

February 2012

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Mascot

The Magazine of the Midget & Sprite Club



Mathieu Damiens

AUTOMOTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

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www.mg-tr-parts.co.uk

February Editorial

Or as Marvin Gaye would say... "What's going on?"

For Gaps and I, January started the way that December finished, in a blur of Spridgetly rushing about. The 22nd of December saw the Frogeye go in for its MOT. The new lower to the ground stance of the car was too low to clear the garage's four post lift. So three of us had to jack the front up and place it on wooden blocks for the anti roll bar to clear their equipment. The bolted in racing seat was far too close to the steering wheel for the tall Mot tester to get his upper body and legs in at the same time. While I'm sure that he felt the snug fit of the bucket seat coupled to his larger than average posterior, might mean extraction from my car resulting in surgery. Either way, he bottled out and asked me to sit in the car during the test.

The hooter hooted, the wipers wiped (slowly) and the lights and indicators lit up when and how they should. The brake test had him in fits of laughter and incredulity especially when I told him that the car is used in competitive speed events. Eventually the MOT man said "YES" to Gaps, on condition that I never bring the car back to see him again.

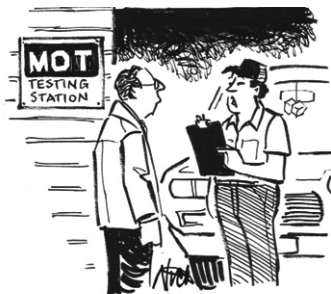
With the new MOT in hand (have you seen the boring bit of white paper it's now printed on?), the new year dawned bright and mild as we drove down to Brooklands for the traditional New Year's Day event. The heavens then opened and the car and I swam back through the London traffic as the windscreen wipers, fresh from their award winning performance at the MOT had a hissy fit and decided enough was enough.

The 2nd of January saw us once again taking a trip through the streets of London as another New Year's tradition, The London Bridges Run, snaked its way backward and forwards in a westerly direction criss-crossing the River Thames, by way of most of its bridges. Thankfully a clear blue sky graced us the whole way and the wipers could rest easy in the knowledge that they wouldn't be called upon. Tuesday 10th of January saw us out again at the Ace Café. So even at this early stage of the year, the Frog and I have had quite a few days out together.

What events have you planned to attend this year? There are quite a few Club dates already organised such as the Donington Historic Festival 5th-6th May and the Silverstone Classic 20th-22nd July, both advertised in this month's magazine. Le Mans 24 Hour 17th June, Le Mans Classic in July, plus Kingston Lacy and the Hampshire open day. Some are club area events, some non-Club national and international events. The problem is that unless area reps specifically inform Richard Flynn so that he can put them into the events section, they will largely remain a secret and therefore less well attended than they could have been. So please area reps. Let Richard know what you have planned.

Have a great month

Gary & Gaps



"Bad news—your dice are nowhere near fuzzy enough"

The deadline for articles and reports for inclusion in next month's magazine is Sunday 12th of February.

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

Cover image: Gino DuPont's Rally spec Sprite beautifully photographed by Mathieu Damiens
www.mathieudamiens.com



Stuart and Sybil
in the Sprite

A Change of Membership Secretary

I know that it's a big act to follow and I think we should all congratulate John Platt for having done such a sterling job as the Membership Secretary for the past number of years. He has served the club well and I am grateful to him that I have inherited a well oiled machine with reliable information from him. Thank you John.

In the way of a bit of background I am on my second AH Sprite having had the original Mk IV in 1969 and the current Mk IV for the last 16 years. I have been a member of the club for more than 10 years (I can't really remember exactly – a sign of advancing years) over which time my wife Sybil and I have enjoyed many excellent runs and fun with the Heart of England branch and other members of the club. So I thought I might try and put something back into the club and in a foolhardy moment responded to John's plea for a replacement Membership Secretary.

I have been working with John for the past few months and I have been in touch with many of you. Most should now have received my emails with the plea for you to accept Membership Renewal requests by email rather than post. From a selfish point of view this saves me a vast amount of time stuffing letters in envelopes and trogging down to the Post Box but more importantly it saves the club money in terms of postage and stationery and if you pay via the website – through the link in the renewal email – it also saves you time and money. A win-win situation. To date just over 50% of members have elected to take the

email route – but then we do not necessarily yet have everyone's latest email address. I shall persevere and hopefully we can get it nearer to 80%. The membership cards have also been redesigned and computerised to speed things up and I am always grateful for any suggestions which you may have for continuing to improve the membership process, I have already had suggestions of paying by Pay Pal and Bank Transfer which will be investigated further when I have got to grips with the current routines from John.

I look forward to communicating with you in the future and apologise in advance for any glitches that may occur during the handover period in the next few of months and as John wrote last recently please let me know of any address changes, both postal and email, so that you can continue to get your MASCOT on time.

John Platt introduced a new offering at the end of his time as Membership Secretary and that was **transferring of membership**. If you ever decide to part with your Spridget – heaven forbid – you may now transfer the remaining part of your annual membership to the new owner at no cost. The new owner will then receive a new Membership number and continue to receive MASCOT etc until the expiry of your annual subscription, when hopefully the new owner will be convinced to renew that subscription. We have already had one new member taking advantage of this feature and hope to see more.

Stuart Watson

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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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.freemove.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
- 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 Mike or Sue Gahan on email mike@mgahan.demon.co.uk or on 07850 488636.
- 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

Members only pages Password: Hardtop (which is case sensitive)

Events

Area reps please continue to make Richard Flynn aware of any events already in your diaries for 2012, so that they can be added to this "Events" section of the magazine and the website.

For the magazine Richard can be contacted at Richard.flynn@live.co.uk or 0121 559 3103

For the website Richard Mumford can be contacted at richardmumford@me.com

Market Place

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

For sale

Austin Healey Sprite Mark 4 1967, tartan red, tax exempt. This car is a great example of a 1960's sports car, only used in the summer months and always garaged and is in great condition. Upgrades include oil cooler, brake servo, K and N filter, stainless steel exhaust and wire wheels. History including photographs, receipts and heritage certificate are available.

For further details ring **Roger on York**
01904 760902

Parts for sale: Sprite/ Midget, BMCA 4.22 diff £40. Sprite MK1 steering rack £30. Sprite MK1 wheels £20 each.

Contact Reg 01889 271037 (Staffs)

Front wings, bonnet, front shroud and windscreen for Midget 1500. The wings and bonnet are very good. The windscreen and frame are sound. Also hood frame which is sound and a hood. I would prefer to sell both wings and bonnet as a job lot and am looking for around 50% Moss prices. I live North of Bath. **Call on 01225 891379**
or mob 07762 099256
or email dick@matherwood.co.uk

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bristol@moss-europe.co.uk

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0161 480 6402
manchester@moss-europe.co.uk

Mutual Assistance Directory



*Midget Mk1 in the 1979 film 'Licenced to Love and Kill', 1979.
Not to be mistaken for 'Licence to Thrill'*

I'm not sure but I reckon that the odds are that you have never consulted the Directory let alone used it. It is published on the Club's Website and available to download as to carry in your car and lists Members around the Country who are prepared to help out others in distress when their precious classic decides that enough is enough. I am not sure how much it is used but I receive little feedback.

Well the time has come for an update as the member list is out of date and it must be revised. Cover around the UK is certainly patchy and could be improved I am sure. Whilst I'm about it the format of the list may be due a revamp or to quote one view the whole thing is from the past and not worth keeping.

A few months ago I carried out a small survey on a few suggested ideas for change which had been put to me. The current list is in Area order and lists Area Reps, Member name and address and a contact telephone number. New ideas put forward suggested Areas as before, Member name with town and

county and contact number only, "Spanner" rating ability and facilities available plus the possibility of refreshment/accommodation if the worse should come to the worse.

Well the latter basically fell on stoney ground as going a bit over the top but the other points seemed popular with an additional suggestion that members could perhaps advise whether basic spares might be available and they would be able to provide details of specialist dealers in their area to obtain parts or repairs. As I have reported above one response suggested that the whole thing is out of date and most members will have national breakdown cover and that it would be better if the Club could arrange discounted cover of this type for members.

I now have to set about this task and I would appreciate your ideas. Please feel free to contribute via the pages of *MASCOT* or alternatively respond to me directly via email – my contact details are provided at the front of the magazine.

John Clark
Mutual Assistance Co-ordinator

DONINGTON HISTORIC FESTIVAL

The dates of the second Donington Historic Festival have been confirmed as Saturday 5th May & Sunday 6th May 2012, a weekend that definitely deserves priority placement in your diary.

SAT 5th MAY &
SUN 6th MAY
2012

The inaugural event in 2011 was a tremendous success, attracting 12,000 people who basked in the Donington sunshine for two days of action-packed historic racing with 300+ cars out on track. While the organisers can't guarantee the same idyllic weather, the 2012 Festival is guaranteed to deliver an equally thrilling array of huge grids of the cream of Europe's historic single-seaters, sportscars and touring cars, all battling it out around this hugely popular and exciting circuit in the hands of some of the top drivers in the sport.

The Midget & Sprite Club has already registered for the event and as with the Silverstone Classic, we intend to have a large club gathering in our own specific club area, close to the action.

The advert opposite contains the discount code for tickets, which have been improved by the additional choice of allowing us to select one day tickets instead of the whole weekend.

Last year the drive around the track at speed was worth the entry fee alone!

Great racing, excellent views of the track, an informal pit area and perhaps as it's a young event it will be less commercially orientated than other Historic Festivals.

A superb location and attractions on site such as the Donington Grand Prix Collection museum.

For further information please visit **www.doningtonhistoric.com** or contact Alan East-Jones at **apfastsol@gmail.com** who has volunteered to be the contact for MASC members wishing to attend.

Quote ref. MSCDHF12 when booking by phone or through the website.

24 hour ticket hotline: 0844 873 7355 or www.doningtonhistoric.com

Where is my Old Midget BVR 464N?

I bought Bumtrinket in September 1974, from Lex Cockshoot in Manchester. £1300 on the road, and one of the last of the 'real' Midgets. I loved her to pieces; I was working as a freelance designer at the time, so spent many hours on the M6, M5 and M1. The problem with Bumtrinket (and all the Midgets, I suspect) was that she leaked like a sieve. Driving through heavy rain was a nightmare, because water would somehow get in to the driver's bit, where the pedals are, so I'd get out at the other end with soaking wet shoes, legs ... horrid! We also got caught in a flood in Somerset, driving down a country road when the adjacent river decided to burst its banks. Pitch black, no street lights – both Bumtrinket and I nearly met our end that night. She was so light that stopping her drifting off into the river was almost impossible, but after about an hour of screaming at the top of my lungs and doing my best to push the car to higher ground someone heard me, and we were both rescued. Amazingly, Bumtrinket started first time; in spite of the fact that the engine had been completely submerged (we pulled leaves out of the air filter the following morning!) After about two days in a 'drying tent' she was fine – thank God with no lasting damage. She was such enormous fun to drive, but potentially lethal! The brakes on

those cars were AWFUL ... stopping distance was about four times what it would be now on an equivalent car. Worst thing was that, because she was so low on the road, each time I skidded into the car in front (did quite a lot of that!) her headlights were lined up perfectly with those vertical bits that most cars had on their bumpers in those days, which meant that every skid potentially took out both headlights. I ended up on first-name terms with most of the sales staff at Lucas in Manchester!

I sold Bumtrinket in, from memory, 1979 or 1980, to a gentleman who lived near Burnley, in Lancashire. He, I believe, sold her to someone in Clitheroe, and last time she was seen she apparently looked magnificent: badges displayed on her bumper and paintwork in immaculate condition. I would so love to meet her again!

I've searched and searched, but can't find a photo of Bumtrinket. I've moved so many times that bits and pieces have gone astray in all the moves, so I suspect that that's what's happened to a load of old photographs.

Pete & Jinny Hanmer
hanmers@gmail.com
0161 627 4479



Good News if you're Changing your Engine



Changes to engine details for historic vehicles

For those of you who have had problems with the DVLA if you've changed your engine, might be interested to hear this latest information, confirmed by the FBHVC:

The bureaucracy involved with correcting or substituting engine numbers on V5C documents and making minor engine capacity changes on old vehicles was discussed in November 2010 at a meeting between members FBHVC's legislation committee,

the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Group, the Under-Secretary of State for Roads and Motoring, Mike Penning MP, and two senior officials from DfT and DVLA.

DVLA have now confirmed that this policy has been reviewed and that it will no longer be necessary for keepers of vehicles in the Historic class – date of manufacture before 1 Jan 1973 – to provide evidence to support an engine change notification.

New Members Dec 2011 – Jan 2012



Steve Cowling in his Drag Midget MkIII.
More about this car in a future MASCOT

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

4522	Gino DuPont	Belgium	Sprite	Mk 3
4545	Gareth Williams	Cheshire	Sprite	Mk 4
4550	Dr Robert & Rosemary Middleton	Notts	Midget	Mk 1
4551	Peter & Rosemary Robertson	Berwickshire	Sprite	Mk 3
4552	Bill Harding	Bucks	Sprite	Mk 1
4553	Colin Jones	Somerset	Midget	Mk 3
4554	Andrew Springett	Glos	Midget	Mk 3
4555	Steve Cowling	Worcs	Midget	Mk 3
4556	Howard Cottrell	Staffs	Midget	Mk 3
4557	Anthony Hart	Perthshire	Looking for	Sprite Mk 4
4558	Alan Cavanagh	Co Cork	2 x Midgets	
4559	Nigel & Linda Baston	Derbyshire	Sprite	Mk 1
4560	Richard Homer	Staffs	Midget	
4561	Jim Sherry	Somerset	Sprite	Mk 1



Gareth Williams' MkIV Sprite



Colin Jones with his MkIII Midget

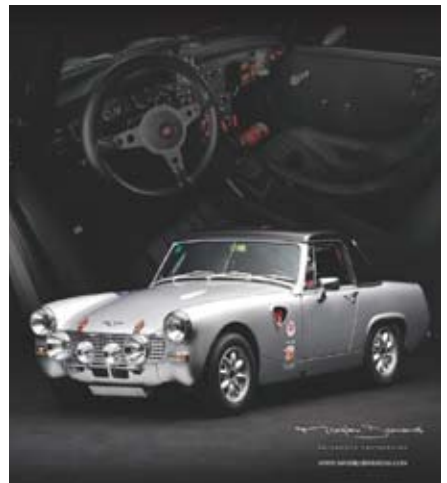


While not a new member, here is the first view of Paul Johnson's recently completed Mk1 Sprite



Alan Cavanagh from Co Cork, Ireland, with his two Midgets

Nigel & Linda Baston with their Mk1 Sprite



Gino DuPont's beautifully photographed Mk3 Midget (see next month's MASCOT)



Jim Sherry in his Frogeye

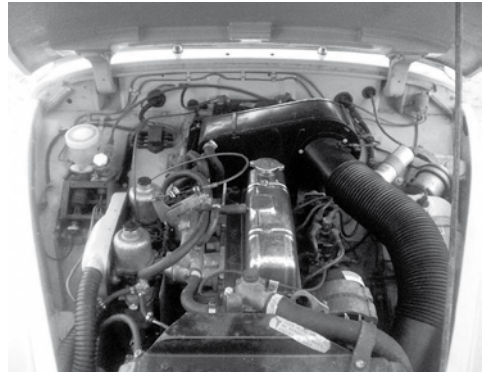


Seen on the Internet

You are used to me finding some absolute horrors advertised on the World Wide Web and more of those to come in future issues. However, this month's internet auction offers a real rarity. The MG Midget based Dragonfly offered in "excellent condition".

The seller has supplied the following description:

YOU ARE LOOKING AT AN MG MIDGET DRAGONFLY ROADSTER, THESE CARS WERE BUILT BY DRAGONFLY CARS IN THE EARLY 80S, THEY ARE BASED ON AN MG MIDGET 1500 AND THEY ONLY MADE AROUND 15, AND



1500 engine



Standard Midget interior



THIS ONE WAS THE LAST ONE MADE, IT IS UNREGISTERED WITH ONLY DELIVERY MILEAGE OF 22. IT HAS BEEN DRY STORED EVER SINCE. IT HAS THE ORIGINAL AVON TURBOSPEED TYRES WHICH HAVE NO SIGNS OF CRACKS OR PERISHING.

I HAVE REPLACED THE BRAKE CALIPERS AND WHEEL CYLINDERS WITH RECON UNITS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

THE INTERIOR IS AS YOU WOULD EXPECT FOR A CAR WITH 22 MILES ON IT AND IT HAS A WOOD RIM MOTO LITA STEERING WHEEL. THE ROOF IS IN PERFECT CONDITION.

I HAVE GIVEN THE ENGINE A THOROUGH SERVICE AND IT RUNS VERY WELL, STARTS FIRST TIME AND IT THE QUIETEST 1500 TRIUMPH ENGINE I HAVE EVER HEARD.

THE BODY IS MAINLY FIBREGLASS SO NOT RUST THERE, HOWEVER ON THE STEEL SECTIONS THERE IS A SMALL SURFACE BUBBLE ON THE PASSENGER DOOR, THERE IS ALSO SOME SURFACE RUST AROUND THE DOOR HINGES, BUT NOTHING THAT DETRACTS FROM THE OVERALL LOOK, AFTER ALL THIS IS A NEW CAR IT'S JUST A 30 YEAR OLD NEW CAR.

After 49 bids from 20 separate bidders on the 5th of January, it reached a selling price of £7,068.30.

Cocidentally there is another currently for sale in America, this green one with a 1275 engine claimed by the seller to be one of only three in the world!

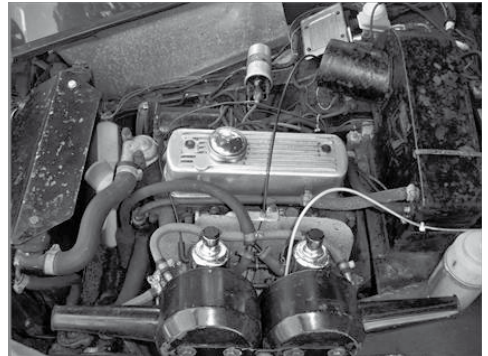
His description reads:

1973 MG Dragonfly 2d with 57,000 miles. Only 3 in the world and priced right for something this unique! The Dragonfly conversion involved lengthening the chassis by 10.5 inches between the front wheels and bulkhead. This car is rich with history and is considered the successor to the Arkley. Estate sale \$31,594.00 OBO!

Perhaps not such a bargain.

If any members own or have previously owned a Dragonfly, I would love to hear from them.

Gary



1275 engine



On Fixing Oil Leaks from the BMC A-series Engine's Rear Crankshaft Scroll Seal

(or how to get rid of your drip tray)

The simple Meccano-like construction of our Sprites and Midgets is responsible for much of their appeal. Armed with little more than a box of simple tools, an enthusiastic and enterprising owner can dismantle a Spridget quite easily, the most serious common problems being associated only with badly rusted nuts and bolts. With skill, patience and these same tools, this same owner can then recondition and reassemble most of the vehicle to proper working condition. The emphasis here is on 'most' because some reconditioning jobs cannot be performed by home mechanics without expert professional assistance. In this article we examine one such important job – fixing an oil leak from the rear crankshaft scroll seal of an A-series engine.

The puddles of oil left behind on the tarmac and grass of the recent 'Spridget50' and 'Midget50' celebrations bear witness to the sad fact that many of our A-series engines now leak oil copiously, many from their rear crankshaft scroll seals. Americans in particular have joked about this for years, laughing it all off as part of the charm of Spridget ownership and, for good measure, poking undeserved extra fun at the poor old Lucas company:

*"... (the rear scroll seal) ... is part of the factory rust prevention system (probably designed by Lucas, because it doesn't always work), and there's nothing you can do about it because **all BMC A-series engines leak oil**. It's deliberate, a simple way of arranging that the vehicle can mark its territory ..."*

Even as we all laugh at such jokes, they do not ring true for those of us old enough to remember that these engines never leaked oil like this when they were new. True, oil was cheap in the 1960's and oil leaks then were nothing to get too worked up about, a few drops here and there were tolerated and, after all, the handbook did recommend checking the oil level daily. But socially

unacceptable oil puddles, and oil leaks of more than one pint per hundred miles were as rare in the 1960's as they are common now. To understand why things have changed over the years, we must look at what happens to the A-series crankshaft and its rear scroll seal as the engine wears and approaches the end of its design life.

The rear crankshaft scroll 'seal' is not really a seal at all, but a simple spiral groove or 'scroll' in the end of the crankshaft designed to spin oil backwards into the sump as the shaft rotates. This spiral groove is enclosed by a very close fitting fixed 'scroll housing' in two pieces – an upper 'eyebrow' or 'half-moon' shaped piece bolted to the rear of the engine block and a lower matching piece which is an integral part of the rear main cap.

Although this design is a very simple and elegant way of preventing oil escape from the end of the crankshaft, it does have an Achilles heel: *it demands an extremely close fit between the rotating crankshaft and the fixed scroll housing*. This very fine tolerance (typically 0.001 – 0.002 inch) can be achieved only by bolting the three main caps and the 'eyebrow' piece to the engine block (without the crankshaft in place) and then



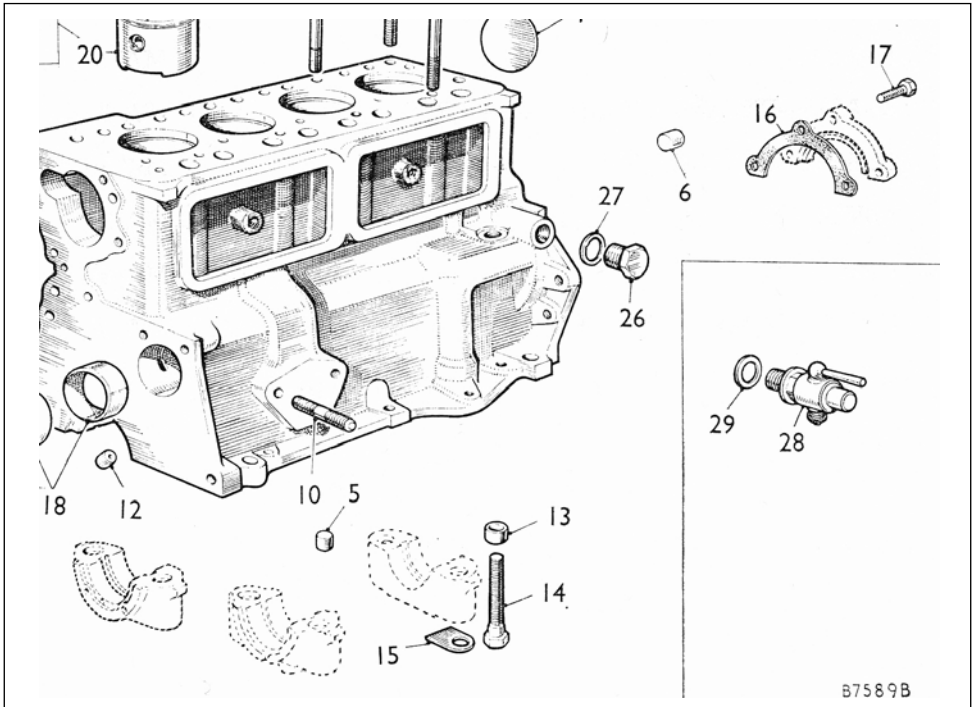
The spiral groove (scroll) at the rear of the crankshaft is here visible lower right. On the left: the rear main cap which is also the lower half of the 'scroll housing'.



The upper scroll housing (“½ moon” or “eyebrow” piece) is secured by three set screws. It should **never** be disturbed unless complete reconditioning and line-boring is planned. In this view of the ‘eyebrow’, the rear and middle main caps are absent, the front main cap is positioned loosely.

line-boring everything in one single critical operation.

After the critical line-boring, all five pieces – the crankcase, the three main caps and the ‘eyebrow’ piece – constitute a unique matched set, best regarded as one single component. Certainly the factory always regarded them as a single component because the three main caps and the ‘eyebrow’ piece were never listed as separate parts and could not be purchased separately. To replace any one of these pieces, the critical line boring operation must be repeated – a job as impossible for any modern amateur as it was impossible for a BMC service centre in the 1960’s. Also note: if the ‘eyebrow’ piece of the scroll housing is ever removed accidentally and then replaced ‘by eye’, the oil leak from the rear scroll seal will almost certainly be worse than before. At the risk of descending to pantomime (and confusing any



The factory Service Parts List (AKD_3566) has no part numbers for the three main caps and the ‘eyebrow’ piece. In the list, these parts are drawn with dashed lines to emphasise that they are **not** interchangeable spare parts.

American readers) “*don't touch the eyebrow, leave the eyebrow alone!*”

If the engine is new or newly reconditioned, the scroll oil ‘seal’ works well – but performance does deteriorate as the engine wears gradually in service and approaches the end of its design life. As crankshaft main bearings wear, crankshaft movement increases. Scroll and scroll housing start to grind against each other and the essential fine gap between them is lost. Compounding these problems, worn cylinder bores, worn pistons and worn piston rings allow high pressure gases to enter the crankcase every time a piston descends on its power stroke. The final result is inevitable, embarrassing and these days expensive: oil everywhere! Increasing amounts of oil blown out of damaged scroll seals by high crankcase pressures, oil misting onto the roads at rates which can ultimately exceed 1 quart/100 miles, unsightly puddles of oil when stationary, drip trays everywhere and – worst of all – Americans making jokes about our cars.

Presented with an old worn out A-series engine wide in the clearances and haemorrhaging oil, there is very little that a backyard mechanic can do to correct matters properly. While worn bearings, piston rings, gaskets and oil pumps can certainly be replaced quite easily, these actions cannot correct the root problems of worn scroll seals, oval cylinder bores and worn crankshafts. Such an engine needs the full blown mechanical equivalent of a major Hospital Operating Theatre, not just a first aid box containing a motley collection of old spanners, socket wrenches and screwdrivers. One quick solution is an exchange engine with a warranty from a reputable supplier, but for those who wish to preserve their original engine this is a desperate last resort. A much better solution is to have one's own engine reconditioned by a reputable firm willing to accept personal commissions – but such firms are not two-a-penny and, of these, only a handful are familiar with our now antique A-series engines.

One firm which is happy to provide a personal service and which has successfully reconditioned thousands of A-series engines over the years is ‘Cambridge Rebores Ltd’ near Cambridge. This firm (see their advertisement, page 17) is happy to perform

either the essential, critical machining steps or the whole reconditioning job, according to customer instructions. Their website ...

<http://www.cambridge-rebores.co.uk/>

... repays close study because it illustrates the sort of machinery that is required for line-boring, crankshaft grinding etc. In particular, the website videos showing this equipment in action illustrate dramatically why these jobs cannot be performed in one's home garage: these machines are large, heavy and very expensive and they require skilled professionals to operate them correctly. Any person about to commission an engine reconditioning should first make sure that the work will be done with machines similar to those at Cambridge Rebores. At interview, if one sees little more than a set of oily spanners, a tank of degreasing fluid and pots of engine enamel, one should walk away rapidly.

Note that fancy aftermarket rear seal kits are available – but their installation destroys the original scroll seal and the new seal will have a short life unless the rest of the engine is working properly. By themselves, these kits are not a quick-fix solution to the problems of a badly worn engine. There is no quick fix! The oil escaping from the rear seal of a worn engine is merely one symptom of far more serious problems elsewhere. If all problems are fixed, the original scroll seal will work just fine.

One final warning: the engine reconditioning process described above cannot be repeated endlessly. For example, there is a limit to how many times a crankshaft can be reground and a limit to how many times the rear scroll housing can be line-bored. I can certify personally that if a ‘dead’ block, suitable only for making boat anchorages or similar, is submitted to Cambridge Rebores for resuscitation, one will be told very bluntly that the patient has died. One will not be asked to sit down before the news is delivered, nor offered a tranquilliser nor even a cup of tea. However, if Cambridge Rebores' bedside manner is not exactly to NHS standard, they are otherwise an exemplary firm and I am pleased to recommend them to the readers of *MASCOT*. And no, I do not possess any of their shares – I just hope to see no puddles of oil after the Spridget60 celebrations.

John E. Davies (Member 3443)
jed2@cam.ac.uk



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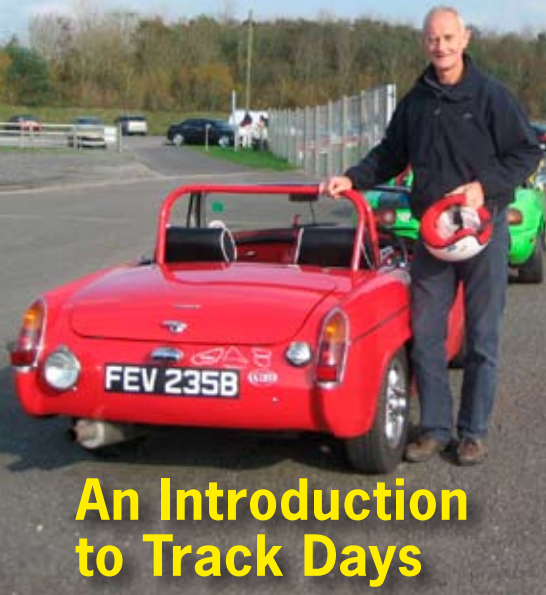
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An Introduction to Track Days

Neil and the K Series Midget at Llandow

Whilst I was building my 1.8 'K' series Midget I had in the back of mind that I would like to have the opportunity to use the car in either a competitive capacity or on Track Days. There is a hillclimb, close to where I live in Pembrokeshire, operated twice a year by the Swansea Motor Club. It is at a place called Llys y Fran. I have often been along to watch as a spectator and indeed have acquaintances who have taken part in their own vehicles, but I have not tried it myself. I know my K series is quick and I have carried out the suspension and braking tweaks necessary to make it safe, but participating in competitive hillclimbs

are a different thing. It's about having the confidence to try it. Also whilst I appreciate that it is supposedly one of the cheapest forms of motorsport in which to be engaged, there is the cost issue. I have often heard the old saying of "How do you make a small fortune in motor racing? Start with a large one!"

With this in mind I decided I would have a go at some track days first. My friend Anthony Cutler, who is the originator and custodian of the K Midget Register, suggested that we should attend the MG's on Track Stowe evening event due to take place on Monday the 15th August. As many of you will know, Stowe circuit is the small circuit within the main race track circuit. The track itself measures 1.08 miles long but has some challenging technical corners.

My home in Pembrokeshire to Silverstone is a 440 mile round trip. I duly booked the time off work and drove up to Malvern to meet Anthony and together we headed off to Silverstone. When we arrived there we met up with a number of other 'K' owners. There were of course a variety of MG models present including MGB Roadster's and GT's, MGR V8, MGF/TF's, a Metro with a 'K' series VVC engine, an MG ZS and Midget's. Those attending were split into beginners or experienced Track Day participants. I, of course, joined the beginners as this was my first event. Following a formal drivers briefing the experienced group were the first away. Before very long my group was off. There were about 10 cars in my group including another two K series Midgets, driven by Jonathan Severn and Tim Dalton, a 'K' series MGB GT driven by Nick Poulton, the VVC MG



Participants with their K Series powered Spridgets (and an MGB) at MGs on Track at Stowe"



A great mix of cars at Llandow

Metro driven by young Matt, the MG ZS, a couple of MGBs and MGFs. We drove four 20 minute sessions during the evening. My K went like a dream. The acceleration in it was awesome. Whilst I failed to pass the other K's and the ZS we all passed the other participants several times. The agility of the Midget in the corners and the power of the 'K' series in the straights meant the Bs, RV8 and the MGFs posed no problem on the overtaking straights. What a buzz I had. It was a great introduction to Track Days in a very safe and controlled environment.

With one Track Day now under my belt, I needed more! However, travelling long distances, fuel costs, Track Day fees and overnight accommodation, make it quite an expensive activity and so I had to wait a couple of months until Saturday 15th October before having another go.

This time it was at the Llandow Circuit just west of Cardiff, a mere 80 miles from my home. This circuit is just 0.9 miles long but has some really testing sections and although not an MGs on Track event was competently run by the circuit itself with a full and detailed briefing being given. Joining me again on this occasion was Tim Dalton who travelled down from the Midlands in his 'K'. Whereas the MGs on Track evening was all MG's, this was a different ballgame altogether. Having arrived for the 9am start, the first car I saw as I pulled into the circuit was an Ariel Atom! Most of the cars had been trailered to the circuit and were set up for Track Days, many having been stripped out and were donning racing slicks! Further examination of the car park revealed a BMW 330 CSI M Spec, Caterhams, various motorbike powered vehicles and a Mini with an Austin engine but with a BMW head and turbocharger pushing

out 250bhp which did the ¼ mile in 11 seconds! There were some more standard cars however including a Lotus Elise, MX5s, Peugeot 1.9GTIs, an MGF and a number of BMWs. What had we let ourselves in for? And amongst all these were our little cars, a 1964 Midget MkII and a 1968 Austin Healey Sprite! OK, both with 'K' series engines, granted. In all there were some 40 cars taking part.

Tim and I joined in with the intermediate sessions albeit he was in a different group to me. Before lunch we had two closed sessions. In my sessions were the MX5s, the MGF, the 1.9GTIs, and the BMW's. My 'K' certainly held its own, passing a number of the other cars on track. What's more, my wife was in the car with me! My enduring memory will be her saying as I was tackling 'Gluepot', "We're going to have a domestic in a minute"!

After lunch and for the rest of the afternoon the circuit ran an open pit lane. This involved 10 cars on the track at any one time with this managed by traffic lights at the pit exit. This was exciting and certainly provided the opportunity to compare your car with other makes present. This was an interesting experience especially as the Ariel Atom was hammering past us down the back straight! Our 'K's didn't disappoint however with lots of people coming up and expressing surprise at how fast our little Midgets were!

Both Tim and I were in agreement at the end of the day that this had been great fun and provided a different experience to an MG's on Track event. I for one will definitely be going back to Llandow. Also, who knows, sometime in the near future it might be an MSA licence and an entry form for Lllysyfran!

Neil Thomas
Tenby

Spriting Back to Happiness

RBK 159

Part 5 (Continued from Part 4 in last month's *MASCOT*)



*RBK amongst friends
at Silverstone 2011*

There was another £1000 plus Mike Rolls bill to come in June 2011, but the fun factor with a new anti-roll bar acquired through eBay almost made up for simultaneous MoT requirements that boosted that annual ritual's cost significantly.

Our editor, Gary Lazarus, predicted the front anti-roll bar would make a significant difference to Frog handling and that was spot on. It was always a nippy ride, but the lurch through understeer into tail out screeching was unsociable. Now it turns into a corner so neatly and tidily, maintaining a chosen line with precision. Rewarding over Silverstone Classic's two new GP circuit laps and the Dyrham Park hill climb retro gathering.

Aside from a full service, the June 2011 assault on Spridget's MoT deficiencies included remedial action for some no-start issues that ironically dogged the specialist, instead of the owner. That meant acquiring and fitting £109.02 of parts including a new condenser, rotor arm and starter solenoid. Sickly drum brake wheel cylinders, all renewed at £64 for parts further complicated passage through MoT.

An operational speedometer was restored as the £6.67 cable failed a second time. Both jammed rev counter (which also ate a mechanical gear set in 2010) and the fuel gauge, which had severed its needle (there is a LOT of vibration in a Sprite) were reconditioned. Instrument repairs took longer than any other billed item at a component cost of £115.43.

A complete and pristine anti-roll bar with triangular mounting plates cost £47.99 plus £7.98 postage from eBay trader *magicmidgetman*. Installation required an exchange £58.34 wishbone on one side and one £25 spring pan. Luckily, the other front wishbone was pre-drilled to later spec and ready for bar action. Back suspension demanded new bushes for the rear radius arms (£15).

Insurance is a perpetual classic conundrum and it bit me in 2011. Risk assessors like classic clientele for their advanced ages and lower risk mileage, but I was caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place as my 635 BMW ('Helga') is perfect for longer motorway runs and usually exceeds 5000



Neatly packaged and as new eBay buy from magicmidgetman was fitted during annual MoT and has significantly improved handling



miles a year. In contrast, I recorded 2072 miles in the Sprite in the opening 12 months. Hagerty, who I met through their excellent classic car runs based on Silverstone, took on the BMW after the Sprite. I ran both for far less than a £400 plus BMW-only premium, but mileage restriction on the 635 was broken. I had to go to Footman James on the



BMW and 6000 miles pa for 273.32p, but stayed with Hagerty on Sprite.

A lightly used wooden steering wheel bought for £25 was beautiful, but getting the correct centre boss took time and had safety issues. Plus gas freed the tired old boss and 9-screw fixing. Those screws were dangerously loaded as the old leather rim mounted behind the boss: definitely not an accident-friendly layout!

New wood rim allegedly had an MG Midget Mk1 boss, but the difference in size and splines was such that I think it came from an MGB. After some false starts I tested Merlin Motorsport's knowledgeable counter staff and finally got a Springalex boss from them at just over £21. Fitting was DIY simple and I now have a correct logo to complement the key fob, both bought less than £3 at Footman James Restoration Show in October 2011.

A set of spare ignition and (originally optional) locking petrol cap keys came at very modest cost from Ian Conley, via MASCOT contact and Silverstone Classic hand over. Ian also has a white Frogeye in his collection and is in the classic car business.

Financially, you will have all seen how Frog – and 1275 or early editions of Spridget – have followed national trends for appreciating prices. Now you'll understand why my major preoccupation going into 2012 was to try and straighten out the Frog's steel bonnet squint.



Woodrim wheel was with us for months before a suitable steering boss came in via Springalex and Merlin Motorsport



The cause of owner angst from pre-purchase onward, bonnet is still being pushed, pulled, and cursed

As this is written, the second new screen is in, but the bonnet stubbornly resists repair. It should be cut and repainted, assuming I find the budget for that. As that tilting clamshell is still operable and locks on its under-grille twist lock accurately, why bother with such an expensive repair?

Resale values

Even outsiders know that a glassfibre bonnet Frog is worth thousands less than an equivalent condition steel-front Sprite, but no buyer or dealer is going to pay top dollar for my steel misfit. That bonnet was a prime reason why I was able to acquire Frog at what now looks an attractive price...

I've lost count of the number of companies and individuals who inspected that sad bonnet, kinked in three previous owner(s)



incidents. When the craftsman who rebuilt the inner front panels on my old BMW – often by eye – would not take Sprout on, I knew this was the toughest task.

I tried Wiltshire company Coachbuilt Horsepower to re-profile the previously damaged bonnet. They trial fitted the original flip-up unit with fresher hinges acquired at Beaulieu Autojumble for £12 and inspected the 40 years of previous bodes. Currently doesn't look like I'll get a result there, despite the pedigree craftsmen working within Coachbuilt at very reasonable rates.

So I tried to find a decent secondhand item. A brace of potential sellers turned elusive. My latest trail to bonnet paradise led to a £1000 item described as suffering just "surface rusted" but I have yet to see it.

Since bare steel new bonnets are listed at £2350 plus 20 percent VAT (£2820 total) with attractive alloy equivalents creeping close to three grand, I had wanted to repair the original, if feasible. Especially as a respected supplier told me that good fits for new Sprite bonnets were still dodgy! So we continue attacking the old unit, especially as the Frog mascot bolted through the original bonnet seems to fascinate onlookers whenever the baby Healey attends an event. It seems worth preserving as it has apparently been on the vehicle 20-30 years. Guess I'll learn to live with it...

Words & images by Jeremy Walton

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Frogeye Spares Company (Midlands)

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Rawles Motorsport Ltd, Alton. (Hampshire)

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Aidy's Bodyshop (Warminster, Wiltshire) 01985.841234

The Rebirth of 990 LRO

Our Sprite 990 LRO originally saw the light of day on the 22nd November 1962. It is a HAN 7 with the 1098cc engine and discs on the front. It was bought by my sister-in-law to be, in 1970 who used it as a general run-around for the next ten years. On getting married in 1980 it was stripped down, the body sand blasted and all the bits put in boxes and stored at the family farm, to be restored at a later date but then largely forgotten about. I knew of its existence as I had driven it years ago before it was stripped down.

Anyway three years ago in late 2008 it was mentioned that it was still in the barn and my sister-in-law wanted to sell it as she didn't



The three of us in the garage (left to right) myself, our friend Marc Smith (who carried out the majority of the bodywork repairs and spraying of the car) and my son James

think she would ever get around to putting it back on the road. Not wanting it to go out of the family I somewhat foolishly bought it together with my son James.

It was literally just the body and boxes and boxes of bits. However, we have been working on it slowly since then and now have at least something of a car shape.

The body has been completely restored by a friend, with all rusty parts either being replaced or re-made and welded. All panels that hadn't been previously sand blasted, were stripped down to bare metal. The whole of the underside has been sealed and is now better than new.

Several coats of primer and undercoat were applied before being finished off with a sparkling new coat of Old English White.

We are now very near to having the suspension and rolling gear fitted, but there is still a long way to go.

The engine is the original, only having covered 42,000 miles and we need an expert to examine it before putting it back into service. If anyone knows where we can get this done, we would be very pleased to know.

My son James tells me we are going to have it on the road for next summer. He is forever the optimist, however, you never can tell.



The bare unprepped bodyshell



Nearly there

David Maskell



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Hi, Gary

It was nice to meet Gaps and see her in action after all I've read about her in *MASCOT*. She certainly isn't short in the GO department.

You asked about the mods I've done to my car. These can be summarised as follows, It's basically a standard Frogeye with period reproduction tuning:

The engine is the original (1959) 948cc after a couple of rebores so it is now +60thou giving a capacity of about 998cc. Pistons are flat top Hepolite 18519KR Powermax design. The cylinder head is standard 12G 202 casting with larger valves and gas flowed ports and double springs. The camshaft is a Piper BP255 with Piper cam followers and a duplex timing chain. The crank has been Tuftrited but is otherwise standard with main and journal bearings – 30thou after a couple of regrinds. The oil pump and pressure relief valve have been uprated. The flywheel is lightened in accordance with BMC Special Tuning spec and the pistons, conrods, crank, 9-spring Borg & Beck clutch, etc all balanced.

Ignition uses an Aldon Lucas 45D distributor with vacuum advance/retard fitted with ignitor and side entry cap, copper cored HT leads and Lucas sports coil.



Fuel is delivered through an SU electronic fuel pump (AUF214EP) mounted on the bulkhead and twin SU 1½in H4 carbs with E3 needles. Pancake air filters and other carburettor bits as per MGA. The inlet manifold is basically a MkII Sprite manifold opened out to take the big carbs.

As I explained, the exhaust is a Meacam/Healey special tuning system comprising a steel long centre branch manifold, with a tuned pipe and twin outlet silencer.

Drive is through a 3.9 diff (ex-Riley 1.5). Front suspension is standard with uprated dampers and a standard BMC 9/16in anti-roll bar. Brakes are standard drums all round with silicone fluid. Halogen headlight bulbs complete the picture.



The car is certainly quicker than my old (rubber bumpered) MGB and is good for well over the ton. The great thing is that it keeps pace with modern traffic and is still quite lively in terms of acceleration at motorway speeds. There are bits of the power curve where it's on a par with my 1.8 MX5 but really I'd need a close ratio (5-speed?) box to make use of it. And it makes a nice noise which the MX5 doesn't!

I don't think I'm going to mess with it any more but I've got my eyes open for a 1275 which I might be tempted to play with!

John Gibbons



Little Red at the Canada run

“Little Red” the Midget

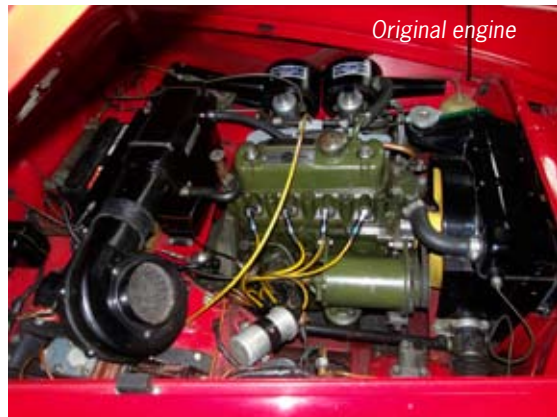
I acquired "Little Red" in May 2009, having retired from running my own aviation business after serious illness. I had always wanted an MG Midget, and having discovered this car in Lancashire through a specialist dealer on the internet. I fell in love with the car as soon as I saw it, and the fact it was a Mk1 version was a bonus. I took with me a pilot chum, an MGCC member who has had many MGs over the years.

A good look confirmed the car was in excellent condition, having undergone a six month restoration from March to September 2007. The majority of original components have been sympathetically returned to the vehicle, including the engine and gearbox. Only the hood looked to need possible repair. I joined the MGCC later that month, and have been actively involved in North and West Yorkshire 'Natters'.

In late 2009 the starter motor was replaced, and in 2010 a new hood ordered. This was fitted in the spring of 2011, at which time I found the hood frame was the wrong type, and had to be replaced by true Mk1 type. "Little Red" has participated in many MGCC events, including the Yorkshire Dales and Compass runs.



Rare original steering wheel



Original engine

This year "Little Red" attended the 'Midget 50' celebrations at Burghley House, and attracted some interest. I have now had confirmation the engine is the original one (No. 9CG-U-h/26048) fitted to the car when built in March 1962. After advice I was able to photograph behind the dashboard to find the original production line crayon markings confirming identity (G-AN1/11483), Tartan Red finish, and confirmation of original items fitted. Only the black paint sprayed on the gearbox cover panels had to be removed, to revert the interior to its Tartan Red finish. The seating appears to be original too, with carpeting on back of early type bucket seats, and seat trim of red with black piping. The car also has the rarely seen original black two spoke large diameter steering wheel.

The car now has BMIHT certificate no 2011/23709, and is 3937 on the Midget register. In 2010 I also joined the Midget and Sprite Club, and participated in some of their runs, and meetings. I believe her to be one of the most original Mk1 Midgets around,



with the only modification carried out – the addition of an electric motor to the screen wash system to help though the MOT (The original pump is still fitted!)

Photographs included show the vehicle over the last year, with my fiancée Julie and myself.

Ken Cothliff

Ed's note: We're pleased that you decided to join MASC too and even more delighted that we had the pleasure of "Little Red" on the Club's stand at the NEC last November.

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Letters

Frogeye TZA 238

Hi Gary

A very interesting story about a MK1 Austin Healey Sprite resulting from a photo of mine taken at Oulton Park, back in the '60s

Regards

Ian Cross



TZA 238 at Oulton Park 1965

Dear Gary,

I've just received my joining instructions from the Midget and Sprite Club (early Christmas present!). I'm afraid I haven't got a picture of both of us but please find attached a couple of pictures of the car.

My car is a 1967 Austin Healey Sprite – OYC 201F. The car has returned to its roots as it was owned originally by the Delves-Broughton family in Chester. I owned the car in the early 1980's and part exchanged her for a Lancia in 1984 and almost immediately regretted it. I lost track of the car but was contacted by its owner in 2000 for pictures and history – she was now situated in Brighton. I obtained a first refusal commitment to buy her back if he ever felt like selling the car. He rang me six weeks ago and she is now 'back home' in Nantwich.

I'm looking forward to some good outings with the Club.

Best wishes,

Gareth Williams

Owner recognises his car from a 1966 photograph here on [Classic Car Link](#)

Mk1 Austin Healey Sprite, Reg: TZA 238

In 1962/3 the infamous Alec Poole purchased TZA 238, in Northern Ireland.

Alec did many local rallies with TZA 238 in Ireland before moving to the West Midlands to take an apprenticeship with BMC in the Morris Commercial division.

In 1964, TZA 238 was entered in several of the Motoring News rally championships and after fitting a 1098cc supercharged engine, he finished 12th overall in the International Welsh rally. In the same year he achieved a 2nd place in the GT class and about 15th overall in The Circuit of Ireland. The car was also entered in numerous events, autocross, hill climbs and circuit races. Alec had wins at Brands Hatch Sprints, Cambridge CC and Sevenoaks and District CC on consecutive weeks in October.

Alec took part in an amazing number of races in 1965, often two meetings a weekend. Alec and TZA 238, were very well known for their

giant killing exploits especially in the wet, against the bigger cars in Marque sports car races and also specialised cars in GT races including, Willment Cobra, Lotus Elans, E types, Sunbeam Tiger, TVR's, Marcus GT, Diva, Lotus 11 Climax etc.

In 1965, Alec added numerous outright wins and class wins to his already incredible record.

I believe that either *Autosport* or *Motoring News* declared that Alec had achieved more wins in UK races than anyone else of that year and TZA 238 was featured in results and photos in *Autosport* almost every week.

By this time, the car was a bit tired and during the winter period, it was re-shelled.

It was to become the first fully lightweight racing Frogeye Sprite with a fibreglass front and back, aluminium doors, Girling 14LF Escort brakes, 7" wide Minilight wheels, 4.55 ratio Jack Knight LSD, panhard rod etc.

A Frogeye Sprite with only one eye, TZA 238 nearside headlight was removed and used as an air duct for the 45 DCOE carburettor.

It was also the first Mk 1 Sprite to have a 1275cc engine, which was not yet available for road Sprites and it retained its distinctive Irish registration number even though it was far from being a road car now.

Credits to Paul Ivey who prepared TZA 238 for Alec Poole.

The results of the 1966 races are not known at this moment and TZA 238 was not raced during in 1967.

Alec's brother Arnie bought it in 1968 who shared it with Robin Cochrane, an engineer working for Quinton Hazell. The engine was changed for an ex works XSP 1071 engine of which produced an impressive 115bhp. This was to allow them to race in the 1150cc class in Prodsports (changed from Marque cars) and also GT races. This proved to be very successful, the pair won outright, and class wins in about ten events in 1969.



In 1970, James Thacker and Edward Thacker bought the TZA 238 and in the next seven years did numerous races. In 1971, TZA was entered in 28 events mostly circuit races adding four wins and 11 second places to TZA's history.

In early 1974, James bought his Cousin Edward's share in TZA and continued to race it himself. The crankshaft of the XSP 1071 broke in 1976 and the engine was replaced with a 1293cc unit with a Jim Whitehouse Arden Conversion cylinder head.

In early 1977, TZA won the first ever MGCC Championship race at Mallory Park and came 2nd in the Sprite Midget race at MG Silverstone.

On practice day at Silverstone 22nd July 1977, James suffered brake failure at Copse corner and put TZA, into a spin to slow it down, unfortunately he caught the inside kerb and the car rolled doing extensive damage. As time was of the essence and the repair looked like being a long process because the shell was rather twisted, TZA 238 was laid to rest and James continued his racing career in a MG Midget.

From that ill-fated day in 1977 the Mk1 Austin Healey Sprite, TZA 238 remains to this day in its damaged condition sustained at Silverstone.

MASCOT would like to thank Ian Cross. Credits also to James Thacker owner of TZA 238 for providing the information as well as Classic Car Link www.classiccarlink.com

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.

LONDON BRIDGES RUN

2nd January 2012



After thoroughly enjoying our first Bridges Run in 2010, and missing the 2011 version, it was time for a return in 2012.

With the top down, we left mid Essex at 0800 to arrive at McDonald's in Deptford, SE London to park next to Mike & Viv from Eastbourne who were attending on our recommendation.

After the usual introductions to both familiar and new crews, we headed inside for a hot drink. A total of 22 cars, comprising 3 Frogeyes, 5 Sprites, 8 Midgets, a couple of other classics (an AC Ace and an MGC) and 4 modern sports cars (including organiser Darren's Elise sprint car) eventually arrived.

Darren had introduced a new feature this year by including a treasure hunt, which involved collecting the answers to a series of questions along the route. At 10:00, we left the car park in convoy and headed for the first bridge, the iconic Tower Bridge. Carefully observing the 20mph limit, the cars were soon attracting the attention of visitors as we crossed the bridge to soon enter the infamous Congestion Charging Zone which is free on Bank Holidays – cheers Boris.

After crossing London Bridge, we took extra care to avoid the overshoot of 2010 to find Stoney Street. Next came a series of small back streets, where the preceding cars seemed to disappear in small roads

everywhere, to eventually cross Southwark Bridge. The beautiful sound of Spridgets echoed off the walls as we passed through the Blackfriars underpass before a loop leading to Blackfriars Bridge and then Waterloo Bridge.

Passing along The Strand, Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and then Parliament Square, the cars were again attracting admiring glances and also provided the subject of many photos from the throngs of visitors. Westminster Bridge was our next target followed by Lambeth Bridge and Vauxhall Bridge, which led to the halfway bridge at Chelsea.



The Strand to Trafalgar Square



Lawrence Slater reflects on a wonderful day

After Albert and Battersea Bridges, we joined the busy Chelsea scene. Only Wandsworth Bridge remained before the comfort stop after 16 miles at another McDonald's.

Thirty minutes or so later, it was time to leave and cross the final six bridges en route to Richmond. The Wandsworth one-way system passed without problems and then we headed for Putney Bridge. A loop twice passing under the Hammersmith flyover, was followed by Hammersmith Bridge before a pretty riverside section through Mortlake and Barnes and on to Chiswick Bridge.



Leaving London Bridge



Parked up for lunch at Rose of York pub

Another riverside section led to Kew Bridge where we had to guess what – “queue” in traffic! Another busy section was followed by Twickenham Bridge. Only Richmond Bridge remained in the final two miles, leading us to the finish at the Rose of York pub in a little under three hours in total. After the obligatory photoshoot of the cars lined up, it was time to organise the letters from each answer to the treasure hunt to find the quotation. The winners – Mike & Ann Harrison – were picked from the correct answers. With the AC Ace having been the subject of much debate on the BBS forum, it also gave us the opportunity to find out more from the owner. A big thank you to Darren and Tracey for another great day out.

Doug & Jenny Plumb
Member 4071

Heart of England Report

Our first meeting of 2012 was at the earlier time of 8.00 and was well attended by 32 members, although we were missing several of our 'Regulars'. We were able to welcome a potential new member Neil, who at present has a Frogeye Sprite 'in bits'. His challenge for the next few months is to get it on the road and hopes that handy hints from MASC members will help speed this up. By the end of the meeting Neil had already decided to become a member so I'm sure Stuart would have made sure that he completes all the formalities.

It was decided that we should have a second meeting during the month as happens in other clubs and this will happen on the 4th Wednesday of each month. We will meet in the bar of the Green Dragon and will be just for a natter with no formality, and with the possibility of a drive in the summer on fine nights, so hope to see you on the 25th January.

Another collection was made towards the cost of a sail for the Heart of England Area and hopefully we now have enough to meet the price quoted. Now all that needs to be done is the chosen colouring to be finalised with the manufacturer.

Events for the year were suggested and it already looks like 2012 will be another busy year. We begin with the MG Spares Show at Stoneleigh on February 19th for which the Heart of England stand is being organised by Dave Colclough and Dave Puzey. Several of the group volunteered to put their cars on the stand so let's hope it is a lively and interesting day for everyone.

The first outing for the cars this year is being organised by Dave Parker who has just acquired a primrose yellow Midget and is keen to give it a good run. It is planned to drive to Frome in Somerset where we will stay overnight in the Premier Inn. Those wishing to go should book through the hotel and then let Dave know.

A detailed calendar of events discussed so far will found on the area website.

Rosemary Couch

Yorkshire Area Report



The last few months have been quite exciting for us, as we've had some good news – Yorkshire's youngest spridgeteer will be arriving in June: yes, we are going to be parents! Baby-to-be has already been out in Sarah's Sprite and already had a go at driving via Mum... This means that Sarah is going to have her hands a little full in due course, so will be stepping down as area rep from April. I will continue as Area Rep, but am looking for someone to join me as co-Area Rep, who can help out and keep things running smoothly over the summer when I too am likely to have very full hands. If you can help out with this, please email me.

We have had some excellent recent meetings. November saw four Spridgets with roofs down on a glorious sunny day at Ye Jolly Farmers, and we welcomed Steve Webb who is rebuilding his Frog to his first meeting, along with the usual regulars and Kevin Caruthers. In December it was a cosy affair with just one Spridget and a Rover P6, Rob & Jenni choosing the luxury option, and it was also good to see Frank and family.

In January we also had a good turnout, numbers partially boosted by Tim's 40th birthday weekend, as we had to involve some spridgeting amongst the fun activity. As ever, the jolly good homemade pies, real ales and hearty company remain a hallmark of Yorkshire area meetings, where we welcome all with open arms. Looking forward to seeing you in February...

Tim & Sarah Saunders

Scotland goes Dutch

A party of four, comprising members of The Midget and Sprite Club and from The Blackwood Classic Car Club, this past weekend (January 14/15th) attended The Interclassics and Topmobiel 2012 Show in Maastricht. It really was a flying visit with us flying out of Edinburgh late Friday evening en route to Weeze in Germany. Upon arrival at a Weeze Pension at 12:30, and following a night's sleep, it was an early start on Saturday to pick up a hire car to drive the 160kms to Maastricht for the show opening at 10:00 am. Following the show closure at 6:00pm we drove back to Venlo for the second night. Another early start on Sunday for the drive back to Weeze and a flight, which arrived back in Edinburgh at 9:00am on Sunday, completed the itinerary.

None of the group had previously attended the show and it proved to be very good. In comparison with the NEC Show it was quite small which allowed the whole show to be comfortably walked round within a day. There were two special displays, each in its own dedicated hall, one for Porsche and the other for The Mille Miglia. The Porsche display mostly comprised the 911 range and included examples of all models from the 901 of 1963 up to the latest 997. The display also included a GT2, competition cars and a police targa model. It was agreed that it would (almost!) be a pleasure to be pulled by the police in a Porsche Targa. There were also several examples of the Porsche Speedster as made famous by James Dean. The Mille Miglia display included a wide selection of cars that had competed in the famous event including Mercedes SSK, Aston Martin, Talbot Lago, Osca, Bugatti, Ferrari and Fiat to name but a few. The main show areas although obviously mostly displaying continental makes did include a good representation of British models. This included models from



Mechanically confused Sprite at Maastricht

Jaguar, Aston Martin, Bentley, Triumph, MG and Ford. In particular there were many examples of the big Healey range, 100s and 3000s. However, extensive searching only revealed one example of "recent" Spridget models a powder blue Frogeye shown in the accompanying photograph. The model was staged as undergoing some maintenance task with a "mechanics" legs sticking out from beneath the car. There was however one unforgivable error – the rear of the car was jacked up supposedly being worked on, but there was a coil spring lying adjacent to the mechanic! Midgets were well represented through the older models with M series, TDs and TFs being on display.

On the home front, the first meeting of the Scottish group is tomorrow (January 17th) and among items to be discussed is the events programme for the coming year. Hopefully I will soon be in a position to publish the proposed events and runs for the Group and would extend a warm welcome to all members of MASC to join us if you are intending to be in Scotland.

John Pardo

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E-mail: jp1kg@talktalk.net

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Winter Parade USA

Every year, members of the British Car Club of Charleston (South Carolina) participate in Christmas parades in surrounding towns. These photos show the Bugeye owned by MASC member Glenn Surrette of Charleston being decorated for the Mount Pleasant evening parade on Dec. 10, 2011.

The parade drew more than 100 units and the town of Mount Pleasant requires all units to be lighted.

In addition to the Bugeye, two Midgets turned up for the parade making the Sprite/Midget participation three out of nine cars,

Don't know if you all do parades over there in Old Blighty, but they're big here ... I did two in one weekend. The photos are from the second of two on the same weekend.

Glenn Surrette

PS: the weather here has been unseasonably warm ... low 70s, so I've been driving the Bugeye a lot.



Midget and MGB lead the British Car Club of Charleston unit



The second decorated Midget



Robbie Turner, son of a friend, untangles lights from bin



Brooklands New Year's Day 2012



Classics on the Brooklands banking

Early morning New Year's Day (well, not very early – about 9.00am) Ann and I set out in the Midget with the roof down so we could “blow away the cobwebs” for our usual trip to Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, Surrey for their Annual Car Club Day. After the regulatory bacon/sausage in a bun “starter” for the day we went to look round the over 1,000 vehicles on display ranging from early primitive examples to the very latest models.

An added attraction this year was the 44 vehicles that were going to be competing in the London to Cape Town Rally. These also ranged from a 1920s open car to the latest 4x4 off-roaders. Competing in the event in his Toyota 4x4 truck is Andrew Actman who also races a Sprite and is the ex-proprietor of Lenham Sports Cars. As usual we enjoyed all that the Museum has to offer including the London Bus Museum which moved to the site in 2011.



Spridgets, MGBs, Triumphs and aircraft from the banking

At about 2.00pm the heavens opened and set the scene for the rest of the afternoon so, after trying to help Gary get his windscreen wipers working, we put the roof up and left at about 3.30pm for a very wet but trouble-free drive home. At over 4,000 visitors on the day, Brooklands has confirmed that this was the biggest Classic New Year Meet that the Museum has held.

Keith Warner

Home Counties North West and Harrow Car Club

Ed's note: It was a marvellous (but very wet) day and along with the annual London Bridges run (see elsewhere in this month's *MASCOT*), is the perfect way for Southern-based Spridgeteers to start the year. Indeed not just for Southerners as we had the pleasure of the company of Ex-MASC Chairman and SS&NB rep Bill Mohan, who made the 250 mile round trip from the Midlands to join us at Brooklands. Both he and I had windscreen wiper failure which made our respective return journeys more interesting.



Spridget Racer Andrew Actman before the start of the London to Cape Town Rally

East Anglian Report

Probably say something like this every year but it is none the less true, as I pound the keys with my Olympic super finger it is early January and very dry and mild for the time of year, however you are reading this in February, the worst of the winter is over and spring is just round the corner. Spridget season is nearly upon us and events need organising and advertising, Spridgets need servicing, the days are warming up and pulling out.

Dates for your diary from me are Kimbolton Classic 15th July, Silverstone Classic 20th to 22nd July (booking code C12134) this event will have limited numbers of Saturday only tickets so if this is what you want book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment (booking and other details on the Silverstone Classic website).

Not a lot happening in the belly of Britain this month with regard to our favourite classic cars, the nearest we had to a proper car at the FBI meeting was Chris in his rather splendid Mini, even HTJ (who has no excuse at all with his plastic lid) let us down although it was great to see him at the meeting after a bit of an absence. Diane and Mick (our events sub committee) had come prepared with a brilliant suggested events hand out with plenty of old favourites and new ideas for this year's events (some of which should be advertised in this copy of *MASCOT*). We worked our way down Diane's list between sips of Old Peculiar, discussing various manly topics and dipping in to HTJ's single object fumble bag, with items being ruled in and others ruled out, some new ones suggested and dates decided, the outcome being a mix of 10 great and varied events including major national events, shows, charity events and our own home made runs, treasure hunt and visits to some great East Anglian places. As I said some events should be on the events page of this issue with others needing a little

Derek with some old car with a horse on it



finalising before we go public, I kind of like the idea of a rolling events programme so as one event passes another is planned rather than a mad scramble at the start of the year.

The other highlight of the evening was HTJ's singular fumble bag which he told us contained a very rare piece of a classic car, I must admit I did start to wonder if the car in question was in fact a Sprite, since it was a particularly peculiar perplexing piece prolonging people's participation. However not surprisingly our secret weapon Dave Hawkes (who has at least one of everything ever made in his garage) knew exactly what it was, the bracket from the centrepiece of a very early Midget grill which has a cleverly crafted reflective MG badge screwed to it (not glued to it). And although the intellectual end of the table conducted a steward's enquiry and decided that the item was not actually part of a Sprite and was therefore inadmissible in a fumble bag, we were however magnanimous and still declared HTJ the outright (or maybe outback) loser.

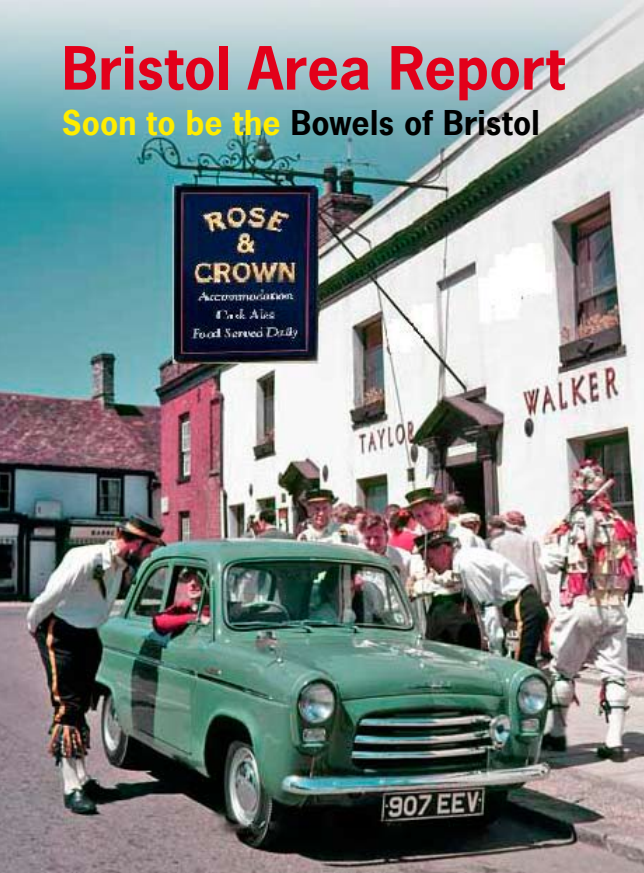
The final topic of the evening was appropriately that of willow and cardboard coffins with Derek suggesting that he could be eaten, now that's a cracking idea for a Club barbecue!

See you all at the Ferry Boat and beyond.

Dave Dixon

Bristol Area Report

Soon to be the Bowels of Bristol



Spridget expert or not, Terry's arrival in his new Sprite Saloon was viewed with suspicion by the other Bristol area members

I should have read the small print. On celebrating our being presented with a copy of the ancient Pucklechurch charter – in recognition of being regular 'invaders' of the parish – we failed to realise the full implications of this honour. We were too busy rejoicing at having our very own key to the village stocks. Also, our enrolment onto the next village ducking stool operator's course, a rare privilege indeed for 'outsiders'. And, very usefully, being allowed (albeit with restrictions) the use of the Rose & Crown toilets again – very useful. However, it would appear that all recognisable organisations, clubs, societies, cults and covens within the district, are subject to conscription by the Parish rulers. Our call to 'Parish Service' requires two of our number to be enrolled into the village Morris Dancing Squad for a period of not more than two years. The 'Pucklechurch Pounders' are a fearsome side. In 2011, they had 24 victories out of

28 performances. Four of the wins were achieved in injury time, eight dancers have been sent off, two have lifetime bans and three others went missing without trace. No one takes the mick out of this lot and survives I can tell you!

Under the circumstances, it was very fortuitous that our January gathering saw a goodly number attending. We welcome new to our fold, Dick and David. (Obviously not put off by anything they may have read in *MASCOT* or heard from other sources). We have until the 1st of March to present our offerings of two members to the Parish Council for intense Morris dancing training before the season begins. On a positive note, the 'Pucklechurch Pounders' are unhindered by any present day 'Health and safety' nonsense or insurance restrictions. We will be seeking volunteers at our February meeting but as usual, I will make the final decisions. (Hmm – Alan Lo with bells on).

Anyway, a lively meeting it was too with more than a smattering of Wiltshire representation. In fact, it was so busy that I forget to check who arrived by Spridgley thing and who didn't. Thankfully, the Landlord allowed me to view the CCTV recording of the car park so I will award the appropriate points before the February gathering. One small point regarding our new 'table matrix'. A further category needs to be inserted – a 'We don't believe you've got one' table. Some members seem very cagey about whether they actually have a Spridgley thing at all. They could be Parish council spies, people with nothing else to do on the second Wednesday of the month or perhaps, some thing far more worrying – we don't know – but we are on to you. The Rose and Crown has a trap door in the Lounge floor accessing the deep well beneath, just about where the 'WDBYGO' table will be!

Always a friendly welcome at the R&C (for most) with plenty of Spridgley motoring matters discussed (by most). Come and join us, especially anyone who has survived any previous Morris dancing service (Please).

Terry Horler

South Staffs & North Birmingham

It has been decided by SS&NB members that each member will take turns in writing a report for MASCOT. This month it is my turn.

Austin Sprite

This was, if you remember, at the NEC classic as 'the barn find'. This is an update of the progress so far. All metal work/welding is complete, engine bay and the underside have been etched primed seam sealed high build prime then stone guarded and painted in two pack. (The stoneguard is also white so if chipped will not show).

Front suspension overhauled, callipers reconditioned by me, new kingpins etc. Back axle was completely stripped, painted and rebuilt with new bearings and seals, brakes etc. The aim is to do all the underside mechanicals except the engine and gearbox whilst on the rotisserie. All new copper brake and fuel lines fitted. Top tip, copper pipe for the fuel line can be obtained from your local caravan store at a fraction of the price. (BS stamped gas and fluid grade from Jacksons of old Arley 3mtr £6.25). By the time this is in print the Sprite should be off the spit and on its wheels. Only the exterior paint, engine, electrics, interior etc.

I would like to thank John Collins for all his hard work within the club and for organising



The Barnfind Austin Sprite at the NEC 2009



Then



Now



Andy already into the Christmas spirit

our Christmas dinner, which was a great success. Pictured is Andy a bit worse for wear after going to the football first. What else could he balance on his head?

The SS&NB area has a new email address: ssnb.masc@hotmail.co.uk

Club nights are a relaxed and social affair and all members new and old will be made very welcome.

Steve Roberts

Midget & Sprite Club

National Event at Silverstone

This is an advance heads up that this year Silverstone Classic will be restricting Saturday only tickets so if you just want to attend on the Saturday I would advise you to book as soon as possible, If you book for more than one day but including Saturday there will be no restriction. I think the organisers are trying to get a better balance of numbers across the three days as Saturday is by far the most popular day normally. Opposite is the advert and discount code (bottom right) to try to give those who want Saturday only tickets a fighting chance of getting them.

Silverstone Classic will once again be our MASC national gathering and will be the biggest and best classic car show on the planet for 2012. We have secured special rates and infield parking in a designated MASC area again this year. Ticket prices are Friday £35, Saturday (limited availability) £50, Sunday £45, two-day Fri/Sat £60, two-day Sat/Sun £70 and three-day weekend £80, this gets two people in one Spridget in to our infield area. Note these discounted tickets are only available until 31st March at which point the prices rise by £5 for each day booked (i.e. £15 on a three day ticket) and even these tickets will only be available up to 31st May.

Sadly prices have gone up slightly this year (not really a surprise) however every year this brilliant event gets bigger and better (take a look at the Silverstone Classic website for details), and is still good value for what is included.

www.silverstoneclassic.com

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