

August 2011

£2 No. 329

# Mascot

The Magazine  
of the  
Midget & Sprite  
Club



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

Compiled by 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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# August Editorial

As I've got older and wiser (my wife might disagree with that last bit), I've come to understand that the two phrases, **"good things often come in small packages"** and **"quality over quantity"** are generally correct and true. Yes there are always exceptions, any chocolate dessert being a good example. However, just because something is relatively small doesn't have to mean that it's any less effective.

Take the example of our cars. I know that I am preaching to the converted here, but how many times have you taken someone out for their first ride in a Midget or Sprite, only for them to be surprised at how well it goes (especially at speed around corners), how nippy or manoeuvrable they are and how exhilarating a normally mundane journey can suddenly become when wrapped inside a tight fitting Spridget, with what remains of your hair flowing in the breeze. Definitely a case of **"good things coming in small packages"**.

Another example of quality over quantity is our Midget & Sprite Club. Not the largest car club in the UK, certainly not the richest (although we seem to be doing OK, thank you very much), but definitely one of the most active and probably among the friendliest. The latter being one of the most common bits of feedback received by me from new members.

The same phrases can also be attributed to professional racing drivers. While there are some taller exceptions (a regular and valued contributor to these pages instantly comes to mind), most, due to the weight limitations involved and the confines of their working environment tend to be relatively diminutive. One name and possibly the most famous of all certainly fits the description above, Sir Stirling Moss OBE.

Sir Stirling who raced from 1948 to 1962, won 212 of the 529 races he entered, including 16 Formula One Grands Prix. He sometimes competed in as many as 62 races in a single year and drove 84 different makes of car over the course of his racing career, including Lotus, Vanwall, Maserati, Jaguar, Ferrari, Porsche and, as we know, Austin Healey Sprites. So it was with some sadness while I listened on Radio Le Mans on the 9 June this year during the Legends qualifying session, I heard Sir Stirling Moss announced his retirement from racing. Sad but also proud that I had been there to witness the event.

MASCOT would like to send its thanks and best wishes to Sir Stirling in his (probably very busy) retirement. Surely a prime example of a **good thing coming in a small package**.

Have a great month

**Gary (only 5'5") & Gaps**

**The deadline for articles and reports for inclusion in next month's magazine is Friday the 12th of August.**



Stirling Moss at Sebring in 1962  
©Tom Bigelow

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Cover image: East Anglia areas Malcolm & Linda George's recent Sprite trip to the south of France

# 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.



## The Midget & Sprite Club on Facebook



In recent years classic car clubs have been experiencing a reduction in membership numbers. The Midget & Sprite is one of the few clubs that has been able to buck this trend with an annual increase in membership year on year. This doesn't just happen by accident and there are many contributing factors such as advertising, a highly visible presence at car shows and now with our updated website at [www.midgetandspriteclub.com](http://www.midgetandspriteclub.com)

The club has also recently been experimenting with another outlet via the World Wide Web. Most of you will have heard of Facebook, but what is it? Facebook is a social networking service and website launched in February 2004, And as of July 2011, Facebook had more than 750 million active users who can create a personal profile, add other users as friends, post

photographs and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. While this may be of little interest to many members, it is seen by those who use it as a very valuable communication tool. It seems particularly popular with younger people and is therefore an ideal way for the club to reach out to potential new younger members, which is essential if the club wishes to continue moving forward.

If you use Facebook why not log on to the [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and type in Midget and Sprite Club. Have a wander around the page and leave a message.

# Club Nights

- 1st Tuesday **Essex Area** – Now meet at **The Bell**, Beckenham Road, Tolleshunt Major, CM9 8LL. For further details contact Jane Gates Tel: 01255830 509 or email: [jgjanegates257@googlemail.com](mailto:jgjanegates257@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](mailto:garylazarus@blueyonder.co.uk)
- 1st Wednesday **South Staffs & Birmingham** – Meet at **Whitacre Ex-Service & Social Club**, 66 Station Road, Nether Whitacre, Coleshill, Birmingham, West Midlands. B46 2EH, 8.30-8.45pm  
Contact: John Collins, Tel: 07970 213084 email: [green\\_mx5@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ilc@bgs.ac.uk)
- 2nd Wednesday **Heart of England, covers Worcs, Warks, West Midlands and surrounding areas** – 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://yorkshireremasc.blogspot.com/>
- 3rd Monday **Dorset** – Meet at **St. Peter's Finger**, Lytchett Minster, Poole, BH16 6JE 7.30pm
- 3rd Tuesday **Scotland** – Meet at Holiday Express, Keith Street, Hamilton 8:00pm. Contact John Pardo on 01698 814791
- 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](mailto:alan.anstead@btopenworld.com)
- 4th Thursday **Sussex** – Meet at **Selsey Arms**, Coolham, RH13 8QJ from 19:00. Contact David Southcott at [dandsouthcott@btinternet.com](mailto:dandsouthcott@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:david@hill.be)
- Northern Ireland [robertholmes25@hotmail.com](mailto:robertholmes25@hotmail.com). If enough interest, will arrange a meeting.

# Club Website

www.midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

**Members only pages Password: Speedwell**

## Events

### From Richard Flynn & Webmaster Richard Mumford

#### August

- 7th Essex Area are having a trip to Lavenham. Anyone interested please contact Jane Gates on 01255 830509 or email [jgjanegates257@googlemail.com](mailto:jgjanegates257@googlemail.com)
- 7th Two events on the same day either join us at Bletchley Park classic car day contact Hubie for details (01733-212722) or join us on our stand at Ferry meadows BMC Rally near Peterborough. Contact Dave Dixon (01733-222810) or just turn up on the day and find us
- 13th East Anglia Treasure Hunt, Contact Chris (01480-880268)
- Sunday 14th Heart of England Cotswold Capers. Contact John Platt. [johnplatt1275@btinternet.com](mailto:johnplatt1275@btinternet.com)
- 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
- Monday 29th Heart of England Pershore Plum Fair. Contact Tim Storrer. [timslenham@hotmail.com](mailto:timslenham@hotmail.com)

#### September

- 4th East Anglia Visit the top secret Nuclear Bunker, contact Hubie (01733-212722)
- 10th – 20th MIGLIA 2011 For M.G. Midgets, Austin Healey Sprites, and derivatives only. For more details contact Alan Anstead Surrey / Kent Area Rep. [alan.anstead@btopenworld.com](mailto: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
- 18th East Anglia Mystery Tour Details from Nigel and Dianne (01954-789503)

#### October

- 15th East Anglia Bowling and Meal in Pidley 1700 details from Nigel and Dianne (01954-789503)
- 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 Join Heart of England group at the Classic Car Show at the NEC. Details from John Platt on
- To Sunday 13th 01789 488321 or email [john@platt2085.freemove.co.uk](mailto:john@platt2085.freemove.co.uk)
- 12th East Anglia we are all going to the dogs (Greyhounds that is) Contact Dave Dixon (01733-222810)

#### December

- 11th East Anglia Christmas meal (Sunday lunch) details from Dave Dixon on (01733-222810)

# New Members

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

4069	Ian West	Surrey	Midget Mk 1
4463	Alaster & Liz Sinker	Hampshire	Sprite Mk 3
4464	John Hutton	East Yorkshire	Sprite Mk 3
4465	Karl Seddon	West Sussex	Sprite Mk 2
4466	Belisarius & Maurice Blik	London	Sprite Mk 4
4467	Richard Barker & Claire Rees	Cambridgeshire	Midget Mk 3
4468	Jean-Claude Bargain	France	Midget Mk 2
4469	Matt & Sue Price	Worcestershire	Frogeye Sprite
4470	Dave & Katie Brown	Hertfordshire	Midget Mk 3 RWA
4471	James & Sheila Lee	Northants	Midget Mk 3/Sebring Sprite
4472	Elsa Sherwood	West Sussex	Austin Sprite
4473	Geoff Cookson	Lancashire	Frogeye Sprite
4474	John Richardson	Derbyshire	Sprite Mk 4
4475	Anneliese Appleby & Stephen Doidge	Herefordshire	Sprite Mk 4
4476	Myles & Sally Sutherland	Devon	Midget Mk 2



Matt & Sue Price's 1958 Frogeye taken the day that Matt bought it in 1986



Myles Sutherland Mk2 Midget



Geoff Cookson's Mk1 Sprite



Ian West's Mk1 Midget



Paul and George Cannon with their Heritage shelled 1967 Midget



John Hutton and Millie with his Mk3 Sprite

# Letters

## Sebring Sprite History

I was interested to see the little piece in last month's *MASCOT* (page 18) by Dave Hansford on both Le Mans and Stirling Moss. I thought I would just point out a connection he appears to have missed. The Sprite which Chris and Charlie Clegg were driving was S221, the actual car which Stirling practiced at Sebring before it developed a slipping clutch and he swapped to drive John Sprinzel's car, PMO 200. S221 is the only one of the Coupes to have had a pretty continuous race history throughout the intervening 50 years!

Cheers

**Martin Ingall**

[www.sebringssprite.com](mailto:www.sebringssprite.com)

*Many thanks Martin. John Sprinzel's article about Sir Stirling Moss (page 18 and 19 of this month's magazine) also mentions this. MASCOT is very lucky to have such experts on hand to expand on and clarify the history of our Spridgets.*

Gary

## Mk1 Sprite Starter Bracket



Starter solenoid bracket is in circle that I need the dimension for

I'm in the process of rebuilding a 1960 Austin Healey Sprite and have run into a major problem. I purchased the car disassembled and a trailer full of parts. The previous owner had installed a replacement battery and heater shelf, but the shelf did not have the starter bracket (part number HMP415046, which is no longer made or available) installed. I have

spent a great deal of time and contacted parts suppliers here in the United States and Europe to get the starter bracket or get the measurements of the bracket so I can make one. Lately I added getting the position measurement so I can also correctly measure the bracket in my Bugeye (Frogeye).

As of today I have been unable to get correct measurements and did a web search and found your site and contact information. I hope and pray that you can supply the starter bracket measurements or know someone who can.

Thanks from a fellow Sprite driver.

**John Sherrard**

[cobra.pilot33@gmail.com](mailto:cobra.pilot33@gmail.com)

## Practicality or Originality



The old rusty shell

Hi Gary

As a new member (joined at Midget50, Stamford), I would appreciate the views of other members concerning replacing all the rot of a 1965 Sprite – with a Heritage shell. Whilst I have a 1970 Midget (on the road), I also have a Sprite project vehicle, and to be very honest it requires new metal in all the usual places, plus a few more besides! After a thorough examination and the opportunity to take advantage of a second hand – but never used heritage shell – I have decided to transfer all the rest of this 1965 car into a 'new' body.

I feel sure that to some, this could be seen as sacrilege, and that one should always repair the original body but the picture of the green shell make objects look better than they really are!

I fully realise that, for example, the new shell is for post '66 cars, and has a slightly



The new Heritage shell

smaller cockpit – but an advantage is being able to use a later hood frame – easier to erect if required. Also, I can be certain of the structural strength of this body, and not having to worry about rust issues for the near future, and hopefully well beyond. Well, what do others think?

**John M Hutton**

**Letter received from Terry Horler**  
**See article pages 8 and 9 June issue of MASCOT**

I welcomed the explanation from the committee concerning the appointment of committee members and Directors as published in the July edition. As the Club is now a Limited Company we must comply with company law and procedures. However, the adoption of the Articles of Association, that now replaces the previous Club Constitution, brings about a significant change. As we now stand, there is no requirement to elect a committee if no more than 11 nominations are received. As such, a nominee only requires a member to propose their appointment to the committee. Hence, should no more than 11 nominations be received, we effectively have a 'non-elected' committee by the membership. In my book, this is not democratic. Certainly, this may be perfectly OK in company law and very cost effective and hassle free for the club administration and finances. My question is – Should we still

purport to be a Democratic Club?

I am not proposing that we can, or should, return to the 'old way' but I am concerned that we still claim to be 'democratic' when perhaps, a more appropriate title could be sought or we just drop any reference to 'democratic' altogether. Having said that, I for one am extremely grateful to those members of the club who volunteer to become committee members and then work hard to ensure that the club represents its member's best interests.

In this respect, I believe we all have a lot to be grateful for. We have had a very good committee since becoming a Limited Company, shame we have not been able to endorse this with our vote, which we may seldom have the opportunity to exercise in future.

**Terry Horler**

**Replica Parts**

Hello

The article "On Replica Parts" in the June MASCOT reminded me of how I recently bought replacement front wheel brake cylinders from AH Spares. Although the parts are made by a reputable supplier (Q&H), the mounting part of the cylinders was slightly too big, causing the shoes not to fully retract. I informed AH Spares, but got no response.

On another note, I am aiming to fit seat belts to my MKII Sprite. Although I have the mounting holes on the inner sills and tunnel, the ones on the rear wheel arches have been welded up. To be sure that I drill the holes in the right place, I was wondering if somebody would be kind enough to email me a picture of the mounting points on their arches.

Many thanks

**Jerry Diccox**  
 sprite@diccox.co.uk

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**If you have any questions or opinions which you wish to have printed in MASCOT, please send them to me:**  
 editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk

**Or by post to: Gary Lazarus, 40B Hungerford Road, London. N7 9LP UK.**

# My Old Spridget



I came across some old photos of my original Sprite back in the '60s and '70s. We upgraded from our first car, an old Morris Minor, to an Old English White Mk IV Sprite in about 1968. It was about 18 months old and our pride and joy. We were keen campers and used to carry a large ridge tent on the luggage rack. This was always a source of interest when we pitched camp as the tent when erected easily dwarfed the Sprite.

The trusty car LOC 228F was named Lucy by my wife Sybil and it took us on many continental holidays and the picture is taken on a trip to Norway when we crossed the Channel and just drove North through Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and finally to the fjords of Norway. It was the days before the roads up there were asphalted and if you were travelling just behind the road graders then the roads were quite smooth otherwise they were a real challenge. Other trips took us into France and we followed the Rhine down to the Moselle as well as numerous trips to the Lake District.

As was often the case, the arrival of our daughter saw us part with Lucy in 1974 and it

was not until 1995 did we replace it with our current Tartan Red Mk IV (no name). We have not perhaps ventured so far afield in this one but, even so, we have had many enjoyable European trips together with other members of the club.

How about having a spot for old photos for those who had one back in their youth? I attach one of a trip we made to Norway in 1971 as a sample.

**Stuart Watson**  
Heart of England Area

*Ed's note*

*That's an excellent idea. So if anyone would like their old Sprite or Midget to once again see the light of day, why not email a photo to me here at MASCOT editor@midgetandspriteclub.co.uk or by post to 40B Hungerford Road, London. N7 9LP*

*I have checked and it seems that "LOC 228F" was last taxed up until 1st of November 1987 and had been repainted green at the time.*

Gary

# Look what has just turned up (after 30 years)

For those of you, who know me well; will know my interest in Midgets goes back over 30 years, having owned a Sprite Mk4, Midget Mk3 and now a Frogeye Sprite.

My story starts way back in the late seventies, when we wore flared trousers and our hair long, as a trainee Civil Engineer I traded in my Mk2 Cortina for a one owner low mileage Austin Healey Sprite Mk4 in Snowberry White. Unfortunately when I bought it the car was showing its age a little and had to undergo a partial restoration (new doors, sills, repaired panels, welding in the usual places, new hood and a gleaming coat of Snowberry white paint) This all happened whilst I was studying for my 'finals' and didn't require daily transport. Unfortunately one evening in August 1980 (only weeks after completion) I was involved in a head-on collision with a large Triumph 2.5 litre saloon at a set of traffic lights in Ferndown, the Sprite was seriously damaged and deemed to be an insurance write-off. After lengthy legal proceedings, the car was towed away for scrap; by this time in was February 1981. I often wondered about the Sprite. Was it being restored or did it go to the great scrap yard in the sky? A cold call in the mid eighties, led me to believe it might be being restored by a chap in Lyme Regis, but further calls failed to contact him, so I feared the worst.



Showing original accident damage

During the late eighties and the early nineties my quest continued, I contacted the Austin Healey register, MG Owners Club and a number of other clubs and tried to locate NFJ 218G, with no success.

When I returned to the classic car scene in 1999 (with a Mk3 Midnight Blue Midget) following marriage, mortgage, children and a 'mid-life' crisis, I again went on the hunt for my old Sprite. Now as a member and area rep for the Midget & Sprite Club, I contacted Club anorak and good friend Dave Symes

who was the national data handler for the Club and together we conducted a number of thorough searches for the car, but no record of its existence could be found. Sadly my once cherished Sprite had passed to the other side.

Moving on many years, to January 2011, imagine my utter shock when I opened the newly delivered MASCOT to find in the 'Members cars' feature a picture of a white Mk4 Sprite looking just like my old car, further investigation showed it was NFJ 218G. The car was now owned by Craig Tarrant from Oxfordshire and he had just completed a full restoration. I eventually made contact with Craig, with help from the club and passed on the 'file' I still had on the car. (After 30 years – I was optimistic I would find the car eventually). Items included in the 'file' were:-

- Original bill of sale, from a dealership in Plymouth.
- Service history, up to the car's demise.
- Stamped service book.
- Photos of accident damage.
- Post restoration photos. (1st time)

All of which Craig was so pleased to accept, making the car's history file and provenance complete.



The Sprite today under Craig's ownership

I have often read those articles in the classic car magazines about tracing 'your' old car and wondered does anybody have any success, well now I know. It just shows if you are looking for your old classic car, never give up, it may well be out there somewhere and if you don't find it, it may well find you!

**Pete Downton, Membership no. 2255**

PS I do hope that Craig and I can meet up soon, so that I can at least have a photo of me and the car again, hopefully we will get an opportunity this season.

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# Mutual Assistance Directory

I seem to be a bit of an itinerant in this Magazine having taken on a couple of tasks in the past. And then having offered and promised David Hill (the previous guardian of MAD) to continue his good work I found myself deeply involved in Midget 50 with no time to give true justice to the Directory. Now that M50 has been and is now just a slightly damp memory I am up for the challenge.

I have heard the odd tale of cars not making it to Burghley (we all have problems which emerge a completely the wrong time do we not?) but as you may now have read in other pages (page 16 of last month's *MASCOT*), it is great to see how wonderful our members can be in rallying around and getting another back on the road, and in this case reaching Burghley on time. There may have been others though who were not so fortunate and I know that some just had to turn around and go back home. I myself have had the experience of calling out the AA man, not having the appropriate tool with me to correct an SU fault. In the end I repaired the Frog with the aid of the AA paperclip, he filled in the paperwork

and I went happily on my way. I am sure that MAD member would have been just as good and who may have then become a new friend.

So there you go, carry a copy of the Directory with you and in the event of a problem there may well be a member out there willing to help you in your hour of need and enable you to get you on your way. And of course if you don't mind adding your name to the Directory you would be very welcome – let me know (see my contact details below and in the front of *MASCOT*). And with our twinning with Amicale Spridget whose members may well be a long way from home. The more names that we have on the list the better. You never know you may want their help at some time.

The Mutual Assistance Directory can be downloaded from the member's section of the club's website [www.midgetandspriteclub.com](http://www.midgetandspriteclub.com)

**John Clark**

Tel: 01227 368 638 mob: 07971 153 556

email: [jrclark@sky.com](mailto:jrclark@sky.com)

PS Thanks again to David for all of your efforts over the years.

## Tips and Info from Notts



### Tips and info. 1

This reminder for me "to put pen to paper" was prompted by hearing that one of our local group recently had a mishap with his car falling off the jack and damaging the bodywork as it fell...

When I rebuilt my Sprite 11 years ago, one of the modifications I made whilst repairing the shell was to provide a more secure jacking point at the front of the car. Traditionally people jack up Spridgets under the "H"

section of the front chassis legs, inevitably leaving dents, or with the possibility of the car sliding off the jack. I had already decided to strengthen the centre of the "H" by welding a thicker plate across between the legs then struck upon the idea of welding a dome in the centre to locate my trolley jack. A suitable piece of metal can be obtained by cutting the top off an old towball.

Admittedly my shell was upside down at the time so making the job a little easier, but this improvement has been really useful.

Another tip which you can see in my photos is to glue a piece of carpet onto the top of the axle stands so as not to scratch paintwork should you wish to preserve it (note not to move the sofa in the lounge in case the wife finds out where the carpet came from...)

### Tips and info. 2

I've had this speed and ratio chart in my possession tucked away in the leaves of one of my manuals for a good while, and have now eventually copied it out as a spreadsheet although I've no idea where it originally came from so can't give credit.

# SPEEDS AND RATIOS

Car	Sprite Mk.	Standard cars					Modified cars		
		1 & 2	3	early 4	late 4	n/a	1	2	3
	Midget Mk.	1	2	early 3	late 3	4			
	engine:	948	1098	1275	1275	1500		A	A+
<b>Input:</b>									
	Tyre size	520 x 13	145 x 13	145 x 13	145 x 13	145 x 13	165/70 x 13	155 x 13	165/70 x 13
(check size available in tyre data)									
	No. of teeth on:								
	Back Axle crown wheel	38	38	38	39	41	38	41	41
	pinion	9	9	9	10	11	9	11	11
	Speedo Drive: 3rd motion shaft	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5
	take off pinion	13	13	13	13	21	13	13	19
	Speedo available/fitted	1472	1472	1472	1376	1000	1472	1376	900
	O/D ratio (if fitted)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.8
<b>Output:</b>									
	Wheel turns per mile	914	934	934	934	934	931	913	931
	Axle ratio:	4.22	4.22	4.22	3.9	3.73	4.22	3.73	3.73
	Speedo ratio:	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.29	0.38	0.38	0.26
	Speedo turns per mile	1484	1517	1517	1401	995	1512	1309	913
	MPH per 1000rpm	15.5	15.2	15.2	16.5	17.2	15.3	17.6	21.6
	RPM @ 70 mph (in top)	4502	4601	4601	4250	4061	4586	3970	3239
	% speedo error (NB -ve means reads slow)	1	3	3	2	-1	3	-5	1
	Notes:					20 and 22 tooth speedo drive take off pinions also available			

## Future tips to come....

How to get at your petrol tank sender without removing the tank.

Wire wheel rear axle dimensions.

Fitting a single carb without fouling the bonnet.

....as and when I get round to taking the photos.

**Ian Cooke, Nottingham and Derbyshire Area**

Many thanks Ian, we look forward to reading more "Tips from Notts"

## RBK 159 – Part 3

Words and images by Jeremy Walton



Home from home April to May 2010 where the Mike Rolls Dorset premises. RBK received a heart transplant via two donors and a pile of new parts

During the 1½ months it took to unite my original meltdown motor and a spares £100 unit from Nadder Valley Classics, I did some shopping outside the engine bay. Trawling the web, I settled on one of many Midlands-based parts suppliers, Frogeye Spares Company. They were obviously focussed on Frog rather than concentrating on Big Healeys, making Frog a bit player. Run by Jayne Foster, I found Frogeye Spares efficient, friendly and knowledgeable. No discounts were involved, and I knew none of those mentioned pre-Sprite, save Nadder Valley's owner, and that was a business contact rather than social.

Most expensive Frog spare outside the engine bay was £145 for a 7/8th inch dual master cylinder, which effectively served clutch and drum brakes. A new door lock was necessary, because the driver's portal kept springing open during lefthanders! I spent a total £374.57 extending to a new, laminated, windscreen and rubber surround.

A Brooklands duplicated owner's handbook proved worth £8.45, as is the same company's Workshop manual reprint. Bought that for £22.50 post free through Motoring Books of Bookham, via eBay. This pleased me after a frustrating afternoon grubbing through more expensive, illegibly oil-stained originals at a local classic car show.

I joined this club during that expensive pause for thought. My main contact at the club has been Gary Lazarus, but I have subsequently

bought and sold amongst members, a lot less stressful than eBay! After some weeks delay I received a £39 Heritage certificate for RBK 159. The editor of this magazine delivered more immediately useful information than Gaydon, but it was good to get confirmation of the Sprite's retention of the original registration even if it had lost the optional heater when I got it. Strangely the original locking petrol cap and windscreen washers had effectively survived, the tank cap cooperating with old new stock keys I bought as spares, the latter from a club member. The rev counter was a £4.50 option in 1958 and demanded new gears to work for a little over 1500 miles before it was finally rebuilt fixing a complete failure and earlier erratic readings. It finally flickered no more about the same time as the speedo expired in Spring 2011.

Exterior paint and interior trim description had changed since its first Hampshire home, the latter because Rawles Motorsport has a resident trimmer who does an excellent job. My only quibble in the past year's ownership is the demand for regular trim housekeeping; particularly the vertical driver's door trim and under dash stays. The fresh upright pillar card adhesion failed after it was moved to fix an electrical short that prevented the righthand rear flashers from doing their duty. I found the answer in a women's lingerie shop (double sided tape)... That's the story I'm sticking with until my case comes up...

It was May and 49 days after motor meltdown, before Sprite was ready to collect from Mike Rolls MG, after the expenditure of more than £2000. As a nosy owner/journalist, I had visited the 52-year old patient several times by then. Aside from the primary motor tasks, other tasks were tackled.

The combined Frogeye Spares reservoir for brake and clutch hydraulics was installed, which sorted the all-drum system for 11 months before something else failed. Repairing the speedometer was good value and legally necessary. It took only a replacement cable at this stage, but I've since learned how expensive original dials can be to repair or buy. Reassembling new and machined components around Nadder's pedigree block, a veteran of 70,000 spirited miles, required a substantial rebore, bringing bore sizes up to +0.60-inch and capacity closer to 1-litre. The red motor's crankshaft was reground and reinstalled.

At £250 the biggest individual motor charge was a resurfaced cylinder head to unleaded specification, actually that exchange motor's red head of MG 1100 ancestry. Harder valve seats and slightly (+1mm) oversize valves



*Just because it was back from hospital did not mean an end to elevated bonnet moments!*



*Here's roughly how the motor looks now, although we subsequently installed a shiny oil catch tank and associated rocker cover vent piping*

*Bores opened out to plus .60 thou, capacity now closer to 1-litre than 948cc*



*Instruments have been augmented, but the persistent problems in the first year have been the rev-counter, speedo and fuel gauge. Now all replaced or refurbished. Yes, the gear lever is new and there is another steering wheel to fit...*

cooperated with a 9.75:1 compression. It does not pink, the first high compression A series I've had to run without pinking, also stopping cleanly on the ignition key.

Next major items (£225) were a set of flat top AE pistons. The inherited home-brewed cylinder head with the combination of 1100 combustion chambers and 948 pistons had previously dropped compression below 7:1. No wonder it was so slow!

Including ancillary, non-motor issues, labour charges accounted for £850 of the final bill. Aside from stripping the damaged exchange engine and the Nadder original

there were associated machining charges to meet. Machining services swallowed a £180 significant share of reborn motor costs. Regrinding the red motor's crankshaft demanded £95: reboring the Nadder block asked a tenner less. Replacement big ends and main bearings accounted for another £73 and a new camshaft, profiled to Mini Cooper 998 showroom specification, cost £60. The rest of the engine parts bill was for vital smaller items. New head and ancillary gaskets, oil and water pumps, thermostat, timing chain with two O-ring tensioners, eight cam followers, gearbox and engine mounts, thrust washers, lock tabs, throttle (return) springs, assorted oil and fuel filters, plus the mounts for motor, gearbox and one for the exhaust system. That lot, and a few sundries like paint, brake fluid and oils, occupied some £200 of the £2,215.43p total.

The result was a revived A-series measuring 998cc with an anticipated minimum of 55 horsepower by 5800 rpm. We'll be checking that out on a local rolling road when I've recovered my financial sense of humour.

Some 1000 miles of running-in were worrying compared with my sixties memories of breaking-in new or rebuilt motorcycle motors. The original Sprite 4:1 diff allows only 45 mph at the rebuilt motor limit of 3000 rpm. That really is a crawl today, so I discovered a lot of the minor roads in a neighbourhood I had not explored. The other compensation at today's 97 octane fuel prices is 38-40 mpg.

*NEXT EPISODE: Running in becomes a memory and some pleasurable times ahead with a taller differential and other mods. RBK is booked into the 2011 Silverstone Classics infield parking, so I hope to meet more members before this is published.*

Mike Rolls, Fifehead Magdalen, Dorset. 01258 820337  
[www.mikerolls4mgs.co.uk](http://www.mikerolls4mgs.co.uk)  
 Nadder Valley Classics, Dinton, Salisbury. 01722 716052  
[www.naddervalleyclassics.co.uk](http://www.naddervalleyclassics.co.uk)  
 Rawles Motorsport Ltd, Alton, Hants. 01420 23212  
[www.Rawlesmotorsport.com](http://www.Rawlesmotorsport.com)  
 Frogeye Spares Company (Droitwich, Midlands)  
 01885 400791 [www.frogeyespares.co.uk](http://www.frogeyespares.co.uk)

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These new measures are in addition to the powers the police already have to seize an uninsured vehicle and fine the driver.

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**DO NOT CONTACT THE DVLA** as only your insurance provider can update your insurance details on the MID. If your vehicle registration number is not on the MID, contact your insurance provider immediately to get the MID updated.

From early 2011 a new law gives DVLA more power to combat keepers of vehicles that are not insured. DVLA will compare its records with details of vehicles on the MID (Motor Insurance database) – the UK's central record of vehicle insurance. If a vehicle does not have insurance and a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) has not been made, the registered keeper could face

- a fixed penalty of £100
- their vehicle being clamped, seized and disposed of, and
- a court prosecution with a maximum fine of £1000.

## What this means to you

- If you are keeping your vehicle for use on the road and it is not insured, **INSURE IT NOW**
- If you are keeping your vehicle off the road and it is not insured you must make a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN). If it is taxed you need to return the disk (including Nil disks) on a V14 form to the DVLA

MASCOT would like to thank Alan Anstead for passing on this information.

## How Many Left?

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

If you have ever wondered how many of our Spridley things remain on the roads of the UK today, the answer is now easily to hand. Just Google **'HOW MANY LEFT'** and check out the information compiled by Olly Smith from the DVLA database. I would point out that errors exist when looking at the figures for our cars. MG Midgets go back to the 'square rigger' days so you need to pull out all the numbers prior to 1961. There is both an Austin-Healey and Austin Sprite pages to check out. My Frogeye is registered as 'Austin Sprite' rather than an Austin-Healey and would therefore appear on the wrong page; no doubt many others do too. Strangely, some four Sprites prior to 1958 seem to be on the road, the earliest being 1954, now that can't be right. Olly Smith warns that many errors from the paper days of vehicle registration fudge the results but overall, we should have a reasonably good picture of what remains. Take a look for yourself but in the meantime, here is a synopsis as of the end of March 2011.

### Austin-Healey Sprite

Licensed	1221
On SORN	262

### Austin Sprite

Licensed	360
On SORN	108

### MG Midget (less the pre 1961 numbers)

Licensed	6314
On SORN	2337

Sprites registered in the years 1958 to 1961 total 701 licensed and 144 on sorn. Obviously, some of the 1961 figure will be Mk11s but we can ascertain that there are less than 700 Frogeyes currently on the road in the UK. You can check out the survival rate for each year of production but beware that anomalies exist. You could end up with more questions raised than answered! A really useful website and full marks to Olly Smith for making this information so easily obtainable.

**Terry Horler**



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81 Somers Road, Rugby, CV22 7DG, England

# Sir Stirling's Retirement



*Sir Stirling Moss reunited with PMO200 at Goodwood in 2006 (with thanks to John Sprinzel and Paul Woolmer)*

So my pal Stirling is hanging up his helmet for good! When I first became interested in motor sport, he was already pretty much the name in 500cc racing and very soon rose up the ranks with stunning wins in Jaguar XK's and onto host of successes with Rob Walker's Formula cars. His early terrific victories were with the Cooper in Argentina GP, where he was giving away around fifty horsepower to his rivals, and won by careful tyre management, which included driving over every patch of oil he could find to minimize



*Stirling Moss talking to Steve McQueen. Standing with Steve is his first wife Neile Adams McQueen. ©Tom Bigelow photo (with permission)*

wear. His other incredible win was at Monte Carlo in Rob's Lotus. In those days the race was 100 laps, and for 98 of them he was driving flat out in front of the two Ferraris, feeling that towards the end they would just sail past. When he finally realized that they couldn't go any faster, he was actually able to finally relax and take the victory.

But for those of us in the Spridget world, Sir Stirling drove a lot of Sprites in International events. As a close friend of Donald, and incidentally a co-resident of Nassau, he drove there and at Sebring in the supporting races. I got to know Stirling through my BMC team mate, Pat Moss, and managed to persuade both of them to drive my Sebring Sprite PMO200 and Cyril Simpson's S221 in the supporting GT race at the circuit which gave our special Sprites their name, the only time brother and sister drove against each other

in the same race. Pat was, of course, more famous for her rallying, but Stirling too managed some great performances with the Sunbeam rally team, winning one of only two Gold Cups awarded back in those far off days, for three successive penalty free runs on the Alpine Rally, and also took a second overall on the Monte Carlo Rally. He was runner up in the Formula One championship a number of times, and only lost out on overall victory when he would not protest a push start that his rival Mike Hawthorne had received, which just confirmed Stirling's incredible sportsmanship.

The Friday before his career ending Goodwood accident, he drove me up to the Racing School at Finmere, where he was chief instructor, and was most impressive not only with his performance on a wet track, in the TR4 – which he had never driven before, but also in the instruction he was giving to the season's best pupils. A couple of weeks later, I happened to be in the hospital with his secretary Valerie Pirie, just as he recovered consciousness from that inexplicable crash, and he was soon chatting away as only our Stirling could. Almost the first thing he said was that he didn't have to prove anything more, and intended to retire from the top level of motor sport. Two years later he was to drive with me on the RAC Rally in a work's Rover 3 litre, but problems with his insurance company prevented me from enjoying this treat, but he did resume a degree of competitive racing with the Volkswagen Touring car team led by another ex-Sprite driver, Vic Elford. His many years of competitive driving in Classic car events has become a great feature of these series, and he even managed to drive PMO again, now superbly restored by Paul and Sharon Woolmer, at the Goodwood races a couple of years back.

I guess if you want to paint a picture of the perfect motor sports enthusiast, who raced with 500s. Saloons, Sports, GTs and Formula cars for about 65 years, then I couldn't think of any other name.

**John Sprinzel**  
2011



*L to R Pat Moss, John Sprinzel, Cyril Simson, Stirling Moss and Bruce McLaren 1961 (thanks to J Whitehouse-Bird)*



*Stirling Moss driving the Sprite he drove in the three hour race. BARC Boys photo (with permission)*



*Stirling Moss and John Sprinzel, Goodwood 2006 (thanks to John Sprinzel)*



## 2080PO a Racing Sprite

I always had a great love for England and its colourful history of sport cars, so when my mid-life crisis hit recently, I knew it was time to realise a dream I have been yearning for a long time: Buy a classic car and take part in historical racing events.

The attraction and love for racing cars come from my childhood memories of my Grandfather, Pierre Avenel.



He used to be a mechanic and was involved in some racing and rally events himself. When I was around nine years old I remember him telling my parents that he could use the engine from the lawnmower and put it in my pedal car. For some strange reason and to my despair my folks declined the offer. Anyhow many years later I came closer to my dream whilst coming to England for what I thought would be a quick weekend with my girlfriend of the time. I ended a few years later, still in London, buying an MG Midget 1500 (AYM 646T). Needless to say the car

was a total wreck which was good in itself as it led me to develop some knowledge about its design and also other related cars such as the Austin Healey MK1. Clearly a car that I could not afford at the time and which subsequently I had to sell to buy a sofa for my flat, which gives you an idea of how much of a wreck it was...

Nearly a quarter of century later, I am embarking into a journey to realise my longstanding ambition. At first I bought a full steel bodied MK1 Sprite from Gordon Elwell, UXU 257, with the idea of making it an FIA compliant rally car and driving it down to Monaco one day... Obviously restoration of a car is long term project which is always at odds with how impatient you are about driving the end result of it. So clearly I can see this as a challenge going forward as I am a rather impatient person.

To make an FIA approved car is clearly not an easy task. To be eligible the car has to be restored or re-created following the blueprint of its period homologation papers. This brings in the complexity of both finding someone that really knows what he is doing when restoring the car but also who can trace or make copies of the original components that are no longer available such as inlet manifold and brakes callipers. What I found is that many have the knowledge but not really the proper set up to undertake this kind of project nor the enthusiasm to face the time commitment. So the first part of my project translated into learning about the car

and also finding an appropriate company to restore it, since much of the restoration is beyond my abilities. The choice of company became quickly obvious after contacting a few garages and obtaining some preliminary quotes: Archers Garage. My choice was clearly influenced by the experience they have in restoring such cars and also the type of clientele they have. Clearly seeing S221 in the garage did help in making up my mind about how skilled and experienced Andrew Foresters is. Also, not so trivial, there is the part about deciding exactly what to do with the car. Should it be replicated to the exact detail? Should original spares be preferred to cheaper and sometime more reliable replications? Should it be a Rally car or a Racer? This is pretty much when it dawns on you that there is an obligatory review of literature that must take place to answer many of those questions.

It is a worthwhile investment to read the Sprite Bibles, namely: "Spritely Years", "Sleepless Knight" and "Modified Motoring" by John Sprinzel and Tom Coulthard. Also making use of the clubs archives and the nostalgia forum at Autosport.com proved of invaluable help as it allowed me to get in touch with John Sprinzel, Ray English (who produces *Marque One*, an excellent quarterly newsletter on Sprites) and Gary Lazarus, who are excellent sources of information on how these cars were being prepared and used and also anecdotes.

This part I thoroughly enjoyed and still enjoy as it is clearly an ongoing process. One of the stories that I particularly liked and quote from John is the following:

*"...the best way for extra air on the early cars, was a vent slot between the headlamps, which George Hulbert and I did tests with*

*wool streamers and found it was a low pressure area and helped suck out the hot air ... I wish I had some photos of us doing these tests, with George leaning over the screen while I drove on the North Circular road – which had no speed limit back then..."*

Clearly a pragmatic approach to testing cars.... Anyhow after all the communication going back and forth with John, Ray and others it was clear that UXU 257 would be turned into a replication of 2214 UE in which John finished third in the Liege–Rome–Liege in 1960. The anticipation of taking part into an international rally was now devouring me. Though as John would say in one of his emails, it would be unlikely to be the same if I ever enrolled myself in it one day quoting him: "I always loved the Liege as a REAL challenging rally, as opposed to the wimpy stuff they call rallies nowadays. It won't be the same event, as I can hardly believe there are many roads left where such an antisocial 'race' could be held". I discussed the project with Andrew and we quickly honed onto the fact that it would make best sense to buy a new shell from Wheelers & Davies as this would provide the car with the body strength required for a long rally such as the Monaco or Liege. Also the UXU 257 body shell was clearly not as good as initially thought. Going about it this way also has cost and time advantages, as repairing the old shell would involve much time and efforts. So we agreed on this and I started to prepare myself for a long wait as Andrew could not take the car immediately and then there is of course the time it takes to restore the car. Whilst waiting I decided to research a bit more about the history of the car and also to keep an eye for other cars that were coming to the market.

My thoughts were that if I found a car with some history it would be probably useful to enter some of the classic event. Keeping some hope to take part in an event such at Goodwood Revival. Goodwood means a lot to me as it is also the place where Finale and I got married. Anyhow one day whilst browsing through the car and classic website I found my jaw dropping in front of an advert for 2080 PO. The description of the car was as follows: "Austin Healey Sprite 1958. Unique barn find – ex racer, still with loads of original 1960's scrutineer's tickets tied to grab handle! Missing engine and gearbox, but incredibly sound, straight and original. Surely a guaranteed Historic race entry. Original number plate and V5!" Clearly it looked the



UXU 257 which I bought from Gordon Elwell



*Adapted Sebring bonnet showing Brooklands screen and roll bar*



*Aluminium floors*



*Fibre glass bucket seats*

wings, which I took as a good sign. The bucket seats were made of fibre glass and near pristine (bearing in mind they are nearly the same age as me...).

The car had a Britax harness and the original fire extinguisher. On the dashboard was a 9000 RPM tachometer. So clearly once upon a time there was some kind of decent engine under the bonnet. Looking under the car both front and back wheels had rare Alfin brake drums (clearly lighter than the usual steel drums), also the "piece de resistance" was in the car sporting a rare Alexander anti-roll bar as well as an ultra rare pair of adjustable Armstrong dampers. In addition the car had vents either side of the bonnet covered with grills from an A35 as Sprinzel used to do on some of the early cars. Finally the car also had a roll bar as well as an aero visor which led me to think that it may have been produced by the same garage that built the car that raced at Lydden Hill in 1965 (as shown on both Gary Lazarus' and the WSM Car websites). Also the registration of this car was 2833 PO which is quite close to 2080 PO. On this I am still trying to find some information.



*Dash and 9000RPM tachometer*

part. Full of excitement, I promptly made contact with the seller and arranged to see the car for the following weekend. Now I had to break the news to my wife and sell her the fact that you cannot possibly have the same car to do a rally and a bit of racing. Not sure she bought it but anyhow I went to see the car. A quick inspection revealed that the back shroud, bonnet and doors were all made of GRP which was not uncommon at that time as it was the easiest way to improve the power/weight ratio of the car. Also the bonnet looks like a Sebring with some modification, since it has a groove which is unusual. Interestingly the floor of the boot had been replaced with an aluminium panel as well as the front inner



*Alfin brake drums front and back*



*Ultra rare adjustable dampers*



*The centre car in Lydden Hill 1965 registered 2833 PO looks strangely like 2080 PO and possibly driven by John Elvers"*

I was absolutely smitten by the car and bought it on the spot. When leaving the house on the following Saturday to collect it I got kindly reminded by Finale my wife to take some cling film so as to preserve as much as possible of the expensive rust I purchased whilst moving it to the Farm where it would be dismantled. On my return I clearly triggered a lot of excitement as all the family came and looked at the car with interest and seemed impressed despite the obvious amount of work that had to be done. Clearly it was also time to find about the racing history of the car before memories vanished.



First thing was to gather the clues. On the bonnet there were a few badges, some still stuck to the bonnet, others in a jar given to me by the seller. This made me think that the car was somehow affiliated through its life to the Healey club, The Chichester Motoring Club, the BARC, The Southsea Motoring club and strangely the Amateur Automobile Club in South Africa. Also from the heritage certificate I gathered the car was purchased at first by Haig' Motor for a D. A Starkey, living in Bognor Regis. I found from the Southsea Motor Club that it was then purchased by Charlie L. R. Page in Chichester who raced it probably from 1960 to 1965. I have evidence of him racing in 1960 and 1961 at the Brighton Speed trials and also in 1960 at Firle. Finally the car was bought by Lionel Starley in Brighton to be primarily raced by his son Colin. I think the engine was then upgraded from a 948cc to a 1098cc.

The car was principally involved in Hill climbs, Sprints and Autotests in the South of England. Mrs. Starley, whom I met recently, mentioned that it also went to do some hillclimbs in France, Holland and Jersey. However I am still to find hard evidence about this at the time of writing. Clearly some of the scrutineer tickets mention the Speed trials and Firle Hill in 1966. I have been told that C. Starley participated in an Autotest at Goodwood in 1966.



*Scrutineer's badges from various events*

I have to say that the help provided through the Autosport nostalgia forum has been invaluable in tracing part of its history and that I am very thankful to its members as well as the various southern England Motor clubs members who have kindly helped me so far. I have had some engaging conversations with Andrew and it is clear that 2080 PO jumped the queue and will be the first of the two cars to get its "Spa" treatment at Archers. I clearly can't wait to see and enjoy the end result and hopefully drive it at Goodwood one day!

**Pierre Lequeux**

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# Cotswold Capers Run

Sunday 14 August 2011

Join the Heart Of England Group on the "Cotswold Capers Run" on Sunday 14 August. Starting at 10.00 am from the Aston Cantlow Club B95, visiting the Cotswold Motoring Museum, home of 'Brum' at Bourton-on-the-Water GL54 and finishing at The Swan Inn, Birlingham, near Pershore WR10 for a meal.

Approx 100 mile route with some interesting roads used on night rallies from the '60s and '70s, passing dozens of typical Cotswold honey coloured cottages and villages on the way with great views.

If interested contact John Platt  
Tel 01789 488321 / Email: johnplatt1275@btinternet.com



Cotswold Motoring Museum

## Seen on the Internet

**MG Midget with an unusual accessory!**



This 1972 US spec MG Midget was seen for sale in Canada earlier this year with an asking price of \$12,500 (Canadian Dollars) which at today's rate works out to be £8136.17. The owner claims that it is in mint condition.

It might be a good idea for long distance camping trips, but I'd imagine that it does nothing to enhance the handling.

Have any members seen something similar or even made their own trailer?

# Yorkshire Area Report



**A**fter June's bumper meeting, July was a much quieter affair with only five Midgets venturing out on a showery summer's day.

After helping Sarah fix the lights on her new white 1965 Sprite "Daphne", Rob & Jenni in the k-Midget followed Sarah in Daphne and Tim in Sebrina (aka Ecurie Saunders) to Ye Jolly Farmers, where we were joined by Mike Bainbridge in his Frog, and ultimately by Tony in his 4AGE Midget. Unfortunately Tony had

to walk the last few hundred yards as his alternator gave up the ghost, but at least the waiting time for the recovery truck was long enough for a chip butty and refreshing half.

Our next meeting is on Saturday 13th August at Ye Jolly Farmer's in Dalton near Thirsk – hope to see some of you there. Keep in touch with what's going on in Yorkshire at <http://yorkshiremasc.blogspot.com>.

**Sarah & Tim Saunders**

## Special Custom Side Screen Tool

**A tip for owners of cars with side screens**



*An artist's impression of the offending tool*

**S**ince we signed the 6th protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights and also added it into the 1998 Human Rights Act: "The death penalty shall be abolished. No one shall be condemned to such penalty or executed." So you won't be hung drawn and quartered with your entrails displayed, to the public, upon London Bridge but it may still constitute an offence of defacing a coin of the realm. A tip for Spridget owners with removable side screens. Instead of struggling to find something to hand to undo the crews holding the side screens on is to drill a small hole into a 50 pence piece and attach it to your key ring. It will probably be one of the cheapest custom screwdrivers that you get and it fit's the wide slots in the screws well and is henceforth always to hand.

**Alan Anstead**

# Highland Gathering (Down South)



After spending the day in the rain at Burghley for Midget 50 and then getting rather cold at Luton Hoo for Classics in the Walled Garden we were hoping for “third time lucky” with the weather on Sunday, 10 July for the Harpenden Lions’ Highland Gathering – one of the largest Gatherings outside Scotland. We arrived at Rothamsted Park at about 10.00 am and parked up with about 50 other vehicles for the Classic Car Show. The vehicles on display ranged from our humble 1970 Midget to a 1966 7-Litre Mustang. Other entries included a couple of 1960s Camper vans, an MGB, a Triumph TR2, a 1950s Rover 90, a Pink Vauxhall Cresta and a Morris Oxford Estate which according to the owner was 1 of only 69 still remaining.

Being rather partial to most things Scottish (including bagpipes and haggis!) we thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the day’s events which included a falconry display, shepherding (a sheepdog rounding up ducks!), gymnastic display, Scottish dancing, a battle re-enactment by the Black Watch and the



*The Black Watch re-enactment*

music was provided by five Pipe Bands. There were also Heavy Events such as Putting the Stone, Weight over Bar and Tossing the Caber. For the children, and some adults, there was a One Mile Fun Run, other races, a climbing wall and the usual array of stalls and sideshows along with a fun fair.

This was the 16th Highland Gathering organised by Harpenden Lions and their designated charities were Grove House Hospice, The Prostate Cancer Charity and Lions Charities including Life Skills. A great day out for all the family and a local car show which might appeal to our HCNW members next year (15 July 2012) and THE SUN SHONE MOST OF THE DAY AND IT DIDN'T RAIN!

**Keith & Ann Warner**



# Washing your Spridget Part 1



It is fascinating what one's mind ponders on when tied to a kiddies' playhouse every second Wednesday of the month. I wasn't thinking about Terry Horler featuring a Jedward hair style driving a sunglow yellow ice cream van. I wonder how people clean their pride and joy and what do they use? Yes, Terry is correct; I do have a strange mind. Anyway, I would like to share my practice and products that I use. I am no car cleaning expert, and would be happy to receive any feedback; at least something for me to think of while I am tied up in the playhouse.

Before I proceed washing the panels, I prefer washing the wheels because I use a more corrosive solution for the job. For people that have steel wheels, this may not be necessary; if you use alloy or wire wheels, it is a good practice to keep them brake dust free to protect the lacquer. The most effective brake rust removal product I found is CarPlan Wonder Wheels; make sure the wheels are not wet; it is more effective on dry

brake dust. Give the bottle a good shake then pour out a small amount. I found the brush it comes with is too long; if you snap it in half it is easier to work around corners and behind the wheel. Careful not to splash on your clothing, it can stain or react with the fabric if it has dirt on it. Wash off with soapy water immediately after each wheel or it can dry up making it hard to clean off. Washing the inner wheel arches while applying the soapy water on the wheels could save time.

My cars rarely get too dirty so I don't pre-wash them; but if you do, you may want to pre wash the car with foam using a special foam lance fitted to your pressure washer. Use a pH neutral snow foam fluid to apply a layer of foam; let it settle for 5 minutes to soften dirt and lift up grime. Best not to do it on a windy day, it's amazing to see how much children enjoy chasing bubbles down the street and how fast one can use up those cleaning fluids. Rinse the foam off with a hose or a pressure washer, now you are ready

to wash the car. Yes, you haven't washed the car yet!

Most people use sponge or brush but I highly recommend using deep pile soft wash mitt. Sponge could drag dirt across the surface like a sanding block creating swirl marks, the same for a brush; a soft deep pile mitt traps dirt between the fibres. I use a homemade grit guard made from a fryer's grill at the bottom of the wash bucket; the grit guard traps bigger particles at the bottom not bringing them back on the car. The proper translucent bucket with guard costs 10 times more at around £20. Regarding car shampoo, there are so many products, it is hard to choose.

Some people like it foamy, some don't, it is a personal choice. The basic principle is to choose one that is pH neutral and smooth to use. My personal choice is rather expensive Zymol Clear Auto Bathe; it is not very foamy but very smooth to wash with. If you wash your cars frequently, there is one cheaper product that is highly recommended, Dodo Juice – Born to be mild shampoo. It produces more foam and is kind to the applied wax, and smells nice too.

It is good practice to establish a washing pattern so you don't forget or miss out any parts. I usually start from the top so you don't get dirty water running on the cleaned parts. Since most of us don't have a top, I would start at the front, the least dirty part of the car, then back, near side and off side. It is important to take care of dirt trapped in front of the A post between front wing and sill. I use a toothbrush there (toothbrushes can be used for more than just cleaning your teeth, you can stick it through the carburettors into the engine block, but that is another story). The dirt there would trap moisture and encourage rust to grow. For those with removable hood and clip on sidescreens, I recommend putting on the tonneau to stop water getting inside the car leaving streak marks along the internal vinyl panels and seats.

Use a clean wash mitt, rinse off the car with plenty of water. For areas with hard water, you could invest in an inline water purifying filter to get a spot free finish; there are cheaper alternatives. I run



*Buckets with grit guards*

a dehumidifier in the house; the water collected from it is almost pure. The typical conductivity reading of tap water is around 400  $\mu\text{S}$  (MicroSiemens); the reading of my dehumidifier's water is 0.3 which is better than distilled water. The conductivity estimates the amount of dissolved solids/ions in water, a higher reading means there are more dissolved solids in the water. Many window cleaners use purified water; they no longer need to climb up high to dry them off. A lot of them purify their own water; you could 'buy' from them cheaply. Or you could collect rain water with a 'clean' system. You rarely need more than two buckets to rinse your Spridget, you don't need to have a large storage tank.

Now the car is washed, you can leave it to air dry if you have used purified water but I am pretty sure most of you don't like a wet car sitting in the garage. Drying off with a microfibre drying towel offers many benefits over chamois leather; it has a better absorbent rate, reduces new swirl marks and is much easier to squeeze the water out. I use compressed air to blow out the water and any debris between the front wing and the sill; obviously Frogeye owners don't have that issue. It is worth lifting the bonnet up and let the water trapped behind the nose inside the bonnet to drain out completely. Open both doors, dry out the sitting water at the bottom of the A posts. These all help prevent rust settling in. Next chapter will be about waxing the car and it does include using a toothbrush.

**Alan Lo**

# Heart of England Report



Some stayed on the night before Midget50 and some had an early start but about 15 of our cars assembled in Stamford to join the many other Midgets and Sprites streaming into Burghley House for Midget50 – and then the rains came. It was a good day but all the gazebos were full to bursting and picnicking in steamed-up and hooded Sprite cockpit is one of the hazards of a British summer. The organisers had worked hard and deserve our thanks to produce an event worthy of the great little car but the weather certainly found all those little water leaks that are a characteristic of the Midget and Sprites.

Fast forward two weeks and despite the early morning mist, expectations were high of a forecast heatwave as we drove to Droitwich to meet up with the Heart of England group for the 'Amble to Hampton Court' – not that one – the one on the River Lugg in Herefordshire. Gradually coats were shed and even Geoff was persuaded to take the hood down if only to dry out the passenger footwell – still wet from a dousing received a couple of days before when repatriating his most recent Midget from Germany where it had been 'resting' since his return from the Spridgettreffen after a failed master cylinder.

We took a leisurely and scenic drive, with hoods down and sun hats on, through the cider apple orchards and the Teme valley to Warren Farm, just off Bromyard Downs, which was our first refreshment stop. Coffee and cakes were much appreciated especially when taken overlooking a gorgeous view of

the Worcestershire countryside from the farms elevated location. Maurice Stacey joined us at Warren Farm, to make a total of 14 cars, he having driven up from the Forest of Dean in his Banham Sprint which featured in last month's *MASCOT*. We had also been joined by a couple from the Netherlands, Hans & Joke van der Loo who were staying at Peter & Pam Warwick's B&B. They had the luxury of a 1992 Alfa Romeo Spyder convertible but they still managed to keep up with us along the twist and turns of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire by-ways.

On to Hampton Court, a restored medieval castle surrounded by beautiful gardens which were largely constructed as recently as 1999 by a multi-millionaire Chicago businessman. Time to explore the castle and grounds, enjoy a delicious lunch and get lost in maze (all Hampton Courts have to have a maze) and, if you did not mind getting wet, the foolhardy could walk behind the waterfall in the grotto. We had planned a leisurely drive back through Tenbury and Cleobury Mortimer to Sybil and Stuart's to finish of the day with tea and cakes. We hadn't taken account of the fact that the whole world was returning home via Kidderminster and the town was almost grid locked. As engine temperatures rose, heaters went on and as engine temperatures fell human temperatures rose but not before Phil and Mo's temperature gauge had moved into the oil pressure section! All was well and we ended a lovely day with tea, scones and cakes on the lawn under the pleasant shade of the trees for a final natter.

**Sybil & Stuart Watson**



## NW Area Report

Saturday 18th June was the Weaver Wander Classic and Sports Car event. I couldn't make it this year but a number of the NW members took part. Here is a report courtesy of Howard:

The Weaver Wander is a parade and scenic run open to all Classic and Sports cars. This all day event is now in its 3rd year and is well organised by the Crewe and Nantwich Rotary Club.

All monies raised from this year's event are going to Macmillan Cancer Support and Help the Heroes charities.

I would guess there were upwards of 100 cars spanning the years from a vintage Rolls Royce to a modern Ferrari.

Following the obligatory bacon butties and coffee the run starts with a parade through the market town of Nantwich where each car is formally sent on its way by the town mayor and a large watching crowd.

Five of the North West MSC cars turned out for the run. With the sun in the sky, hoods down and the wind in our hair (at least for those with some left!) we were guided towards the nearest black cloud and promptly drenched.

The route meandered through the lanes of Cheshire, Shropshire and the borders of North Wales. The provided Navigation notes were very clear and precise but organisers don't allow for navigators saying "Oh! look at that nice house" rather than "turn left".

The morning run took us to Erddig Hall, a stately home near Wrexham where we had a picnic lunch and were given free passes into the gardens.

Following a very relaxed break we set off back to Nantwich but on a different route. However having covered 50 miles in the morning and the same for the afternoon, we partly opted out on the run back as it passed within a few miles of home. I not sure if the

others went back to Nantwich for a further parade although we saw Bernie several times crossing our path from seemingly random directions – or was it us !!

I'm unable to reveal any names but Bernie realised on arriving at a petrol station that he didn't have his petrol cap key with him and despite all his efforts (you can see teeth marks in the paintwork) he couldn't shift it.

However with the inspired thinking that makes you proud to be a MASC member he uncoupled the pipe from within the boot and filled it directly. Bystanders were amazed as he appeared to be filling his boot with petrol!!! Pity this wasn't caught on camera as it would make an ideal caption competition for MASCOT along the lines of "and after filling the car with petrol he'll probably open the window to let the clutch out".

Everyone who I spoke to enjoyed it although the complete day involves a fair bit of driving. Thanks to the Rotary Club who obviously put in a huge amount of effort to organise such a large event.

Look out for next year's event on [www.weaverwander.com](http://www.weaverwander.com)

On 26th June some of us went to Hoghton Tower classic car show. There was me and Diane, Bernie and Lynne, Neil and Shelley and David with son Jonathan.

This was the first outing for our new gazebo, or event shelter to give it the proper name. In conjunction with the banner we looked quite the business and attracted quite a bit of attention and interest; although to be fair this was probably more to do with the charisma and charm of the area rep!

Also at the show, although not on our stand was NW members Larissa and Ian in her lovely red Frogeye.

The weather was kind to us being mostly hot and sunny, just a few spots of rain. Mind you shortly after we got home the heavens opened and it lashed it down.

The event was a bit like the NW area reunion. We met up with Chris Hawksworth again and his mate Mark. Chris has a Frogeye and was a regular at the NW meetings and events before moving down to Bedford – it was nice to see him again.

Also there was Chris's mum and dad who we haven't seen for a few years now. Then there was Peter and Dorothy, still active MASC

members but they tend to be more involved with the Yorkshire area as it's a bit closer for them; mind you I'm not sure we have really forgiven them for defecting, I mean it's not normal for a Lancashire lad to be socialising with Yorkshire people is it, there are some things that you just don't do – its almost on par with supporting Wigan Warriors.

There was a large variety of vehicles at the show which made it a very interesting and enjoyable day, and thankfully not a stationary engine in sight!

For July club meeting we had brilliant turn out. Lots of cars, although not mine as it was packed ready for camping that weekend and I couldn't bear the thought of trying to get the hood out of the boot if it rained!

Also, Andrew's car was not quite ready after his rather rushed engine transplant, he will hopefully have had it ready for Cholmondeley.

Mike came along in his MGB GT; this is fitted with a 2ltr Ford Zetec engine and looks really nice. When I say nice I of course mean in an engineering sense only, still can't see the attraction of these old man's cars! I wonder if one day I might walk past one and think 'my that's a fine looking vehicle'? You never know it could happen, it would be like a Nissan Micra moment – when you fancy one of these then you know you are about to enter the geriatric kingdom and there will be no return.

We had a new member, Wayne with his round wheel arch Midget, so a warm welcome to him.

Don't forget that it's the Gold Cup race meeting at Oulton Park on 28th/29th August.

If interested then please book tickets direct at [www.oultontpark.co.uk](http://www.oultontpark.co.uk) or by calling 0870 950 9000

Also, please tell Ian so he can arrange a club pitch.

Tel 07801333151  
or email [ji.jones31@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ji.jones31@yahoo.co.uk)

Finally, I would like to dispel the rumours that are going round suggesting that I might be Bernie's secret love child. This is not true, although my Mum did say she visited Stockport many years ago!

Well that's all for now.

See you at the Kilton on 10th August

**Les**



# Hants Area Report

## What I did on my Holidays

by John – aged 46½

Made the mistake of going to the bar, again! This time while I was fetching drinks I got volunteered to write up our week's escapades. Not sure how I'm going to start this, how about:

*A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away....*

No, not right, how about in the style of Enid Blyton:

*17 Go Mad in Horbling*

'Right' called Harry (who's real name was Harriet but she would punch anyone on the nose who called her that) to Jenny, let's grab Timmy the Frog and head out for lashings of (ginger) beer....

Hmmm, not working is it? OK, let's have another go.

To celebrate Midget 50 our club holiday this year was to the little sleepy (God help it, it didn't know what it was in for) village of Horbling, 40 minutes north of Stamford. Joining Ellen and I on this week of adventure was Harriet & Terry (our esteemed leaders), Lyn & Alf, Jenny & Barry, Vic & John and Marian & Ken. Carol & Mark, Mike, Chris and Matt were unable to make the full week but came along for either the weekend or a few days after the weekend, as they didn't want to miss out on all the fun.

Between us we had a few Frogs, an assortment of Midgets and an MGF. OK, the last one should have been my Frog but she currently has: no wheels, engine, seats, carpets, brakes, etc and Ellen said unless she had carpets she wasn't going in her!! This

meant she got to take her pride and joy and I got to do a lot of map reading. On the plus side I'm still definitely on track for Spridget 60.

On Saturday, most drove up in convoy and we met them for a lunchtime stop at Tesco, the first of many tea stops for us. The rest of our merry little club joined us at Horbling later in the day. We stayed in an old farmhouse with eight bedrooms, two living rooms, a dining room, an enormous kitchen, a games room and its own ghost (sorry Barry). Interestingly it also had a swimming pool and a cellar but no one was actually brave enough to investigate either! Although there were mutterings of going for a swim by a few, some of whom were being volunteered against their will we have to say. After a pleasant few hours in the pub we had an evening BBQ, expertly turning various meat based products into lumps of carbon.

Sunday was of course Midget50, much has been said already about the event so I won't repeat it all again. Suffice to say that we were bitterly disappointed that rain was the order of the day. To add insult to injury, for the rest of the week, at least up to Friday afternoon, the rain kept away. Our other gripe was tea at £2 a cup and bacon sandwiches for £4. On the plus side, I was particularly happy to nab a screen surround that didn't look like it had been fed through a mangle but annoyed that John beat me to some bumperettes.

During the week everyone tended to wander off on their own or in random groups. Popular locations included Skegness with paddling and ice cream, Rutland Water with the half height church, Tattershall Castle, Barnsdale



*Three go paddling*

Gardens, Sleaford waterfront, the local farm shop (with homemade beer) and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. I was intrigued to spot at the latter that Spitfires and our old cars have something in common, they both have oil drip trays – actually you could use a Frog as the oil drip tray for the Lancaster...

Ellen was looking forward to Barry demonstrating his wind surfing ability but apparently it wasn't windy enough. Having watched another chap on his board blast past a power boat we can but wonder in awe at the sort of conditions Barry thrives in. Barry did manage to demonstrate his harness, for which a little imagination was needed as we were in the car park of the garden centre at the time.

We managed to eat well, the local pub was a big hit, one evening we even managed to draw up some club rules. Unfortunately due to the fact that most of the assembled had more than a few wee tipples, they didn't get written down. The 'Dime Bar Crunch' dessert was particularly popular, in fact certain members managed to consume the pubs entire supply (no names to protect the guilty!) One memorable night at the house we devoured Spaghetti Bolognese for 13 people and one duck (don't ask).

Luckily no-one had any terminal car problems, the most notable issue was that Harriet somehow managed to break her dynamo and a rescue party was sent out bright and early on Monday to fetch a replacement from a local motor factors. Terry refitted it with marked efficiency, aided of course by a team of experts – all with their own opinion on how it should be done. Not wanting to be outdone, John broke a new record for oil consumption, he (well his Frog) went through



*The big trip-tray*

about 20 gallons of oil – a problem that was simply solved by a large spanner and a lot of bravery.

When not eating, drinking or indulging in tourist pursuits, amongst our other entertainment we squeezed in our now infamous first annual darts competition. It was a nail biting finish, both teams spent 45 minutes trying to get a double one to end! I think I can say with all honesty that Jocky Wilson need not lose sleep over one of us taking his trophy...

Saturday and home time came far too quickly. Due to the complexities of our home life we had to be up early, something which most of our fellow holiday makers seemed to think was impossible for us. However, everyone made it home safely despite the torrential rain. To wrap up it was a most excellent week, we enjoyed the company and look forward to next year's outing – might even be able to do it in a Frog.

**John & Ellen Ferguson, June 2011**

PS. Special thanks to Alf for letting me 'borrow' his paper.

# June in Kent and Surrey

A very short write up for the monthly Kent meet at The Angel because an e-mail was sent around cancelling it. I was away on a short break, with the Sebring Coupe, in France and various members were attending various car shows on this day.

Surrey however was attended by thirteen people bringing five Spridgets. Nay & Col and Pete & Hils updated us on their recent May Bank Holiday run to the Laon Classique which hopefully they will write about for us all as it sounded a good laugh. Following an ignition problem on their Frogeye Pete & Hils brought along a new H & H Solutions (MASC advertiser) dizzy with electronic ignition that will soon be fitted. Col then described the trials of fitting an ECU on his, ongoing, Turbocharged Sprite restoration/build. I lost track after the first sentence. Maybe if we can encourage him to write about it for *MASCOT* I may, after several read throughs, begin to understand. I thought one of the attractions of Spridget ownership was the simplicity of the cars? Will the car be ready for the 'Circuit des Remparts' event at Angouleme, France in September. My Miglia Tour (10-21 Sept) will be calling at this event. Due to unforeseen events my navigator has had to pull out of this event. Does anyone fancy filling the seat? (see *MASC* Jan 2011 for details or contact me). Mike Gorman brought pictures of his new tractor – a '50s Deutz. Apparently it came complete with a mower attachment for mowing his lawn. Sue & Jim; John & Bethany, & John Clark came in Sprites with hoods furled – a brave choice considering the changeable weather conditions. Ashley completed our gathering.

## Le Croissant

For many years when visiting friends, in France, who live south of Le Mans, or visiting Le Mans for the Classic motor race, or just touring the excellent Loire Valley I have often

visited the Hotel De France at La Chartre sur le Loire. The Hotel de France was the Aston Martin team base during the 1950s when competing at Le Mans 24

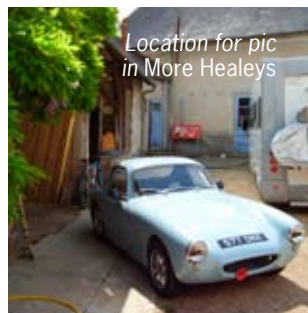
hour race. The team won the motor race in 1959 with the DBR1 driven by Carroll Shelby & Roy Salvadori. The hotel is a sort of Mecca for motor racing fans. The walls of the bar are adorned with photographs, many signed by the drivers, and there are also caricatures of drivers by the artist Geo Ham.

Previously, while refuelling the Sprite at a Shell garage (no longer extant) at Arnage, I was given a postcard of the Bristol Team, again during the 1950s using the garage as their base. I wondered where the Healey team were based when racing Sprites at Le Mans 24 Hr. After all this time no one seemed to know although John Hill, who was a mechanic with the sprite team in 1960, came the closest. "I believed that we were in a small Inn with a small café in a village about twenty mile from the track. The main street ran in front of the Inn with a courtyard to the left". The answer was actually on my bookshelf, in a book unread for many years. Geoffrey Healey's book *More Healeys* supplied the answer with a picture of a Sprite Coupe taken in the yard.

The team stayed at Le Croissant. 107 rue Nationale, Cerans Fouletourte. So during the latter part of June I paid a visit finding it as John Hill described. There was no evidence of the Austin Healey team's stay. No old pictures on the wall in fact nothing, really, to suggest any interest in the famous Le Mans motor race apart from two chequered flags hanging in the breeze out front.

I entered the yard via the archway to the left of the café and could see where the photograph in the book had been taken. I was unable to replicate the photograph as a camper van stood where I wanted to place the sprite. Perhaps another time! The premise is no longer an hotel but a bar restaurant. When I explained to the staff the reason for my visit they showed me pictures, still held in a camera, of a visit from some big Healey drivers, some two years previously, who had also sought to take photographs of the yard.

**Alan Anstead**



# East Anglian Report



*Chris' ingenious hood cover*

We had started a bit of a trend with the MASC events this year with soggy Stondon, Monsoon 50 and then my Sprite adventure to France got rained off (well the Sprite part of it anyway). I had planned to drive the Sprite down to Frogeye cottage, spend a couple of weeks getting sunburnt and then take in Thierry's Brittany run on the way back before catching the St Malo Portsmouth ferry, however the run was cancelled and I was late with my booking so missed out on getting a cabin. In the end the prospect of arriving in Plymouth like drowned rats and spending the night in wet clothes in a reclining chair (that didn't recline) before bailing out the Sprite and starting all over again did not sound like much fun so it was rusty Rover to the rescue (actually it is really an MG in disguise). Our norm for all these things since February 5th 2000 when I bought the Sprite has been unbroken sunshine, breaking our journey in southwestern France at hypermarkets so we could park in the shade and stand by the freezers to cool down.

The morning of the Kimbolton classic arrived with some trepidation, however when I threw back the curtains I was greeted by a glorious morning. I rolled the Sprite (and my mig hooked onto the front bumper) out of the Sprite cave and at that point realised this was the first time I had even seen the Sprite since Monsoon 50. I turned on the ignition

to pump some fuel through then turned the key a bit more and she roared into life in the way that only a 1098 can, and off we went for a bendy blast past Grafham water to our allotted area at Kimbolton castle (I even managed to overtake something very sporty with a huge engine and Optima written on the back, on the way). It was a classic, classic classic with all the usual attractions, hundreds of classic cars, the sealed knot enactment people, heavy horses, a funfair, dogs, real ale, all kinds of stalls (some care related) lots of exotic vehicles to take a ride in, the stunning location of the castle grounds and even a low level Lancaster flypast brilliant!

The weather stayed mostly warm and sunny apart from a short spell of warm and wet around 1500, which forced me into the beer tent, and Chris to erect his ingenious plastic hood cover (which takes seconds to fit and makes the car 100% waterproof) for a short while until the sun came out again and dried everything up nicely, much to the disappointment of a certain gentleman who had become quite attached to the plastic hood cover. All that remained to do was to take down the (now perfectly dry) gazebo and enjoy the drive home in the beautiful warm evening sunshine.

See you all at the Ferry Boat and beyond.

**Dave Dixon**



## Ardingly Classic Car Show 9th-10th July 2011 (Sussex, Surrey Hants and Kent)

Arriving early on Saturday morning, I was pleased to be able to sit in my new 'baby' an Austin Sprite Mark IV – with the hood down in the main ring at the Ardingly Classic Car show. Sipping coffee in the sunshine and watching a myriad of different cars arrive to join their club stands. Gazebos were erected, and flags, bunting and other paraphernalia marked out each club's demarcation area. In front of me the Triumph Sports club even had a mock-up petrol filling station and zebra crossing with belisha beacons (as we used to call them!). However they didn't have their club logos to rival the two sails proudly claiming our Midget & Sprite Club area. We had two, thanks to the members of the Hants MASC who travelled several miles to be with us and who camped, from Friday night onwards.

Whilst waiting for the others to arrive, I was interestedly peering at Meredith Hutchins' Sprite, an earlier model but with additions that I would like, wire wheels, nice new hood, and lots of stickers – perhaps I could apply a few to mine to cover rust bumps? Also the boot rack, surely a must for every lady driver – more luggage space!!

Eventually, we had 17 cars on our patch and two gazebos which were well used throughout the two days, seemingly by rotation. General opinion was that there was less autojumble and it was of lesser quality than usual. Weather was changeable throughout the day but we were lucky on the whole.

Sunday was a far busier day – the main arena had more car clubs and general footfall was a lot greater. Breakfast in the Norfolk Pavilion was a big attraction for members exhibiting on the second day. We had slightly fewer cars, about 13 I think. One big draw for the public was Mike Youles' Lynx D Type which was 'guesting' on our stand – it was much admired and photographed throughout the day – even I became adept at recalling its details – whilst Mike and friend were watching the Grand Prix in the Real Ale Beer Tent – or that's what they said they were doing!

I think we all enjoyed the camaraderie under the gazebos throughout the two days. The weather being better on the second day, and there was a bonus of an air display by a little Spitfire who performed its acrobatic moves for us all to enjoy.

In the month that I have owned the little Sprite, I can only say that I have loved every minute. She is a pleasure to drive, being a very eager beaver (maybe that's because the 1275 A plus engine is a bit quicker than my previous 948cc drive). Like all of them, she looks 'cocky' and reminds me of the attraction I had for all things Spridgety, circa 1970/1971!!

With Sussex, Surrey, Hants and Kent members it was a proper get together – How about putting your tent on the boot rack next year, and joining us to make a Southern England club social event.

**Elsa Sherwood**

# South Staffs and North Birmingham Report



**S**S & NB seems to be going from strength to strength at the minute and that's all down to our members! Our July meeting had 19 in attendance, and we were very pleased to welcome several visitors from our neighbouring Warwickshire area.

Our July meeting also happened to fall on Steve's birthday and he had kindly arranged some food for us to enjoy. So a big thank you to Steve for sorting that out for us, it was very much appreciated by all.

Out and about this month, we've been to a couple of events. Andy is doing a great job of sorting out events for us to attend and registering our presence as a club.

Several of us went to the classic car night at Bosworth which is a regular show held on the last Tuesday of each month. There was a great diversity of cars there from Ford Capris to VW Beetles to Minis as well as a good

selection of MGs. It's well worth a look if you are in the area and we may actually make this a regular event for us to attend through the lighter summer nights.

Another great show was "the cars in the park" at Lichfield. This is a two day event, however we went along on the Sunday. This is a huge show with an abundance of great cars to wander around and admire. An added bonus this year was the superb weather. Again this may become an annual event for us.

During our club night we looked at Andy's list and are plotting several more Spridgety adventures in the coming weeks. So if you would like more info, please drop me an email on the address below.

**John Collins**

Mail to: [green\\_mx5@hotmail.com](mailto:green_mx5@hotmail.com)

Tel: 07970 213084

## Bit on the Side

Ever since I bought my Tartan Red Mk111 Sprite, in December 2002, I have been searching for a little bit on the side. No, no, don't deliberately misunderstand me, I have been looking for a reasonably priced miniature representation of my pride and joy (or bête-noir, depending upon circumstances) to display on a side table so that I can admire it from all angles without lying on my back or venturing out to the garage on a raw, cold day. It would also make a good topic of conversation when the vicar comes to tea (they all had one in their younger days).

When I was researching regalia for Spridget50 I tried to find a suitable Frogeye model to offer as a piece of memorabilia but nothing came to hand that was affordable or on the right continent. I know that the Frogeye



model is available in various forms but what about the square models?

I came across one very battered example of a Mk11, at Knebworth, but the wheeler dealer was asking £35. Too much said I – how wrong I was.

Last week my neighbour was taken to Goodwood Festival of Speed (Maserati transport and Audi hospitality) and, good fellow that he is, he enquired of a Model man “ahs abaht yer Sprite, mate?” This purveyor of grown men’s toys produced a very attractive product by ‘Spark’, in a display case. It is

Tartan Red, and very well detailed with door mirror, wipers, exhaust and interior details. On the down side it has a fitted hood (Mk1V) is LHD and costs £39.99. But its gaps are perfect Ed!

I await responses to this story of “open your eyes, dimwit! There’s this and that and the other”. If so please tell. Perhaps they could be made available through MASCOT. There must be demand for an affordable little bit on the side.

**Chris Jackson**  
Home Counties  
North West



# V8 Engined Drag Sprite

The “Super Sprite V8” was in action at the “Rover Racers Reunion” which was part of the “Nostalgia” drag event held at Shakespeare County Raceway on June 25/26th. On Saturday it ran the ½ mile in



14.9 seconds, but was beaten by a “Big” Healey 100 – with a 383 cu inch (6 litre) “Small” block Chevy engine! On Sunday it ran a slightly slower 15.1 seconds and was beaten by a 105E Anglia – with a Big Block 7 litre engine!! There was a lot of interest in the Sprite with many people being amazed that it had a V8 engine fitted.

The quad downdraft 36IDA Webers are proving to be very impressive but really need setting up to suit this car (they are still jetted for the Alfasud engines they originally came from.....!)

**Philip Herrick**

*Ed's note*

*See an article on this Sprite on pages 17-19 of June 2010's MASCOT.*

## Market Place

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

**FOR SALE:** Everything to do a wire wheel conversion (second hand). Kit came off a 1972 MG Midget; 2 wire wheel front hubs and disks; 2 rear wire wheel adaptors; 5 wire wheels and part worn tyres (155 x 13) (plenty of tread left); 2 spare inner tubes; 4 spinners £325. Also pair of red harness 3 point type seat belts off 1972 MG Midget £50. Buyer collects, parts in Redditch, Worcestershire.

**Tel Jackie 01527 544373**

**FOR SALE:** 1974 Midget 1275cc. Blaze with minilite wheels (powder coated Rostyles available), new Don hood and chrome. Re-built with Heritage shell years ago – no rot and decent paint. New unleaded-friendly engine, clutch, alternator, carbs, sports exhaust, tyres, interior trim and many other parts. Re-built 3.7 diff, and all suspension and brake parts replaced/overhauled. Only about 500 miles since all this work was carried out. One lady owner for 25 years (1977-2002). Selling in order to concentrate efforts on modifying my Frogeye. £6,975.

**Phone Stewart on 01788 891740 (Midlands) for further details and photos by email.**

**FOR SALE:** Dec '69 Midget. MOT May '12. Stage 2 engine. 1 3/4" carb. s/s exhaust. Frontline tank and front suspension; Spax rears, panhard rod, electronic ignition, oil cooler, 2 fuel pumps,

brake servo, 5 speed recon Sierra box, w/w, BRG with black bonnet, Moto-Lita, ammeter etc. Kenlowe; rigged for sat nav; waxoiled annually. Owned 11 years. Bills for £29K. FOR SALE £4K.  
**Carson 01360622334 (NR Glasgow).  
thomsonc7@sky.com**

**WANTED:** Isle of Wight Frogeye Sprite. Wanted by genuine enthusiast (club member and ex Frogeye/Sprite owner). Prefer decent example, but anything considered.

**Contact: Larry 01379 652524**

**WANTED:** Mk1 Sprite. Midget & Sprite Club member Wayne Williams is looking for a Mk1 Sprite project. He's not after something that has been totally restored although that would be nice but because of financial restraints he would like to purchase a car that needs work but not a wreck.

If anyone knows of or has such a Sprite please let him know. It would be greatly appreciated.

**Wayne Williams 07976 310 170 or  
07879 488 146.**

**WANTED:** MKIII Midget or MKIV Sprite pair of doors, bare or complete without holes/trim strip must be clean and original (no reskins).

**Contact Trevor 07774109754  
trevalarge@hotmail.com (Bristol)**

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