction. What style will he choose Archers or Tifosi Rana? With three such derivatives, at various stages of completion, throughout Kent and Surrey sections they will soon be more common than the original frogeyes.

Steve, who is also a rep for Southern Austin Healey Club as well as being a MASC member, and I were able to discuss a joint visit, scheduled for Saturday 30th April, to a private motor museum - The Lewis Collection, at Churt, near Haslemere, in Surrey, that will follow a drive in from Newlands Corner. Although, combined, there are some forty cars going there are still places available. A set donation will be required for Help for Heroes charity. Contact me for more details if you want to attend.

Sussex group says he? Yes three couples paid visit from Sussex. David (Sussex rep) & Linda Southcott had come to pick up a stand that I had made for supporting their area sail on hard ground. Jeff Snell & Elsa had come to promote the Ardingly Show, at Haywards Heath, West Sussex, taking place over the weekend of 9 / 10 July. This show is usually excellent for anyone willing to make the effort and will be a good opportunity for Sussex / Surrey / Kent to hoist there new MASC sails. Anyone from Hants or HCNW fancy making the trip? Camping is possible. Then Chris Harding and Sue arrived in Sue's very nice M.G. (dare I say it ... BGT). Chris is a long time Surrey member who lives in Sussex and now also attends Sussex Area meets as well. It is hard to define who belongs to what area as Sussex / Surrey / Kent so often mix and mingle. Sue & Jim made a brave effort despite health issues. Jim seemed to take



Surrey Girls plan Laon route

ages, coming from the car, in finding the bar. Never known that before! Perhaps a pause to wish all of our members, who are unfortunate to be suffering poor health or are in hospital at this time, a big Get Well Soon, as Surrey, particularly, is currently blighted by serious illnesses which prompted Mike Gorman to attend alone.

Col & Nay; Pete & Hils, Alex & Jess were soon huddled around a map of France planning their trip to the Laon Classique and onward visit to the American D Day beaches near Caen . Just after this meeting I forwarded, to Hils, an invite, from Aude Evrard of our French "Twin", Amicale Spridget, to meet up for the duration of the Laon event. This is one of several invitations that I have recently received from Amicale Spridget to meet up in France for events. We are hoping to dine with then again in September (10-20) when the Miglia Tour (see Jan MASCOT for advert) ,that I have organised, stops off at Angouleme for the Circuit des Remparts motor race. It is still possible to grab an entry on that tour. Amicale Spridget have an excellent website, maintained by their president Franck Thibaud at www.spridget.free.fr. Since our 'twinning' was announced some of the site is captioned in English. With luck by the time this report gets into MASCOT our own NEW website, constructed and maintained by HCNW member Richard Mumford will be up and running although for the immediate future, at least, it is expected to be a "work in progress".

For those of you interested in Sebring Sprites Kent MASC member Martin Ingall has recently updated his website www.sebringsprite.com

Alan Anstead

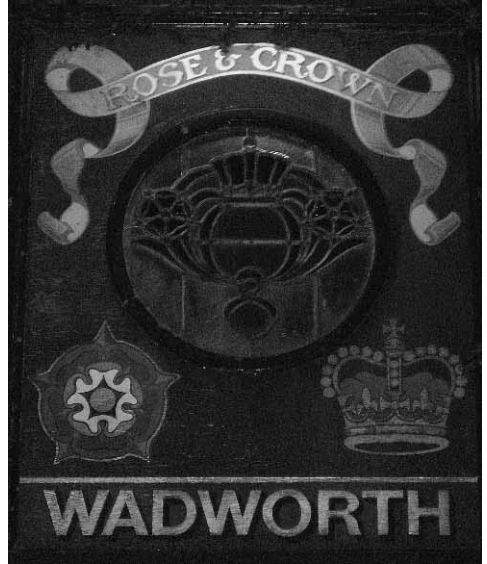
Bristol Area Report

Our regular gathering on the second Wednesday in the month saw most of our usual regulars with the notable exception of our area rep, who decided he'd rather be on holiday than lead his merry men on the most important evening of the month. Perhaps this was just as well considering he was banished to the naughty table at our last meeting. The disciplinarian that he is, my punishment for providing the naughty table sign was to have to write the report for this month, so no escape for me. Andy Cross had obviously learnt his lesson and this time turned up in his ever reliable and trusty MKI Sprite. Others attending included Alan Lo, Jeff Allen, Colin Gale and Trevor Large. So with Andy who had the only Spridget thing present, to put the rest of us on the naughty table would've left Andy having a conversation with himself all evening.

Following on from last year, I'm still having engine problems with my MKII MG. Last summer Andy very generously (perhaps foolishly) volunteered to take a look at it and ended up having to replace the head gasket. Ultimately this was not the root cause of the problem and the irregular and erratic engine running has persisted. It needs further methodical, careful and considered investigation before I finally take a big stick to it à la Basil Fawlty. Alan reported that he had recently experienced a problem with his car; he couldn't get the spot lights to come on. Alan surmised the wiring or switch must be at fault but then further investigations revealed he'd forgotten to remove the spot light covers – ah, problem solved.



Andy brings his trusty Sprite



Recently the weather has improved markedly but, as is the norm for our Bristol Area meetings, the clouds had gathered and inevitably it was another wet evening. To overcome this very frequent occurrence we may have to move our monthly meetings to the last Sunday in the month thus avoiding the rain that persists on each second Wednesday. That said we're all looking forward to the Easter break and the opportunity (hopefully) for a drive in the spring weather.

We intend to have a presence at the Wheel Nuts fundraising classic car show at Rose School, Stroud in early May. I am told this is quite a large car show and although local, not one some of us were familiar with. If anyone else is interested in coming along then please get in touch for registration details.

If you're interested in joining us at the Rose and Crown, Pucklechurch then please come along on the second Wednesday of the month and we'll make you most welcome, and don't worry if you are not yet a member or haven't got your Spridget with you as we're always glad to meet anyone who shares an interest in these great little cars.

Philip Sellen
1153

Kent Area

What better opportunity could there be than Sunday 27th March 2011 to drive a Spridget. Beautiful sunshine and blue skies over Kent! Daffodils lining the roadside and in places the first primroses. The weather certainly contributed to a diverse collection of cars brought along to the monthly meet at the Angel, Addington Green. We assembled a good cross section of Spridgets from Frogeyes to 1500s, with and without the rubber bumpers.

Mel & Barb were running in a new engine. Machined by Surrey member Col Carpenter and assembled by Mel it sounded sweet. Darren & Tracey blew their car's head gasket en route so returned home to get their fire breathing monster supercar Ultima. Ron turned up with grubby hands having had to stop en route to sort a fueling problem and Martin Ingall, in JJO, his well known Sebring rep was another with running problems. Fuel? Ignition? Neville & Pam Plummer could not even get their IOW Frogeye out of the garage as it had brake problems. Ah! The joys of old car motoring.



Smooth Painted
Spridget dashboard



Front of house

Instead of collating who comes to meets the most in a Spridget and an annual prize giving at our Christmas Meal perhaps I should collate who breaks down the most with a prize of a new set of spanners.

Ten Spridgets made it to the meet so "well done" to those. The other non Spridget was a Hillman Minx belonging to Sussex rep David & Linda Southcott. A Maserati Bora drove into the car park but did not stop and a local Ferrari came up the lane beside the pub.

No names but a "well done" too to two members that made the effort, came without their Spridgets, being temporarily unable to get in them due to leg injuries.

For those wanting a challenge next time turn left out of the pub and immediately right at the crossroad taking the direction through Trossley toward Meopham and experience 'the hill'.

Alan Anstead

Kent and Surrey Rep

Reps Rep to National Committee

Mail to alan.anstead@btopenworld.com

Tel: 01322-384050

P.S. Would all area reps please ensure that I have current contact details.



Mel's 1500, Ron's Sprite and David's Hillman

Wiltshire Area



Spridgets on the Daffodil Run

At the recent March meeting at the Barge at Seend, we attracted 3 Sprites, all with tops down and Colin in his new van. Terry Horler won the prize for the coldest hands having driven all the way from Bris'l into deepest Wiltshire. A very pleasant evening was had by all with lots of chat about Spridgely things, Andy's recent track day at Hullavington and Colin's hillclimb plans for this year. Colin also told us all about chicken keeping!!

It is planned to have a combined Wiltshire/Bristol get together at The Vine Tree at Norton, (between Malmesbury and Chippenham) www.thevinetree.co.uk on Thursday May 19th from 7pm onwards. All are invited, bring something old, even the wife! It is also hoped to have a navigation run later in the summer in the West Wiltshire area.

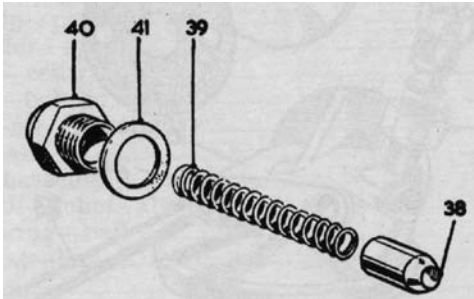
Dave Hansford

Ed's note: I dread to think how the "Coldest Hands" competition was judged!

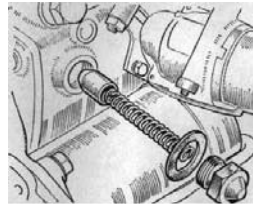
Oil

I have a soft spot for Morris Minor vans, usually in an 'orphan' state. I stripped the engine to renew crankshaft bearings, piston rings, oil pump and timing chain etc. (why do people say "Oh timing chain rattle, they all do that" when it is quite straightforward to replace?)

Anyway, having done all this I was cranking the engine on the key after the rebuild with the plugs out waiting for the oil pressure light to go out and yes I had primed the oil pump, but the oil light stayed on. After the obligatory trip indoors to moan about the situation I thought about the oil pressure relief valve.



38. Oil Release Valve. 39. Valve Spring.
40. Valve Cap. 41. Cap Nut Washer.



Location on the engine

(Behind the big blanking bung (40) just to the rear of the distributor) I had not disturbed this and had been using the van prior to the engine strip with no problems, but thought it was worth checking. On removal there was a deep score all along one side of the plunger and general lighter scoring, causing the plunger to stick. After a light cleaning with WD40 and fine wet & dry of the gallery, I fitted a new plunger (38) and spring (39) having primed the gallery with oil. This cured the problem and the oil light went more or less straight out. Spark plugs back in and away we go. This may seem an obvious thing to check in hindsight, but in future I would check this as a matter of course.

When I was an apprentice back in the '70s, a common 'Bodge' was to take the spring out behind the relief valve and increase the tension to get the oil pressure to read higher on the pressure gauge fitted to Minis, Riley Elfs, and Austin 1800s etc. Happy Days!

Adrian Mills

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On the 22 / 23 & 24th July 2011 we will be holding our Grand International gathering at the fabulous Silverstone Classic with heavily discounted tickets, dedicated MASC infield parking, access to everything and a parade lap of the track for our cars, most likely on the Sunday (day to be confirmed) to celebrate 50 years of the Midget. This year the Classic will be bigger and better than ever with 6000 classic sports cars on display, 800 additional classic sports and racing cars to get up close and personal with and we will be among the first to sample the delights of the newly improved track and amenities.

The event will include twenty races over the weekend, full access to the pits and grandstands, 100 or more trade stands and stalls, Silverstone's own shops, bars, eating places, two vintage rock concerts, a classical concert, access to the picnic in the paddock, air displays, a free Victorian fun fair, car auctions, art, antiques, all the things I have missed out and those that are still being planned. All this together with a chance to catch up with the guys from other areas of our great little club, compare notes and look at their Spridgets. The racing is a fabulous spectacle with cars (including famous F1) dating from a few years ago back to the 1930s and beyond and worth millions, and all really going for it, often with legends like Stirling Moss (and a host of other famous drivers) at the wheel. Google Silverstone Classic for more details and updates.

This is top-flight big time motoring fabulousness at its best and MASC has brought you the chance to be part of it at a bargain price. **DON'T MISS OUT.**

Car Clubs Ticket Offer

The matrix below explains the ticket prices that are available to our members during each ticketing period: Ticket Price Matrix

	Advance Tickets 1st April – 30th June 2011	On-The-Day Public Ticket Prices
Friday	£35	£40
Saturday	£45	£50
Sunday	£45	£50
2-Day Fri/Sat	£70	£80
2-Day Sat/Sun	£80	£90
3-Day Weekend	£95	£110

During Advanced Tickets periods MASC members will be able to purchase event tickets using the **MASC BOOKING CODE C11035** which will include 1 infield car pass for access to our display area and admission for up to two people in the car at the special heavily discounted prices.

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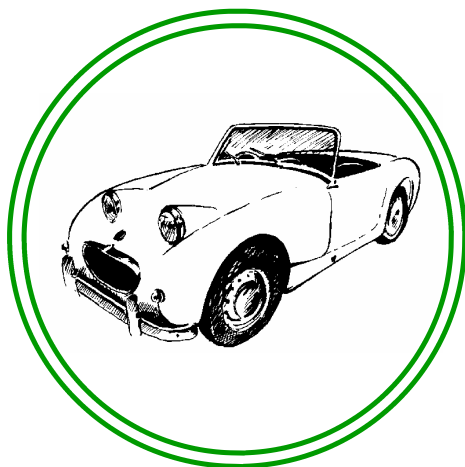


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