

December 2011

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# 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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# December Editorial

Yes it's that time of the year again, when we all sit here wondering how it flew past so quickly. However I'm not going to eulogise about what's passed, what might have been and what's going to happen. Suffice to say that it has been an excellent year for the club, for me personally and hopefully for you, the readers of *MASCOT*.

For many of us the ownership of our cars and membership of MASC allows us to feel part of an extended family (without the shouting and screaming normally associated with the latter part of this month).

An excellent example occurred this evening (22nd of November as I write this) when I was able to contact a new member of MASC who had joined only the day before. Let's call him Dan, because that's his name. I was able to telephone Dan to tell him that I had a photo of his Mk1 Sprite that had been taken by the original owner back in 1962 and sent to me as editor of the magazine. We then chatted about Spridgets, what our preferences were, how we felt about them and how he might rebuild his car. This conversation, which went on for nearly an hour, was between two strangers who had never spoken or even heard of each other before that telephone call. Yet we chatted as if we had known each other for years and may even get to meet this weekend, if I can get my act together to venture down to the Kent meeting at the Angel at Addington Green.

There was an instant bond due to our appreciation of these little cars. I'm sure that we both came away from the telephone call richer and I can bet that I'll probably like Dan when I get to meet him.

Without the catalyst of the cars and the cement which is the Midget & Sprite club this would never have occurred.

With the New Year fast approaching, why not make it a resolution to get out to your local area meeting. Take the Spridget, and if not the Spridget then your everyday car. The area reps won't mind what you turn up in and they would be delighted to greet you, especially if you have never been before or it's been ages since you last popped along.

Have a great end of the year, I know that I will.

## **Gary and Gaps**

**The deadline for articles and reports for inclusion in next month's magazine is Wednesday the 14th of December.**



**The new Club Grill badge launched at the NEC in November. Priced at £21.00 incl P&P. You know that you want one for Christmas!**

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

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Cover shot Andy Bird's Frogeye at RAF Hendon photo copyright John Collins

# Assisting the Areas



**A**t the last committee meeting I became the new MASC area Rep's Delegate, and it was suggested that I should start off by explaining the role and how it fits into the club on the hallowed pages of *MASCOT*.

Firstly a massive vote of thanks to Alan Anstead who started this much needed role in an effort to pull together and improve support to the area Reps. He distributed the area Rep's pack which offers guidance to anyone trying to set up a new area, and provides insurance and other legal documents to inform our reps, record our road events, and keep the club on the right side of the law.

THE AREAS ARE A MASSIVE PART OF THE CLUB and the Area Reps are the vital focal point of the Areas, it is as simple as that!

Without the hard work of the area reps we would have no area reports in *MASCOT*, because we would have no regional events going on to show off our club and cars to the wider public. Without our events our cars would be less used, less seen and less of an encouragement to new people to want to see them survive. It is one thing to go out in your Spridget as an individual, but quite another to go out in convoy as an internationally recognised club, it's the same car and the same people, but suddenly Test Hill is opened up to you at Brooklands, you get infield parking at the track, the National Trust let you park in front of the rotunda and serve you

coffee on arrival, you get to drive round the F1 track at Silverstone, see your car on the cover of *MASCOT* and get 15% discount on your insurance, I actually make a profit on my subs since I asked for and got this discount on my everyday car also (tip – it's worth asking!).

So we have a brilliant thriving international club with a corporate identity, stand at the NEC, great accessible award winning magazine and a global web presence. And at regional level we are brilliantly represented by our individual local areas, each with its own unique local character and structure tailored to its member's preferences. My job is to do everything I can to help and support the established and up and coming areas through the area Reps, so if you are a MASC Club Rep with a suggestion, a gripe, an idea, something you would like brought up at the next committee meeting, would like to borrow some club equipment for your next event, need access to club paperwork or are a member thinking of starting up a new area then please contact me so I can help.

The committee and I recognise the huge contribution made by the area reps and as the club continues to develop and grow we have a real will to assist them in their efforts in any reasonable way we can, because like you we want to see MASC prosper.

**Dave Dixon**

# 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)
- 1st Wednesday **Devon Area – The Dartmoor Lodge Hotel**, Ashburton, TQ13 7JW 1930 – 2200. Please contact Dave Price for details, 01805 603133, [daveprice@daveprice.plus.com](mailto:daveprice@daveprice.plus.com)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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 **Notts/Derby border Area** at the **Sitwell Arms** at 30 Wood Lane, Horsley Woodhouse, Derby, DE7 6BN 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 Thursday **East Anglian Area**. Previously the Cambridgeshire Area meet at **The Ferry Boat**, at Holywell, 8pm
- 2nd Saturday **Yorkshire Area** – meet each month at **Ye Jolly Farmers Inn**, Dalton near Thirsk YO7 3HY – please note new fixed venue – more information at <http://yorkshiremasc.blogspot.com/>
- 3rd Monday **Dorset** – Meet at **St. Peter's Finger**, Lytchett Minster, Poole, BH16 6JE 7.30pm
- 3rd Tuesday **Scotland** – Meet at Holiday 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 Mike Gorman, [mike@birchwood44.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:mike@birchwood44.freeserve.co.uk) Tel: 01737-552256
- 4th Thursday **Sussex** – Meet at **Bolney Stage**, Bolney, RH17 5RL from 19:00. Contact David Southcott at [dandlsouthcott@btinternet.com](mailto:dandlsouthcott@btinternet.com)
- 4th Thursday **Hampshire** –New Venue! Now meeting at **The Fox and Goose**, Greywell, RG291BY. Please ring Terry or Harriet Langridge on 01252 626063 for details.

- 4th Sunday **Kent Area** – Meet at **The Angel**, Addington Green, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5BB at 12:00 for lunch. Contact Alan Anstead, Tel: 01322 384050.  
alan.anstead@btopenworld.com
- Last Monday **Wiltshire** – Meet at **The Barge Inn**, Seend, Nr. Devizes, about 7pm except on Bank Holiday Mondays when it will be the Bell Inn at Yatton Keynell near Castle Combe, 6.30pm. Contact Andy Cross on 01225 743554 or e-mail andy@cross743.freeserve.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 at 7pm for those wishing to eat or at 8pm for those not. Phone Ray Darch on 01460 72040 with any queries and to ensure we will be there!
- Northern Ireland robertholmes25@hotmail.com. If enough interest, will arrange a meeting.
- South West Wales Non regular and occasional meetings and runs arranged throughout the summer months. Please contact David Hill on 01239 811307 or email: david@hill.be

## Club Website

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

**Members only pages Password: Monza**

## Events

### From Richard Flynn & Webmaster Richard Mumford

#### December

- Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th This year the Midget and Sprite Ladies trip will be to the lovely city of Rome. The dates are Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th December to give two full days for sightseeing. The approximate cost will be £240 for a 3 or 4\* city centre hotel (sharing twin rooms) and flights from Gatwick.
- All ladies are welcome, but please let me know by 31st August if you wish to come so I can book as early as possible to keep the price down. You are probably safe from segways, go cars or other dangerous activities this year as there is so much to see in Rome ... unless of course I happen to come across something interesting!
- Helen Ward helen.ward@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk
- 11th East Anglia Christmas meal (Sunday lunch) details from Dave Dixon on (01733-222810)

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# Who Owns this Car?



*Philip Enjoying 478 LHA at Silverstone earlier this year*

I don't know if you ever wonder who has owned your car before you did? Some of us are lucky and have owned the car longer than anyone else and know every detail about the car, others have cars that have so many owners DVLA don't even know the answer. But I imagine most of you are like me; I have a little bit of paperwork but not much.

Editor Gary found pictures of my car in an Austin Healey year book for 1979-80, so I know at one point it was a concours winner and just before that it was a rotting shell – pictures in the yearbook to prove it.

So I was very pleased at the Silverstone Classic this summer when a gentleman approached a group of us asking who owned the Frogeye 478 LHA; that would be me I said. It turned out to be former owner of 478 LHA, Philip Heathcote. Philip has been kind enough to let me have the following information about my car:

*'I bought the car in January/February 1967 and have very fond memories of both the car and also the particularly carefree life at the time I owned it, which was before marriage and mortgages.*

*The previous owner lived at number one hundred and something Redhill Road, West Heath, Birmingham. I have been back since we met but was unable to identify the exact house which I suppose is not surprising given that it was 44 years ago!*

*The car was advertised in the Birmingham Evening Mail on a Monday night which was unusual because the traditional "car nights" were Thursday and Friday. I went see the car in the dark! But it was inside a small garage*



*478 LHA as it was during Philip's ownership*

and it looked to be better than any other I had seen.

I was taken on a test ride (I was told that synchromesh on second gear had failed which made the car tricky to drive until you were used to it and also insurance was an issue because I was under 21) with the roof off and the snow just beginning to fall.

I agreed to buy the car subject to an inspection in the daylight at the weekend and also a test drive which was agreed to provided I had arranged insurance cover.

By the weekend I was smitten and had even convinced myself that I would be able to master the gearbox without difficulty.

The condition of the car proved to be as good as I had first thought and the test drive revealed no problems other than the gear box although the combination of very direct steering and difficulty getting second gear made progress either hilarious or downright dangerous depending upon your point of view.

When I collected the car the fibreglass hard top which also came with it was fitted, and whilst this did protect the soft top in the worst of the winter weather it was a bit like being inside a kettle drum. I think it was this that encouraged me to drive with the roof off unless it was raining or snowing. It was also this that made me realise that the gearbox was noisy as hell in addition to the second gear syncro failure. A new gold seal replacement gearbox, together with

a replacement clutch, were fitted as soon as finances allowed. I never did manage to double declutch properly.

For most of the time that I owned the car I worked at Lucas as a Product Investigation engineer for all Lucas products and I also studied Automotive Engineering at college.

As Birmingham was the centre of the car industry at the time, the contacts at college enabled me to source nearly all the replacement parts I needed to bring the car to a very good standard over time. (Differential, prop shaft, braking system, suspension and electrics)

The specification was kept standard other than for 1¼" carburettors which were fitted when I bought the car, inlet trumpets in place of air filters and a Motolita leather steering wheel both of which I fitted. I also gas flowed the cylinder head and matched the inlet and exhaust valves (it made the engine much smoother but I suspect no quicker). The standard moulded rubber mats rather than carpets were fitted and were made presentable and practical by polishing with red shoe polish two or three times a year.

Another benefit of working where I did was working closely with the Competitions department and so I was able to obtain a sports coil, yellow and black copper cored spark plug leads as used on the formula one cars of the time and also headlamp bulbs with a 100 watt main. These were totally illegal for road use but anyone coming in the other direction who failed to dip their headlights did so at their peril.

I sold the car, I think in spring 1971 but it may have been a year earlier, to someone who lived in Staffordshire but I am afraid I have no idea where.

It really was great to see the car again at Silverstone and thank you so much for letting me sit in it, start the engine and generally have a poke about. On a day when we were surrounded by a thousand Jaguar E types, and cars valued in millions rather than thousands, the best car for me was 478 LHA.

**Philip'**

To me finding this information is like finding out my family history! What do you know about your car?

**Mark Hall**



Mike Mohr of Wolverhampton has certainly put some effort into the restoration of his white 'Mk 1' Sprite, after purchasing it for £325 in 1977. The work included the usual bodywork repairs, plus a full mechanical, suspension and brake overhaul, only that the upholstery of the seats and the chrome were carried out by professional firms. The result? Best in Class at International Holey Day, and Best in Class at the Midlands Centre concours at Ragley Park. The car was first registered in November 1959. These 'staring and after' shots demonstrate the results of Mike's work. Photos: Mike Mohr.



LHA owned at the time by Mike Mohr, a scan taken from Paul Skilleter's "Austin Healey Year Book 1979-80"

# Letters to the Editor

## Insurance for Young Drivers

My *MASCOT* arrived today.

One of the letters to the editor highlighted one problem we face in attracting younger members, to Spridgets, and that is the high price of insurance for a Spridget. I recently received an e-mail, from a 17yr old, trying to get insurance for a Midget as he could not get insurance under £3000. I appreciate that there are many variables i.e. driver record, post code etc. I asked a 19yr old with a Midget who replied that he paid £2700. Eventually the 17-year-old got back to me with a quote, he had received, from Aviva for £1000.

*Alan Anstead*

## Jersey Hire Cars, Condensers & Capacitors

(See pages 10 and 11 of this month's *MASCOT*)

Hi Gary,

With reference to Peter Harley's well written article on three Midgets (and three condensers) and how he became endeared to the marque (Oct. issue). His first car had originated on Jersey, the place where I got hooked on these little cars. I had spent, no misspent, some of my youth there in the early Sixties; Sprites were the hire cars, there were dozens of them running around the island. They had "H" plates on the back, like those near fire hydrants, white H on a blue background if I recall correctly, a requirement for all hire cars. The envious eye I cast over those holiday makers top down motoring on endless sunny days, stayed with me.

I had Googled "condenser ignition failure" and came up with a section of britishcarforum.com, the hyperlink is tediously long. Three different condensers had been opened up revealing the shortcomings in design and poor connections, little wonder they often fail. A quality capacitor had been used to replace the condenser, but being too large to install inside the distributor was mounted to the points side terminal on the coil. The capacitor, which should last "forever", was soldered to a copper faced printed circuit

board with a gap, in the copper, to separate each condenser terminal. I sought an expert opinion on this idea, which was favourable, except perhaps the gap in the copper could be wider to prevent any possibility of arcing. As stated the housing and mounting of the capacitor does need some refining, and I did express some concern about having it some distance from the points or even hidden away from the coil. I was told that when dealing in volts per microsecond the inductance of the wires can be a significant factor. Still very interesting I thought, and intend to try it.

*L. Langley, 2921b*

## Where is Speedwell Sprite 5447HX?

I have had an enquiry from a prominent writer of classic car magazine articles who is trying to trace a Speedwell Sprite (registration 5447HX) that was last known at an address in Cambridge, he plans to reunite the car with it's original owner and write a feature on it (*MASC* would obviously get a plug if we help). I will make some local enquiries but I wondered if you could put a note in *MASCOT* asking if anyone knows where this car is now.

Best regards

*Dave Dixon*

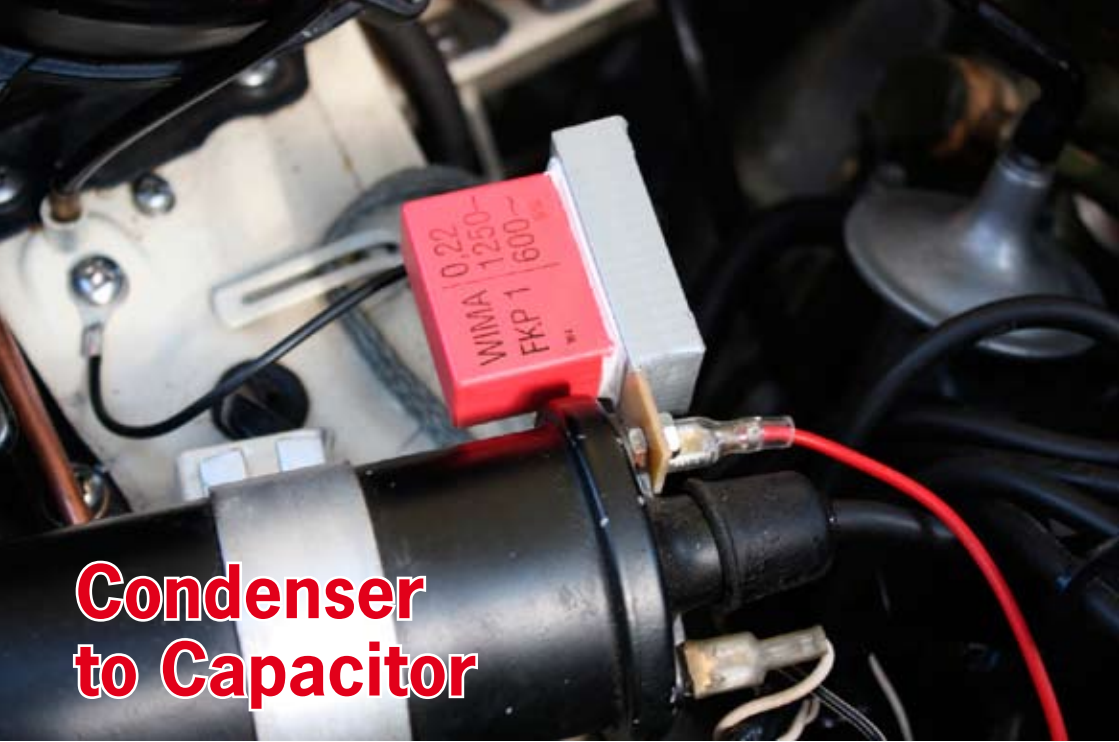
## BMW E30 5 speed Gearbox conversion for all models using BMC A Type Motor

It seems that there are now perhaps six or more members actively pursuing this project and I think it would be of benefit if we liaised with each other for information, ideas, and perhaps snags encountered. I now have the parts from Germany to almost complete the project but unfortunately can't progress as my garage/workshop is out of action at the moment. In the meantime I would be happy to pass on information.

If members would like to join the contact loop please email me at

hunters360@btinternet.com

*Geoff Hunter*



## Condenser to Capacitor

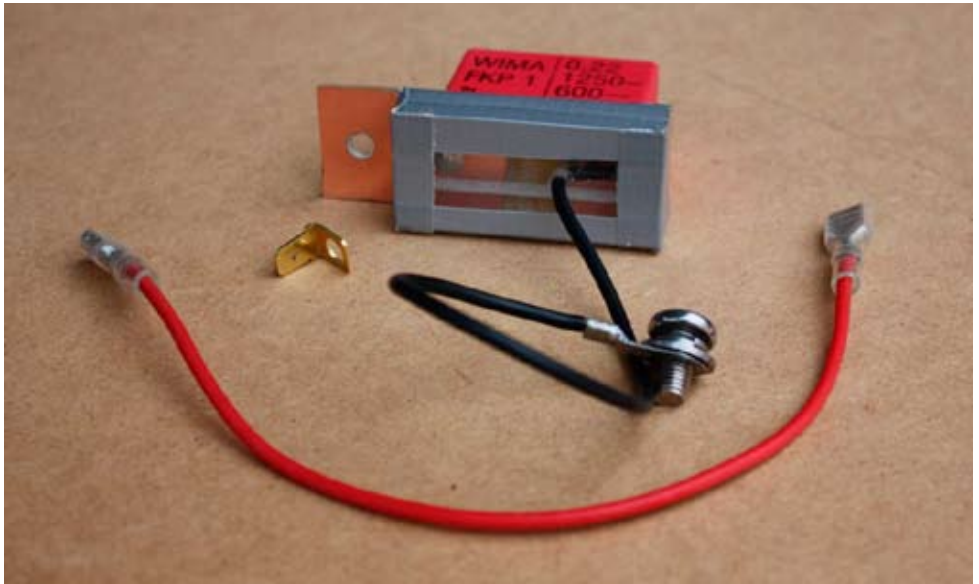
Having had what seemed to be two faulty condensers on the run I decided to go with a capacitor; and having driven only sixty miles the intermittent misfire seems to have been cured. There is also a striking improvement in starting. The car had been standing for three weeks before I fitted the capacitor, it fired immediately. Normally it would have taken some cranking (not that I thought this a bad thing, it does get the oil circulating). The capacitor and copper faced

board were acquired from Maplin Electronics for less than the cost of a condenser.

Two pieces of Perspex were used to insulate the board from the environment, one with a slot to accommodate the terminals and wire, then glued together and taped to the board. Then deciding to solder just the ground wire to the capacitor and use a spade connector on the coil so that the original loom wiring could be used; although I did make a lead for the distributor for the experiment so that the connection would be clean. Sealer was used around the capacitor and board again for insulation and additional support, and grounded to the body via a nearby free tapped hole.



In my experience of electronic components if they work at the outset they normally continue to work, this unit would make a cheap piece of test equipment for diagnosing a faulty condenser. I am just as keen on having the capacitor stuck on the side of the coil as I am in reverting back to dodgy condensers. Electronic ignition is the answer, I suppose,



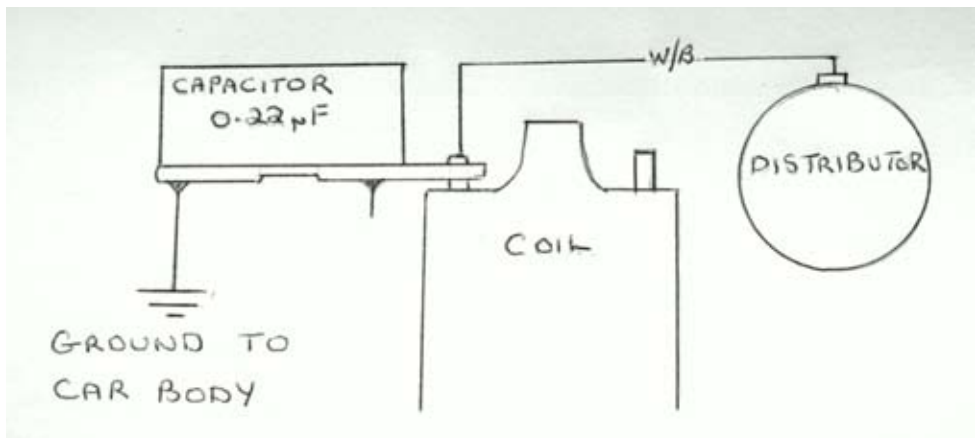
and they are good value if the vehicle is negative earth. Positive earth electronic distributors are now available, unfortunately they are twice the price of negative earth units. We have no desire to change the polarity of our Sprite.

The capacitor is non-polarised, it is connected to the coil terminal marked CB (contact breaker) on older coils or + for positive earth or - for negative earth vehicles. In all cases the wire is coloured white/black. The 0.22 $\mu$ F capacitor needs to be able to handle the voltage spikes, the guy on the website gave dimensions of about inch

and a half by half an inch. He used a 600 volt dc, I used, what was readily available, a 1250 volt dc, the actual voltage isn't critical.

I did acquire a box to put the capacitor in but it did then become even bulkier, and where and how to fix it, and it would require longer wires, which may result in an induction problem. A smaller capacitor say 250volts 0.22 $\mu$ F may work (or fry) and may even fit inside the distributor. Proof of the pudding, as they say.

**Lawrence Langley**  
2921b



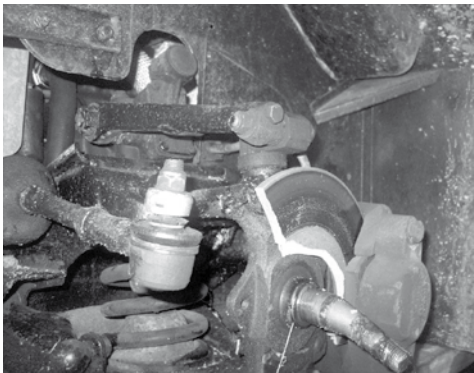
# Healey Sport, Hillclimbs & Sprints - Eventful Weekend



Further to my report earlier in the year, I was rather looking forward to the Wiscombe/ Gurston weekend 10th / 11th Sept: We set off towards Honiton for my 2nd visit to Wiscombe Park, it was very foggy on arrival and the clouds hung over us all day. During practice the track was damp, everybody was very cautious, there were nine Sprites and six big Healys in our class.

After lunch the timed runs began, we had fine rain, I had a re start because Andrew Taylor's Sprite was red flagged. I was trying too hard and rolled the car over after hitting the bank on the right hand side, as many others have done in the past on the esses section of the course.

Apparently the car went airborne, hit the roll cage on both top bars and landed on three



More than just new pads needed here

wheels, the front nearside wheel had sheared off the hub and brake disc still attached having bent the stub axle, as we landed. I jumped out ASAP (like you do) to look at the car, picked up wheel only to be taken by the paramedics into the ambulance, for a check up. While the marshals cleared the course, after the Doctors "all clear" I was taken back to the paddock for a cup of tea. Talking to the other competitors, I was offered a shared drive the next day at Gurston Down by Joe Mackrell. With a "Little help from my friends" we loaded a sad Kermit and set off home.

We had a great BBQ at Murray's that night, on Sunday Gurston stayed fine, the Clerk of the Course was happy to let me dual drive Joe's 1380cc Sprite with red hard top, also Murray in Tom's car as he had clutch problems. Tom Walker came first braking the Sprite record, Murray second in the Supa Sprite.

Only some light repairs and check over, we were out again three weeks later at Prescott for the last event of the season but I could not beat my personal best. Although I held third place until then Ralph Haywood gained 1 point more so came third overall. Better luck next time!

When I was younger my mother told me I should save for a rainy day, also when I drove too fast she said " you wont get there any quicker". IT BECAME ALL TOO TRUE !!!

Sorry it may be a bit long, Happy Christmas to all our readers ... Keep up the good work Gary.

**Colin Gale**

# Footman James NEC Classic Motor Show Competition Winners

This year's competition for a free weekend ticket to the Footman James NEC Classic Motor Show was not one of the hardest ever set and it's no surprise that all seven winning tickets had been claimed within 24 hours of MASCOT's delivery.

The question for those who need reminding was simply:

**"Which Sponsor of the NEC Classic Motor Show is also an advertiser in MASCOT?"**

The answer to which is: **Footman James**

The seven winners were:

Bob Fletcher, John Hutton, Peter Hind, Mark Hall, John Andrews, Neil Thomas and James Whiles.

My thanks all members who took part, and my apologies for not being able to award a ticket to everyone who took the time to enter.

One winner John Hutton has kindly emailed with a bit of feedback and some photos (see page 14).

He writes:

So, my copy of MASCOT arrived on 4th November (my birthday!), and I entered the competition to win a ticket to the Footman James NEC Classic Car Show - and won! Determined to take advantage of this good luck we went down on Thursday afternoon and stayed the night, at the Caravan Club site, Chapel Lane, Wythall, off the M42, around 13 miles from NEC.

To ensure that we avoided any tailback for exit from the motorway and entry into the NEC, we left the site at 8.00.am, and were comfortably in the NEC car park, and eating breakfast in our motorhome for 8.35 am. OK maybe a little early, but organised!

We entered Hall 5 at just after 10.00.am, and I visited our stand early on, and it seemed a friendly place to be.



*A beautiful K Series engined Midget displayed on the Civil Service Car Club's stand*

Most other stands were easy to access – however the Austin-Healey stand had ropes around, hardly inviting, and considering that even the Rolls Royce stand was open to all!

There was plenty to see, including some 'live restoration', and antics from the Mike Brewer and Ed China *Wheeler Dealers*, and of course the *Top Gear* team. Got to say – Clarkson just doesn't appeal to me (sorry).

The Club Stands featured some superb restorations, with many rare cars, and you would have been most unfortunate not to find something that ticked all the boxes. Trade stands had parts from grommets to gearboxes, and were well attended. I finally departed the exhibition at around 6.30.pm, having had a most enjoyable, if a little tiring day. Thank you once again MASCOT.

**John M Hutton**

*Ed says: John, it was our pleasure. It's great that you enjoyed the show and that you received an addition surprise Birthday present.*



Ken Cothliff's Midget, Little Red  
alongside Shaun & Michelle's  
MkIII Midget, Midge



The Patrick Collection's  
cut-away Midget



Graham Goodall's  
MkI Sprite

# Where is it Now?

**Mk1 Sprite**  
**WAO 995**



Firstly I would like to say how good it was to meet everyone at this year's Silverstone Classic. Thanks to David Dixon for organizing the parade lap of the circuit, it was the highlight of the weekend. It was also good to make new friends in the Midget & Sprite Club, especially Dennis and Daniel, but everyone was so friendly with us all having a common interest.

The second reason for this not is that I am trying to locate my previous Frogeye Sprite, a 1959 model, registration number WAO995. When I had it, the colour was old English white, but according to the DVLA records it still taxed and is now blue. I am sure one of our club members might know of its current location.

Barbara and I bought it back in the mid sixties. We were saving up to get married when I saw it advertised in the local paper. I thought we would just have a look at it, but when we saw it, we agreed to buy it there and then. For £195.0s.0d.!!! We insured it with London and Cheshire Insurance Company for £13.10s.0d., third party only, (still have the receipt). They later went bust with our money. It was our everyday car and was parked overnight on the roadside. I used it to go to work, used it every night and weekend and we even went to London and Torquay for our holidays in it.

I pulled up in it one day outside a local fish and chip shop, and the owner came out and was very interested in the car. It transpired



*Barbara with the Frogeye*



*A blurred photo of Ron's Sprite 778JUP*

that he was one of the previous owners, had been in a local motor club and had used it on local rallies. I found out later that a friend of ours has an 8mm cine film that had been taken inside the car going through a special stage on one of those club rallies.

Four of our friends also owned Frogeyes. Ron with 778JUP, Howard with 1883SM, Peter with RFY40 and Brian with RG777. Unfortunately Brian's car was stolen in 1965 and never found. It was good fun in the 1960's, living our youth and driving these affordable sports cars. Here we are, nearly 50 years down the road, trying to emulate those days!!!

WAO995 had a hard life, but even harder was to come. We eventually bought two old cottages to knock into one dwelling. They cost £125.0s. 0d. Then we bought an adjacent barn for £60.0s.0d. Later we bought an adjacent stable for £25.0s.0d. It all cost £1.10s.0d. more than the car insurance. We used the Sprite as a builder's truck, carrying building materials, bags of cement etc. on

the passenger seat an in the boot space. This went on until the cottage was complete.

The day before we got married we bought a two year old Mini and the Sprite had to go. We sold it to a mechanic friend for £100.0s.0d. and he rejuvenated it. The last I heard about the car, my friend was driving it down the new part of the M6 when the fuel tank dropped out onto the road. The boot floor had rotted away. He managed to do a temporary repair and was on his way. It may have had one careful owner, but it certainly wasn't me. The photo of the car (at the top of page 15) was taken on a damp dismal day prior to selling it.

If anyone knows anything about the Frogeyes mentioned, please get in touch. WAO995 is out there, I would just like to find it.

**Ian Burnyeat**

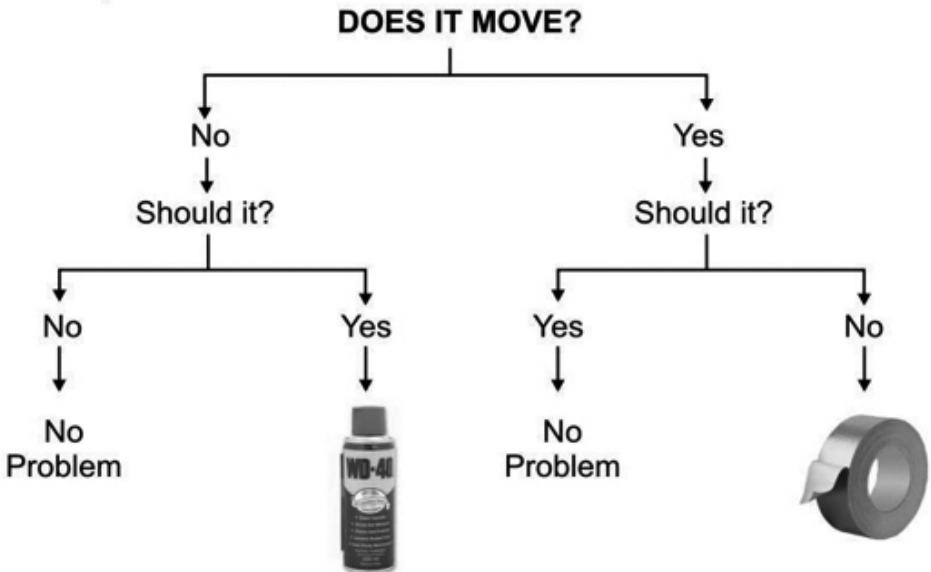
Membership Number 4251

*Ed's note: If anyone knows of any of these cars, please contact me in the usual way. Gary*

## The Only Maintenance Manual That Your Spridget Should Ever Need

**Copy it, print it and stick it on your garage wall.**

*With thanks to Andrew McGee from West Yorkshire for bringing this to my attention.*





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MASC stand near the bar

## MASC at the Footman James Classic Motor Show 2011

The Heart of England Group again organised the MASC stand at the NEC for the 2011 Footman James Classic Motor Show at the NEC last November. The eight stunning cars shown this year highlighting 50 years of the Midget Mk 1 & Sprite Mk 2 were by Ken Cothliff (Yorks) – Midget Mk 1 / Shaun & Michele Walsh – Midget Mk 3 RWA / Alan & Linda Pritchett (HoE) – Midget 1500 / Sectioned Midget – The Patrick Collection / Stuart Gunn & Rosemary Weston (HoE) – V8 4WD Midget Mk 3 / Graham & Sandra Goodall (HoE) - Frogeye Sprite / Roger & Maggi Byford (Home Counties) – Ashley Sprite / Jim & Rosemarie Willis (HoE) – Sprite Mk 2. All arrived safely except poor Maggi Byford whose Sprite expired 10 feet away from the stand with hydraulic clutch problems on the Ashley. A good range of models showing the range of cars within the club.

This year we freshened our display with superb new tables produced by Richard Flynn and had our stand quickly erected. This year's show was much bigger than previous and the halls had been cascaded through the complex with Top Gear Live taking the best three halls, resulting in the show appearing to be in two halves separated by an unwelcoming link tunnel with us being some distance away from the entrance, although we were grouped with the other MG & AH clubs. The dedicated found us but perhaps we did not get as many visitors as we would have expected. The

attendance in these hard times was 2,000 more than 2010 at 47,000 showing that interest in classic cars is being maintained. We did however have three extremely busy days and recruited 16 new members, a big welcome to you all, sold approx £400 from our clothing regalia at half price to clear stocks pending the introduction of a new range and our superb new Grille Badge. We gave out 200 of the special NEC edition of MASCOT together with more back numbers so hope for more new members to follow.

We had many visitors say how unlike other club displays, they appreciated being able to come onto our friendly stand, meet the owners, sit in the cars and look under the bonnets. No absent owners and fences here!

Again as with previous years we have tried to involve members from other areas of the country with display cars and personal, we were very pleased to have some 30 members sharing the manning over the three days, something we will encourage again. It is very good to have such enthusiastic support from members who put themselves out with time and money on hotel bills etc to help. Once again our "Spridget Sales, Wants & Message" board proved very popular with many items finding new homes. We shall certainly repeat this again next year.

As last year some of our members kept leaving us to visit the Hammerite stand but



And in the blue corner

Classic car show NEC 2011

returned without paint! Does anyone know why or have any photos? Good to meet up with so many members during the three days, some visiting from as far away as Scotland, including a lot of our area reps, also to put faces to various contributors from the BBS, all to talk about our favourite cars. Thank you for bringing your advance on-line ticket stubs which will benefit the club £1 each.

Many thanks go to the Display Car owners for some interesting Spridgets, Heart of England

Group members for support setting up and breakdown, Richard Flynn for transporting our kit, Ann Platt & Janet Hunter for Cakes, Roy Cole and Andrew Smith for supplying the trailer and transporting the sectioned Midget from the Patrick Collection and all the Guys and Gals from Heart of England, Notts & Derby and Kent areas who gave up their time to man the stand – A very big thank you to you all, as we could not do it without you. I personally had a real surprise when on Friday morning before the show opened, Chairman Geoff Hunter assembled all together and presented me with a plaque for my past endeavours. I did not see this coming and was extremely pleased to receive it. I should have guessed something was up as he refused to sell me one of our super new grill badges beforehand!

On Sunday Alan Anstead made an executive decision and handed out the remaining stock of red tee and sweat shirts for us all to wear giving us a very smart corporate image.

We will be doing it all again next year but not with me in charge as after 6 years, Alan Pritchett has kindly offered to take over the organisation although I have agreed to be in the background. We have already started planning next year's show, having already made our application. We shall have to wait until April and see what size we are allocated before we can consider the final line up. Although we have several cars already 'pencilled in', we are always interested in offers of display cars. Put the date in your diary now 16/17/18 November 2012 and join us at the NEC.

**John Platt**

Photographs copyright Alan East-Jones



As usual the cutaway Midget got a lot of attention

Packing up, the gazebo already dismantled





# My Turbo Blue

Having passed two E-Types down the straight, I set off after the 911, caught and passed it and then over the time remaining, basically lapped the field! My little 1959 Mk1, Austin Healey Sprite was flying<sup>1</sup>. I purchased it back in 2004<sup>2</sup>. I'd been a fan of Mk1 Sprites (unlike in the UK, we call them interchangeably, Bug Eyes or Frog Eyes in Australia) since I was a teenager but at the time had spent most of my funds restoring a concours 1937 Morris 8/40. That was an outstanding car but its little 0.8 litre flat head could in no way keep up with my mate's Bug Eye. Later I got hold of a superb XK 120 but then, like many before me, I married, became involved in tertiary studies and that era came to an abrupt end. Nearly 40 years later, about a year before retirement, I grabbed my Mk1. So in mid 2005, right after retiring, I decided to improve its performance and got stuck

into it. Since then, apart from the Queensland Austin Healey Sprite Club, I also joined "GEAR", the Golden Era Auto Racing Club here in Queensland. We have what might be called 'competitive' track days in GEAR. The various types of cars are usually "Pride and Joys" so to prevent drivers growing horns, strict rules say 'no intimidatory driving', and



*My first restoration, 1937 Morris 8/40*



<sup>1</sup> Check the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4Bh-OH-Bel>

<sup>2</sup> The car was known in Australia as one of Colin Dodds' restorations. See <http://www.spriteparts.com.au/garage/chook.html>



Racing cockpit and screen



Chasing down the opposition

'no overtaking on curves unless waved by'. We line up a bunch of cars, start one after another and in the 15 minutes allotted to each event, try our darn'dest to overtake everyone who started in front of us and then we set out to catch and pass everyone who started behind us! Due to its high state of tune, my little Sprite is usually pretty successful in doing just that.

I joined GEAR in 2009 and since that time, except on one occasion when I spun out, have never ever been passed by another car. The two E-types mentioned in my opening haven't been the only ones either. I recall surprising myself going past an immaculate light weight version not so long ago, along with the usual Lotus 7's and even an Elite. The strongest competition comes from twin cam, cross flowed after market computer controlled, EFI'd 200SX powered cars. But so far I'm still keeping them in my mirrors.

I have always been mechanically inclined and am not too bad on paint and fabrication either. I wanted to keep the car fundamentally Sprite, but almost everyone in the club had improved their cars in some way. Many had their Mk1's converted from their 948cc motors to the slightly later 1275 motors (I did the same), many had converted to front disks, (eventually I did that as well), lots had extractors and or webbers, improved compression, cams and the like. So my

simple philosophy became, if you modify for a little extra performance, you modify for a little extra performance. Let's not argue then about what kind of modification one uses as some so called purists do. Once you modify you modify! Thus to my mind, why not go for the most efficient methods of achieving that.

One of my sons-in-law, Dominic Blandin de Chalain, is a very enthusiastic BMW technician, he's also an auto electrician, a Rotary drag car owner and an expert in after market computers. We discussed which way to go and he pushed for forced induction but definitely not the old fashioned carburettor charge going through a super charger or a turbo. Arm chair experts said turbos burn out pistons and blow up motors etc but I've learned from Dom that under modern computer control those events should not happen as the gaggle of sensors (I have fitted plenty to the Sprite) keeps the computer in full control of the essentials such as maximum revs, maximum boost, engine temperatures, ignition timing across the range, very importantly air fuel ratios and this at all times and in all conditions (which can't be achieved by carburation). In fact the computer receives information and resets its controls six times every second!

So I decided I needed to shop around for a T-25 Garret turbo, (I have varied A/R ratios with experience) had the inlet runners, plenum and exhaust system built by an expert craftsman, purchased an Australian L-10 Microtech in car computer system with associated spark exciters and quad coils, set up all my sensors, rebuilt the 1275, (kept the standard crank and rocker gear), but



did convert the head to 11 stud, put in extra valve springs, put in a turbo settings modified cam, did a full balance, lightened the fly wheel, and attached a crank angle sensor using micro volt Hall Sensor technology. That by the way fits into the original distributor position. All these mods are discussed at length in various entries if one wants to simply Google "Bruce Roberts Sprite". The car is fundamentally Sprite right through, including suspension and drive train...well almost. I did fit an Rx2 LSD and axles due to twisting the splines of the original axles and also breaking teeth from the original diff. Total cost after original purchase has been about 13 thousand UK Pounds.

Tuning took some development and was all done out on the road where temperatures and conditions are always varying. People ask, "What's its Dino Power"? I simply say, "It's adequate"! Actually I'm not a believer in Dino testing and I've got a car that proves my theory.

I've learned a lot about modern technology and am convinced about in car computers with EFI for tuning. Now that we have the matrixes set up for our car we simply hook up the lap top, do a ten minute road run, come home, switch off then go over the read outs on the lap top. Where we see a possible advantage if we were to change a read out line, we do so, go back to the car, hook up the lap top, turn on the ignition, turn it off again and the tuning mod has been done. As simple as that.

I took the car to the drags, my first time ever and recorded a 14.8. We have modified more since then so maybe one day we'll do the low 14's. But bear in mind, that first run was faster than a V-12 E-Type was quoted at by



*Bruce and the Sprite at the All English Day*

the factory when they came out. And for the technically minded, it has a "Two Step" set up for powering off the line. While revving to start, I hold a button in, the computer retards the spark thus allowing unburnt fuel into the turbo chamber where it starts exploding and backfiring, then when the lights go green, I release the button, and with perfect engine timing and at the same moment, maximum torque, not just maximum revs, I release the clutch and off we go.

But one mustn't think that this car is a race car. Yes I put on the roll bar, some numbers, the racing screen and race tyres for track days but most of the time it looks very standard. It's a joy out on the road, has a very subdued exhaust note, and pulls away in top from about 1300RPM as smooth as silk. It's a pleasure to drive, I'm seventy next birthday, and life is good!

**Bruce Roberts**  
Queensland, Australia



*At the Drag race*

# New Members November



Gary Tomkins  
in his MkIII  
Midget

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

4512	Mark Livingstone	Berkshire	Sprite	Mk 1
4513	Jim Smith	Herts		
4514	Peter Barton	Hants	MG	Midget
4515	Tom Marnham	Surrey	Midget	Mk 3
4516	Terry Thompsett	Sussex	Midget	Mk 3
4517	John Boddy	Surrey	Sprite	
4518	David King & Joy King	Gloucestershire	Sprite	Mk 4
4519	Jason Rees	Gloucestershire	Sprite	Frogeye
4520	Angela Hudson	Gloucestershire	Sprite	Mk 1
4521	Tom & Barbara Delahoyde	Ireland	Midget	
4522	Gino Dupont	Belgium	Sprite	Mk 3
4523	Ian Goodchild	Surrey	Midget	Mk 3
4524	James Fairbairn	Bedfordshire	Midget	1500
4525	Richard Stevens	Middlesex	Midget	1500
4526	Martin & Barbara Ezra	Middlesex	Sprite	
4527	John Collinson	Devon		
4528	Gary Tomkins	Bucks	Midget	Mk 3
4529	Martin Yates & Maria Thelwell	Worcs	Sprite	Mk 2
4530	Johnathan Kesselman	Beds	Sprite	Frogeye
4531	Stephen Ford & Claire Fitzgerald	Kent	Midget	Mk 3
4532	Robert Johnson	Warks	Sprite	Mk 2
4533	Lance Gurney	Warks		
4534	Les & Elaine Jeans	West Midlands		



Peter Barton and  
his 1500 Midget



Les and Elaine Jeans  
with "Bridget"



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# Rawles Open Day 2011



*There's a Spridget in there somewhere*

A sunny but chilly morning saw us heading along the A303 (hood down with Jill trying to listen to the Rugby semi-final between Wales and France on headphones!) to the 4th Rawles Motorsport Open Day at Upper Froyle near Alton on 15th October. A warm welcome awaited us as always from Andrew, family and staff alike, along with tea, coffee, biscuits and sweets for the children.

Around 100 cars, owners and families packed all of the available space, with some very desirable vehicles on display – and not all Big Heales! A sprinkling of Sprites along with Austin, Aston Martin, Triumph, MG, Lotus, Jaguar, Morgan were all represented and

the beautiful Hampshire countryside was an added bonus on such a lovely day. As is usual there was the chance to catch up with old acquaintances and make new ones and swap stories, hints and tips. Also some spare parts if you knew where to look!

We were all free to wander around the facilities that Rawles can provide for their customers, the workshop, body shop, and upholstery with their specialist staff on hand for advice; and the rolling road was being demonstrated too. Examples of on-going restorations were also on display. We were then treated to a delicious BBQ prepared and served by Debbie, Tris and Tommy; very welcome before the drive back home.

So a very big thank you to Andrew and everyone at Rawles for a good day out, and to those who brought their magnificent cars. Also a personal thanks for changing our alternator while we were there! Looking forward to 2012 already!

(Wales lost but that's history now!)

**Jill & Dave Hansford**



*Immaculate engine bay*

Before it got busy



## Heart of England Report

The meeting this month was well attended with 36 members, many of the old familiar faces, but it was also nice to see Sue and Roger again and to welcome Jane who had come with Andy.

There was not much new business to discuss but John reminded us of the arrangements for the NEC Classic Car Show at the weekend, sadly for his last, and numbers and menu details taken for the Christmas Dinner. At the October meeting we had decided that in the New Year, meetings would begin slightly earlier at 8.00 so members were reminded of this. Also contributions were asked towards purchasing a Heart of England sail to be used at future events that we attend and members generously gave, meaning we are 2/3 of the way to the cost already. Geoff Hunter was congratulated on becoming Club Chairman and it was noted that Heart of England now have very good representation on the Committee including new Membership Secretary Stuart Watson, Jim Willis and Richard Flynn.

### NEC Classic Motor Show

Much planning goes into organising and executing this event, and sadly, this is the last time that John Platt will be putting in his expertise to guide us through the set up, rota for willing members and staying till the bitter end to see it through. Our grateful thanks must go to John for all his efforts over the last upmteen years for giving up his time for this prestigious event.

On Thursday, we agreed to meet at my house and load up the regalia necessary to provide the stand. The weather forecast for the day

was supposed to be dry. Those who were exhibiting their cars had spent ages polishing and fettling, to no avail, as it began to rain about 10.30, and looked to be set in for the day. Luckily, the motorway to Birmingham was quite dry by the time we set off, and we got away with just a good leathering off on arrival. All the cars arrived safely, and were illustrated in the November "show edition" of *MASCOT*. Thanks to Gary for featuring them all.

The stand and equipment was soon erected, and our thanks must go to Richard Flynn for making the new tables and logos to compliment our stand. The old table that we have used for years is now very tired, and Richard's new layout looked very professional.

The show this year was even bigger than previous years, and was spread over several halls with some 1400 classic cars on display. We were placed in Hall 7, and I felt we were a little "out of the way", but the organisers



The team presenting John Platt with a MASC plaque

had grouped all the MGs and Healeys in one area, so we were in good company. Business was very brisk all weekend, and the volunteers did a sterling job advising, selling and generally being on hand to answer the deluge of enquiries we had. Thanks to all who attended in this capacity and to Geoff (via Janet) for providing acres of cake to sustain us all! The reduced price regalia sale was an instant success and bargains were snapped up quickly, and we now have very little left. It will be up to the committee now to decide how we proceed with this item for the future, so watch this space.

Getting in and out of the show for the cars seemed to be much easier this year, but I

understand that the vans and trailers were prevented from getting into the halls for hours afterwards, to load up after the event, which I think takes the edge off what seemed to be a very successful event. Perhaps we can make representation to the promoters of the organisation to prevent this happening again.

With Stuart Watson on hand for his inaugural membership role, about 20 new members signed up at the show, and many renewals completed, the event was a resounding success and Heart Of England area look forward to hosting the event again in 2012.

**Jim Willis**



## NW Area Report

*Halloween line up*

**N**ovember club night had a fantastic turn out. A very good night with a few cars as well, even though it was dark and cold – not me though, I'm far too soft. The only down side was that Mike came in his other car. I can't bring myself to write the name of it but you know the one. Can't recall if Neil also went in his 'other car' as I was too shell shocked after seeing that blue thing in the car park, placed right in the middle for all to see. Some people have no shame. I must have a word with the Kilten to see if we can arrange special parking for those who are aged over 60 and have a particularly bad taste in cars – somewhere round the back by the skip would be good.

On the 25th September four of the NW area took part in the "Five Walled Towns Trail". Here is a report courtesy of Dennis.

Taking part were Alan, Terry, Lee (with co-driver Maddie) and Dennis with his brother Keith (Sefton Morris Minors) as co-driver. The event was organised by the "Walled Towns Friendship Circle" consisting of Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy, Denbigh and Chester.

I picked Keith up in Wallasey at 7.50 the weather was grey and drizzling. All 200 entrants (cars from various eras from early 1900's up to 1973) met at Gorse Stacks car park and the weather brightened up a bit. Those of us who were brave or fool hardy took our tops off or down.

We were waved off between 9.00 and 9.45 at various intervals by the Mayor of Chester. Leaving Chester we followed our route card taking us through Huntington, Aldford, Churton, Farndon, Loggerheads, Llanferres,

Llanbedr, Rewehl to Denbigh. Just outside Denbigh I let Keith take over (with Daniel's kind permission). I hadn't realised Denbigh to Conwy was going to be the most challenging part of the drive particularly with Keith never driving the Sprite before. As we trundled along country lanes and over hill and dale I had my heart in my mouth twice.

From Denbigh the route took us to Llandudno and along the Promenade. The weather had brightened up now and we hadn't got wet despite dark clouds along the way. On the promenade people were taking photos of our parade. Following the route card took us into Conwy under the Town Walls, around the town and out the other side and to our destination Conwy Council offices car park.

Keith and I walked into Conwy had fish and chips and went back for the presentations. Took Keith back home via the A55. The car struggled up the 3 lane steep climb having to take it in third gear all the way up to the top with the coolant nearly boiling but we made it passing a 4x4 and caravan boiling over. I dropped Keith off in Wallasey and put the hood on. Home for tea at 6 pm.

On 30th October we had our Halloween run. Good turn out with eight cars plus three witches, although to be honest until they told me then I didn't know they had actually dressed up. We met at the Leyland Garden Centre at Croston where we had some breakfast – extra staff were shipped in from High Legh just for us. Then it was time to set off along some lovely roads heading to our midway stop at Crosby beach. This is the location of Anthony Gormley's Another Place – 100 cast-iron, life-size figures spread out along three kilometres of the foreshore, stretching almost one kilometre out to sea. However, the tide was in so we couldn't see a thing!



Alan at Walled Town Run



Fraser and Lesley

After a short stop we set off on the second part of the run heading back to Leyland. We drove along some brilliant roads across the marsh lands, not to mention Green Lane – even 4x4's won't drive along here! We finished for lunch at Charnock Farm restaurant.

Lee didn't stay for lunch but set off home with Maddie. Not long after I got a text, he had broken down on the motorway – head gasket blown. He phoned the RAC only to find his membership had expired! However the very kind RAC lady let him renew over the phone then promptly sent out the recovery wagon. Not a happy ending to the run but it got worse. Once home, the RAC man helped Lee push his car down his long and steep driveway and into the garage. With Lee sitting in the car ready to stop once in the garage then what could possibly go wrong, I mean who would press the clutch instead of the brake pedal!! BANG, one dented rear panel and boot lid. Not a good end to the day. Bernie has since been to see Lee's car and has worked his magic on the rear panel. A new boot lid is required though.

December club night will be our Christmas meal starting at 7.00pm. Andrew will have sent out menus and details but if you haven't received one and would like to attend then let me know a.s.a.p. Well that's it. If I don't see you in December then have a lovely Christmas and hope to see you next year.

**Les**

Email: [lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:lesrobinson@blueyonder.co.uk)

Tel: 01772 432138

# Hello from a New Member

Just a quick line or two to introduce or reintroduce my Sprite to you. Having found this car on an on line auction site, I put in the first (and what was to be the last) bid, after bidding and losing many previous Midgets and Sprites. To my surprise I won the auction.

Here starts the story how to get it from Minehead to Cheshire, only 200 miles. Trailer no, get it delivered no that would be too simple. So the 6.55am train to Taunton seemed the best option with a bag of basic tools a fuel can and jump leads what could go wrong with a car that I had not seen or heard running? (Mot'd and taxed though).

Three hours is a long time on a train to think about what could go wrong. 9.15 Taunton station car park to meet with the car and owner (I think he was surprised to see me not in a straightjacket). A quick guided tour of my new project, a bundle of paper work and the obligatory boot full of



**MIDGET & SPRITE CLUB**

DATE OF ISSUE NOV 2001 YOUR REFERENCE No. 2794  
ISSUED TO JOHN RATHBONE

**SPRITE MK111 ( HAN 8 )**  
ANNOUNCED - March 1964, REPLACED - October 1966

FIRST CAR NUMBER - 38829	LAST CAR NUMBER - 64734
EARLIEST ON REGISTER - 38850	LATEST ON REGISTER - 64707
MEMBER BUILT - 25905	NUMBER ON REGISTER - 290

**YOUR CAR**

CAR NUMBER - 50698	ENGINE NUMBER - 10CC 0AH35294
REG. NUMBER - JLB 926D	AREA - LONDON DATE - 7-1-66

**CLOSEST MATCHING CAR NUMBER**

CAR NUMBER - L-50671	ENGINE NUMBER -
REG. NUMBER - 96-91-00	AREA - HOLLAND DATE -

REGISTER REFERENCE NUMBER OF ABOVE  
RHCJ

YOUR CAR PREVIOUSLY ON REGISTER, REF- N/A

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE SEND A STAMPED ADDRESS ENVELOPE TO THE MIDGET AND SPRITE CLUB REGISTER, QUOTING YOUR REFERENCE NUMBER AT THE TOP OF THIS CERTIFICATE.

83 LITTLEDEAN, VAYE, BRISTOL BS37 8JQ, ENGLAND

spares though I'm not sure what five fan belts three new wiper blades and a chrome grill are going to do if I brake down.

Just before I set off quickly wired in a cigarette lighter for the sat-nav, sorry to you purist out there. I typed in home, avoiding motorways ... five hours hmmm. Now this is the part where I list all the things that went wrong. Not a chance, my new red Sprite never missed a beat. Two stops of 20 minutes to check the oil and water and it ran like a dream not using a drop of either.

So not much to do mechanically but plenty to do on the body.

Note to self on long journeys take a radio to stop unfounded rattles & groans (that was just inside my head).

Having sifted through most of the paper work I have found an old Midget & Sprite Club register attached maybe you could tell me something about my car?

Thanks

*An old MASC register certificate*

**Pete**



At RAF Hendon

## Five Go South

**B**usy, busy, busy. Well that's how it seems to me. SS & NB definitely seems to have been getting out and about over the summer.

In brief, several of us regularly attended Bosworth's Classic car night, a couple of Spridgets ventured down to the Silverstone Classic. But the big run this summer was our journey down South.

displayed "as found" after spending several decades at the bottom of a lake.

Following this, we took a short run along the North Circular before arriving at the Ace Cafe for their monthly classic car night. We were amongst the first there and took pole position in front of the Ace. Due to being early, we took the opportunity to partake in a hearty meal – the whale of fish seemed to go down well as did the bangers and mash!



Later at the Ace Café

The evening sun decided to come out and many more cars turned up during the evening, despite the previous night's troubles in the London riots. After several hours of wandering around looking at cars and chatting, we decided to head home, briefly stopping to refill with fuel and discussing how much each of us had used. Our evening finished off with a run home in the dark along the M40 & M42 before

Five of us travelled down the A5 on a Tuesday morning, all with hoods down and visited Hendon Air Force museum. This is a great place to visit and in fact, I don't think that we took it all in on one day. There is some amazing machinery in there including a Vulcan bomber and a Halifax bomber that is

going our separate ways.

Hopefully we can carry on with our days out and see where we can travel in the coming future.

**John Collins**

Mail to: [ssnb.masc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ssnb.masc@hotmail.co.uk)

# Scotland Area Report



*Everybody is famous for 15 seconds - Dave A being interviewed at Dalemian as part of the Midget 50 years birthday celebration*

Firstly, it is congratulations to Pauline and Steve who got married last month (October). In modern terms they have been an "item" for several years, but with Steve living in Uddingston near Glasgow and Pauline in deepest Norfolk, the relationship has necessitated both of them driving many, many thousands of miles over the years and the telephone companies making big profits! However, this is now all coming to a close. The pair of them (probably mostly Pauline to be honest) are now juggling with the logistics and practicalities of trying to rationalise the contents of two houses into one as Pauline is to relocate to Uddingston. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Scottish Group members, to wish Pauline and Steve every success and happiness in their years together.

Steve, Dave A and I have just returned last night from our annual jaunt down to the NEC for the Classic Motor Show. We drove down on Friday afternoon and stayed at the Travelodge at Sheldon. A local bus journey avoids having to wait in a queue of traffic the Exhibition Car Park. We visited the show on Saturday and again on Sunday morning prior to returning in the afternoon/evening. It was good to be able to visit The Midget and Sprite Club stand and have my annual chat with John Platt and the others who man the stand and to whom thanks are due. I did however miss our Editor, who successfully managed to avoid me. I must

have done something wrong to upset him! On a personal note, although I can appreciate the top quality restorations that people produce and the dedication it must take, I do like to see cars that may be not quite to the same exemplary standard but which are obviously cars that are used and enjoyed by their owners. It is my perception that each year there are more and more of these cherished and used cars appearing on the various stands and I, for one, can only endorse it.

Having mentioned Dave A, I regret to advise that there has been no progress on the restoration of his American import Spridget. Unfortunately Dave has suffered a couple of setbacks. Firstly, he damaged his hand which then turned septic and then this was followed by a damaged knee which necessitated the use of a walking stick for a period. Hence, no progress on the project. Hopefully, work will recommence soon and I will be able to provide an update on the various trials and tribulations.

A provisional booking has been made at Fratelli's in Coatbridge for Sunday December 11th for the group's Christmas lunch and while on that subject I would like to wish all members of The Midget and Sprite Club a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

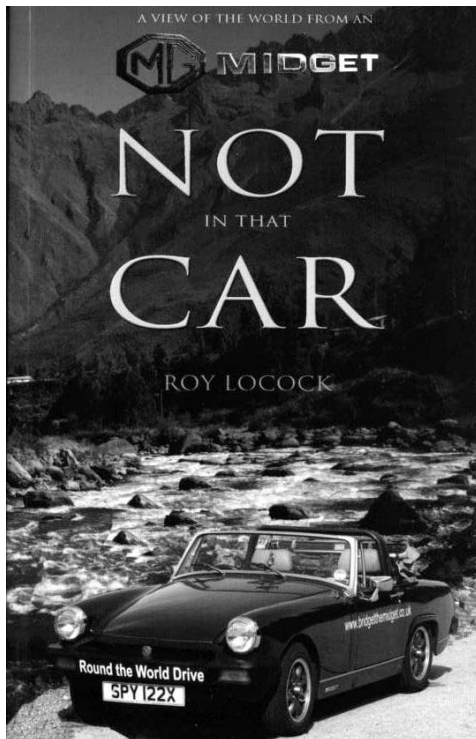
**John Pardo**

Contact: 01698 814791

E-mail: [jp1kg@talktalk.net](mailto:jp1kg@talktalk.net)

# Book Review (in time for Christmas)

## Not In That Car - a round the world drive by Roy Locock



Roy Locock and his rubber bumper 1500 MG Midget covered over 39 000 miles, through 27 countries and raised money for Unicef along the way.

Roy's adventure was reported on by many newspapers and magazines in the UK – as well as news agencies across the world. I found this a highly readable account of an epic journey that may well appeal to travellers and Spridget owners.

I might have preferred that it were more detailed and with more colour photographs but at the RRP price £14.99 perhaps one should not complain especially as I found it cheaper on the internet.

**Paperback:** 256 pages

**Publisher:** Matador (1 Jun 2011)

**Language:** English

**ISBN-13:** 978-1848766532

**Alan Anstead**

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

Tel: 01322-384050 (answerphone)

Roy and team mate Chris Vernon in an MG Midget each, are currently of on another adventure, an expedition from Abingdon, in the UK, to Cape Town in South Africa and their arrival is estimated to be around 10th December 2011.

The adventure has been totally financed by the participants. They will, however, also be raising funds from as many commercial and individual sponsors as they can find, in support of CoCo, a children's charity undertaking education and healthcare initiatives in several African countries. A donation link to their web site, [www.coco.org.uk](http://www.coco.org.uk), has been available on their site since January 2011 where there is considerable information about their work. The Midgeteers hope to visit one or two of the projects in sub-Saharan Africa as they wind their way towards Cape Town.

You can follow their exploits on the team's website [www.bridgetthemidget.co.uk](http://www.bridgetthemidget.co.uk)



Ramnagar Palace, Jaipur



Subharta of Jaipur



Passing The Albert Hall, Jaipur



The Palace, Udaipur

# Ian Shapland

Ian lives on the north Devon coast with his wife, Pamela, small son, Monty, and little dog, Elvis. During the late eighties, whilst working in the self-catering holiday industry, Ian took to flinging old cars around on international rallies – he took part in the first 'Pirelli Classic Marathon' in 1988 in a Triumph TR4 and the first 'Monte Carlo Challenge' held in 1990 with a Mercedes-Benz 220SE 'fintail'. During these long distance events Ian amused fellow competitors by scribbling cartoons on table cloths in a variety of cafes around Europe. A switch of career in the early nineties into the frantic world of freelance motorsport journalism coincided with a parallel increase in his artistic output.

Ian combines his artist endeavors with being the editor of oldSTAGER magazine – Europe's top historic rallying magazine – published by the historic rally car register...

*"I specialise in producing cartoon/caricature in either pen & ink, or gouache (water colour) which make ideal birthday or other special celebrations gifts for friends and family... these cartoons can feature special themes important to the recipient and lend themselves particularly well to people who love their classic cars. Finished A4 sized pen & ink cartoons cost from £50.00, whilst the much more detailed gouache caricature paintings cost from £150.00".*

Ian takes inspiration from the local land and seascapes as well as his interest in painting animals. *"Whilst much of my time is spent producing cartoons and caricatures, I also*



"THAT OLD BLOKE WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU CAN READ A STAR CHART!"

*This was actually a limited run Christmas card produce many years ago and now out of stock*

*enjoy more realistic motorsport painting and love working in oils when there is enough time."*

Ian also specialises in producing 'bespoke' Christmas card designs for a variety of companies and individuals, offering a very distinctive take on the traditional seasonal greeting card.

Given this background, perhaps it isn't too surprising that Ian is a member of the Guild of Motoring Artists and has produced work for companies such as Nissan Motorsport Europe, AP Racing, Abingdon Works Co and the MSA.

## Ian Shapland

GGE-Art by Ian Shapland  
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or visit: [www.gge-art.co.uk](http://www.gge-art.co.uk)



*We carried this cartoon depicting the very successful rallying Midget of the late Gordon Howie. There was some debate at the time over increasing sizes of advertising appearing on historic rally cars*

*"This new advertising is all very well... but it's slowing us up!"*

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# Donington Autumn National MG + Triumph Show

16/10/2011



“Would you like to put together a stand for a show in your area?” asked John “Oh, by the way, it’s in three weeks”. No pressure there then. A call to the organisers, Andrew Greenwood, revealed more details. We could have an area for five cars, indoors. Great, so we could all be nice and dry and the gazebo would not blow away!

An email plea for display cars brought an offer of a restoration project, but unfortunately it needed a trailer to get it there which we failed to get hold of. My initial idea of one of each Midget model failed, so we decided to have a representation of both Sprites and Midgets as that is what our club represents. These were tenuously “linked” on the stand with a brief history of each car and how it fitted into the evolution of the Spridget. A photo-frame showing the rebuild of Ian’s Mk3 Midget helped keep visitors interests, and the gazebo and flag adorned with our logo created an excellent centrepiece for the display of magazines and stickers. (Thanks to John and Alan for bringing these along)

We had a steady flow of visitors throughout the day, with “time off” for each of us to have a look around the other exhibits and stalls, offering both new and second-hand items.

It was a great surprise at the end of the day for Ian to be presented with a trophy for the best Mk3 Midget in the show, a topping tribute for all his hard restoration work and a reunion with the car’s former owner. Not only



*John, Alan, Sue, Ian, Paul, Alan, Ian, Neil*

one surprise, but then another for the “Best Club Display”. Well done to all!

Comments from some of our group about the event...

Sue + Neil – “Cafe a bit expensive but nice. Atmosphere very friendly. Very enjoyable all round”

Alan – “I thought the venue was great. The trade stalls had a very comprehensive variety of useful items and I was very pleased to get a cover for the hood, for when it is folded down. Thought the cafe was rather expensive, but not having taken anything with me it was very welcome. I would certainly go again next year even if not on the MASC stand.”

Me – “a very enjoyable day out and well worth the effort, for which thanks to all who helped.” Here’s to next year’s event!

Yet another award winning area – must have rubbed off the NW members present!

**Ian Cooke**

Notts/Derby area rep.  
ilc@bgs.ac.uk

# Bristol Area Report

Our November meeting at the Rose and Crown produced another bumper crop of Mascateers – great stuff indeed. Now for the negative stuff. Despite our healthy numbers, a full 90% of attendees arrived by the non-Spridgley thing process. A solitary Andy ‘all weather’ Cross was the only Mascateer entitled to sit at the ‘good table’, the rest of us all being ‘naughty table’ fodder. However, the naughty table simply isn’t big enough for such a number. (Now if you are really clever, there are enough clues in the story thus far for you to work out how many that was). 30% of the gathering arrived in two seater sports cars of a non-Spridgley thing persuasion, this giving rise to a third order challenge to our policy in this, the most ancient of MASC branches. Quite simply, it was felt that the ‘Good’ and ‘Naughty’ division should be augmented by a ‘Mitigating Circumstances’ table for the inbetweens amongst the throng. As Area organiser and one of the 30%, I had to agree. So it was that I was ‘elected’ to approach the Landlord to ask for a ‘Mitigating Circumstances’ table to be made available. After checking the table plan, phoning the Brewery, his insurers and the local Parish council, he said the best he could offer was a ‘Slightly errant behaviour’ table. So that was a good result.

In my October report, I did mention the ‘Local brew’. From my rather obscure view of the pump handle, as it threatened to disappear up my left nostril, I had mistakenly read the label as a Wadworths blend. It does actually read WD 41. Thinking this to be Wadworths special brew No41, the Landlord put me right. Evidently, it’s a great favourite of the local farming community; the farmer’s take a pint for themselves and another to free off all the seized bits on their tractors and ploughs. Well, at least that’s the story their wives believe when they see hubbies Massey Ferguson in the car park during the day. (Just hope they don’t hear the songful E-I-E-I-O from the bar)

My newly introduced ‘Request to attend a meeting’ form was met with universal approval. A most effective way to control numbers and keep away the riffraff. I have also negotiated with the parish council for the



*It was perhaps understandable that no one wanted to leave their Spridget in the car park, after last month’s mishap*

club to have exclusive use of the Stocks on the village green on club nights. I had thought that the Stocks were only used for ceremonial occasions and on a Friday and Saturday night to warn passers by that Pucklechurch has a zero tolerance policy toward any local rowdies. However, the council were very pleased to let me have the key to further demonstrate that good behaviour is a mid-week expectation as well. Really looking forward to our next meeting – and a ‘willing volunteer’ to be identified, I wonder who?

It’s that time of year when most branches (which seems to be everyone except us) has a Christmas meal. This I have carefully avoided as I believe we should maintain a non-religious, political, racist, ageless and sexist viewpoint. Which brings us onto our very risky Wiltshire Area Organiser. Andy Cross described some very saucy goings on in his last report. I must stress that such antics can severely damage the handbrake lever, rip the soft top, poke out the windscreen and crack the oil pressure gauge glass – or so I am told. I feel that Andy Cross has totally misunderstood the fitment of the dashboard grab handle on the early Sprites and hence why Midgets and later Sprites never had such an item. Furthermore, why do you think BMC moved away from removable seat cushions? Spridgley things should prove fun enough without any added in car entertainment.

Yours disgusted

**Terry Horler**

# East Anglian Report

Can't believe I am writing December's MASCOT report (the Christmas edition no less) where did 2011 go? It is fast approaching the off season for our hobby although I think increasing numbers of people are keeping their beasts road legal throughout the year and enjoying the odd winter whizz about on the crisp dry days. Certainly today the sun shone and topless classics were out and about in East Anglia, we even have a couple of events to report on.

First up was the Magical Midgety tour organised by Diane and Nigel, sadly one of our Midgets had succumbed to nuclear fallout from a previous event and so had to be represented by a modern stand in (I understand the decontamination is coming along quite well now and the Midget in question is going like a bomb again).

Sadly Pat and I missed out on this trip, not due to radiation burning through our fuel lines (we sorted that the following day) but we were once again in France so I had to rely on my spies for the rest of this paragraph. Nigel and Diane's runs are always brilliant and take in some great classic locations so it was not surprising that the first stop was at the wonderful historic town of Saffron Walden for a welcome cup of tea, cake and a chat at Costa coffee (all very civilised). We then travelled through some pretty villages including Clare and Cavendish before stopping for lunch at and a wander around the antique shops or (in Graham's case) the public houses of Lavenham.

We then travelled on to Flatford Mill which is classic Constable country where we took a lovely boat trip up and down the river for half an hour or so, at which point it started to rain. But we did not get wet as the boat had a roof! (I wouldn't have allowed that if I had been there). Due to the time we had to postpone one stop for another event, so we

could make our way back to the finishing point for dinner at 5.30pm, before we headed home. The record for the most miles covered on the day went to Hubie and Sally for an impressive 220miles (sorry).

Next up was Pidley bowling, more of a rainy season social than a Spridget event but huge fun never the less, with another vote of thanks due to Nigel and Diane for organising this popular outing. I think everyone did quite well, allowing for the fact that some of us had hardly picked up a bowling ball since our Sprites rolled of the production line and my lane had molehills in it (you can't have those massive East Anglian skies and

wide open spaces without a bit of wildlife getting in on the act). I can't remember which of our professional bowlers won but Chris and Mick were both up there with scores in three figures.

Finally we had a good turn out at the FBI (Ferry Boat Inn) with lively conversation

around cars, our next event, matters arising from the AGM and a bright yellow fur fabric fumble bag. I had spiced up the fumble bag with some obscure objects which baffled our best brains to such an extent that most only managed to identify a couple of things (including the easy object), the hero was Derek who I think identified everything although he did have to resort to multiple manipulations (and several pints of brain lubricant). Diane even raised the subject of next year's events and took down a few good ideas, maybe we should start having rolling event planning so we add a new one every month or so, with maybe six advertised in MASCOT at any one time.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a brilliant festive season and a fabulous 2012.

See you all at the Ferry Boat and beyond

**Dave Dixon**



# Kent Report



Computers: don't you just love them? Mine blew up with no warning – and I had only just paid out for a new printer that decided to call it a day. If any Kent members believe that they are not receiving e-mail from me then please send me an e-mail to secure your place in my address book. Ta!

John Clark kindly arranged a drive out for us on 16th October 2011. Fifteen cars assembled at Brogdale Farm, Faversham, Kent for a drive that was to take us along a coastal route, firstly along the banks of the Medway and Thames Rivers, and thence along the English Channel coastline.

The route had been sent out to all that had said they would come but everyone seemed quite content to ignore it, and the many sat navs which were on display and just follow John's lead. In no particular order on the day we passed by/through Herne Bay, Minnis Bay, Margate, Ramsgate, and Broadstairs stopping at Swale where the café owner arranged access to the esplanade for us to be able to park next to his American spec MGB. He asked for a MASC membership form too! Once refreshed we eventually came to our destination the Crown Inn at Sarre where the landlord had set aside the restaurant for our exclusive use. A fine meal was the fitting end to a fine day. Good weather had provided



perhaps one of the last opportunities of the year to drive, as a group, with hoods stowed.

I drove home from the former still in daylight but whilst putting the Frogeye away, in the garage, I noticed some water ingress on the Sebring Coupe sidelight. I exposed the light unit which had nicely browned with oxide. I wire brushed the oxide away then had the idea to super glue some kitchen foil over the light unit back plate. No more staining is visible and the light (side/indicator) appears brighter too!

Some may say that I should have been at the AGM on 23rd October but it clashed with the Kent monthly meet at the Angel, Addington Green. A new National Committee will now be formed without me. I have had an enjoyable year on the National Committee and it has been a pleasure working alongside a talented, enthusiastic, and hardworking group. I am sure the club is in good hands!

Our monthly meeting proved to be another fine day and we sat outside in the sunshine. I took some pictures of the cars but alas the pictures disappeared when the computer crashed. What more to say? A sunny day, top down on the Frogeye, good friends, good food, good company it just doesn't get much better.

**Alan Anstead**



*At the Angel, Addington*



## Hampshire Happenings

### Alton Rally and Car Show

It was a misty start as we set off for the meeting place in Tilford for the start of the rally. The organised route was the same as last year but no less enjoyable as we drove in sunshine through pretty Hampshire villages on the 30 mile journey to Alton. The atmosphere in the town was great, lots of people, the cars of course, a jazz band playing and craft stalls lining the streets. All in all a good end to the season as this was the last event on our 'Summer Calendar'.

### Christmas Meeting and Dinner

As in previous years, the last meeting of 2011 will be on the 3rd Thursday in December and will include Christmas Dinner at the Fox and Goose. Lyn is now taking details from those who would like to be included in the festivities so please have a look at the menu and send your selection to Lyn at the usual address [pie@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info](mailto:pie@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info) by Sunday 20th November so that she can make the booking at the November meeting. If you won't be at that meeting please contact Lyn to arrange payment of your deposit.

### Forthcoming Events (John's Bit)

[events@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info](mailto:events@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info)

### 15th December – Xmas Meeting and Dinner at the Fox and Goose

### Autumn & Winter News

Hampshire Update will be taking a bit of a break during the winter so you will receive the next issue during the second week in December and again in February. Events for the winter are still in the planning process but we are currently looking at: (in no particular order) Lunch & Quiz at Barry & Jenny's; a run through Hindhead Tunnel + lunch or afternoon tea; a trip to Gosport then ferry to Gunwharf Quays for lunch/shopping/Spinnaker Tower; Skittles Tournaments against other Clubs; Treasure Hunt; Pizza Party at Terry & Harriet's. We are also considering changing the date of our Open Day to avoid clashing with other events in the local area but we will keep you posted of this and any other details as they become available.

As always we welcome your ideas, comments and suggestions.

[events@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info](mailto:events@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info)

If you have any contributions for the web site or photo's from the events please forward them to Barry:

[info@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info](mailto:info@midgetandsprite-hampshire.info)



## Lego Sprite from Poland



While surfing the world wide web, I came across this little gem created by a young guy in Poland.

It seems that while many of us left Lego behind in childhood, there are many highly skilled practitioners out there who have taken this product way beyond the imagination of those of us that consigned it to the attic, the charity shop or bestowed it on our younger siblings and relations.

This green (you'll have to take my word for it) Lego Mk1 Sprite seems to be one of the more simple pieces which its builder Jarek

has created, however it still shows that a great amount of thought and skill has gone into its creation.

Jarek explains:

"I built this little car mostly because I needed something simple and quick, and this one perfectly fits the description. Anything with a distinct feature is easy, and boy, is there any car with one more distinct that those eyes and face of a frog? Or maybe because I want one. With the steering wheel on the correct side, that is, which makes this a bit hard. Were such Sprites even made? It is very heartening that a car lover appreciates what is essentially a simple toy.

Cheers

**Jarek, Poland**

## Market Place

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

### FOR SALE

**1978 Midget 1500 Black.** Complete car abandoned in a dry garage and not used for 10 years. Offers around £250.00.

For more details contact **Sean McGuigan - 09123 893710 (Hertfordshire)**

**Nine Stud Windscreen plus brackets**, re-chromed, Laminated glass. Sprite I & II axle case, good condition, painted. 1098 cc Cylinder Block, 2" mains, std bore size - worn. 1098cc Crank and rods, 2" mains, std sizes - worn. 1275 cc crossflow radiator, low mileage. 1275 cc Stainless Resonator/Silencer assy. - Very good cond.

Please contact: **Peter Hobson 01706 648737 (Milnrow - M62, J21)**

# Le Mans Classic 2012

Reserve your place\* on the Le Mans Classic / Loire Valley Tour 2012.

**Saturday 30th June 2012 - Saturday 14th July**

The Le Mans Classic motor race event, for cars manufactured during years 1923 - 1979, takes place every two years. It's your chance to see again those classic machines from bygone eras.

The sixth edition of Le Mans Classic will be held on 6, 7 and 8 July 2012. For three days, some of the most beautiful cars will follow each other on the famous Le Mans Circuit and relive the glorious times of the past.

In addition it is hoped, as in former years, that we may gain entitlement to deploy our Midgets and Sprites with a display, together with our "Twin" club Amicale Spridget, within the infield areas.

New for this year the chance to attend the Grand Prix Historique de Bressuire, 30th June - 1st July, where old cars race around the town's streets.

Come for the full fortnight or for just the Le Mans Classic weekend. We will be based, at a Gite, within easy reach of the Le Mans Circuit and Loire Valley.

Tour as a group or individually. You may even choose not to attend the Le Mans Classic but just enjoy this beautiful area of France with its many Chateaux, vineyards, and places of interest.



Reserve your place now as places are limited.

Alan Anstead, Kent rep.

Tel: 01322-384050 (answer phone)

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

\* This tour is for M.G. Midgets, Austin Healey Sprites, and derivatives only.

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**XGRL101P - Frogeye Grille**

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**XBMP101P - Front Bumper Blade**

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Pressed in one piece to the original steel gauge.

All parts designated as 'PREMIUM' have been triple plated for a long lasting and deep lustre finish.



**XWHE130P - Hub Cap**

Sprite

These items will be the finishing touch to your prized Sprite!



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