

MIDGE MAGAZINE



Autumn
2020



Nick's Midge

MOBC. the Midge Owners and Builders' Club



Hello All.

Well, I hear you in England have been let out on probation. Here in Scotland the restrictions are easing but many in both countries are staying in on the grounds that the disease hasn't gone away. As I write this I realise it will have changed by the time you read it. Gone are the days when you only found out about a pandemic when you woke up covered in spots.

Other countries will have their own regulations and encouragements. Midge driving is probably about as safe as you can be as long as any passengers are in your 'bubble'. Personally I think the advice is still a bit ambiguous, especially the bits that advise us to 'be alert' and 'stay safe' and the like while the advisors are less than careful about their own behaviour. There are significant indications of a second wave, or rather the continuation of the first, so keep that mask handy. If in doubt stay in the garage and have the coffee and sandwiches sent from the kitchen. Of course there is always the danger of finding the locks have been changed when it starts getting cold, and while on that thought, remember that a tonneau cover and a heater are worthwhile and necessary investments, as is a £700 flying jacket and something with ear flaps. JH.

Welcome to, Daryl Phimister, John Hall, Tom Bartlett (USA), Lin Allen, Michael Kanitz (Germany)

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Stories and photographs to Secretary Jim Hewlett at jim@jimhewlett.com or The Old Manse, Tarbrax, West Calder, West Lothian, UK EH55 8XD



Tom Sanderson writes:-
I have been busy on 'Flo'.

At Christmas I took the head off and had it machined for using unleaded, while had the engine stripped, I replaced the rubber hoses with silicone types and used waterless fluid in the cooling system now. Next job, new dash covering with vinyl, took the gauges out and replaced the pitch and foam with 3 mm sponge strip and used a smear of black silicone to seal, cleaned the glass and polished the stainless bevels.

I replaced the screw in bulbs with LED screw types.
Last job make a hood, still on with that, paper patterns made and material cut ready for pinning together.

Tom Bartlett has just joined the MOBC, and because he and his Spitfire based, V6 2.8 litre bright yellow Midge are in Alabama USA he gets a special mention. That and the fact that I want him to write an article about it.

I think it might be the Midge previously owned by Charles Welch (or possibly Welsh) Member number 1201. I haven't heard from Charles in a long time so if this doesn't promote a response from him I'll be deleting his data from my computer as per the data protection act. If anyone else finds they haven't been getting Newsletter notifications just email me and I'll reinstate with no charge.

Of course, it may be that you've not updated your email address.

Or I've mis-typed it.



Some rebuilds are smaller than others

Rob Macknay writes:-

In the mid eighties, having just finished building a Midge, and had just had my 1st daughter, I was talking to JC. He sold me on building a Mayfair car for her.

After many years of use ended up in shed and looked very sorry when I got it out a month ago. Flat perished tyres, rusting chrome, dull paint (my own Ford rosso red cellulose job) So I:-

Sandblasted and repainted the wheels, new tyres.

Paintwork buffed up fine.

Replaced the rusted chrome headlights

Polished the brass screen.

Fitted speed controller to original 12 v motor

Made new red carpet from a cheap set of car mats

Re-veneered the dash with a burr walnut off-cut.

Gave all the black metalwork a fresh coat of 'perfection' 709 marine paint.

The original stainless steel front grill which was made on an oil refinery pipework lagging machine has polished up well

The car will go back to my daughter who now has twin boys just coming up to a year old.

A picture of the future drivers is attached!



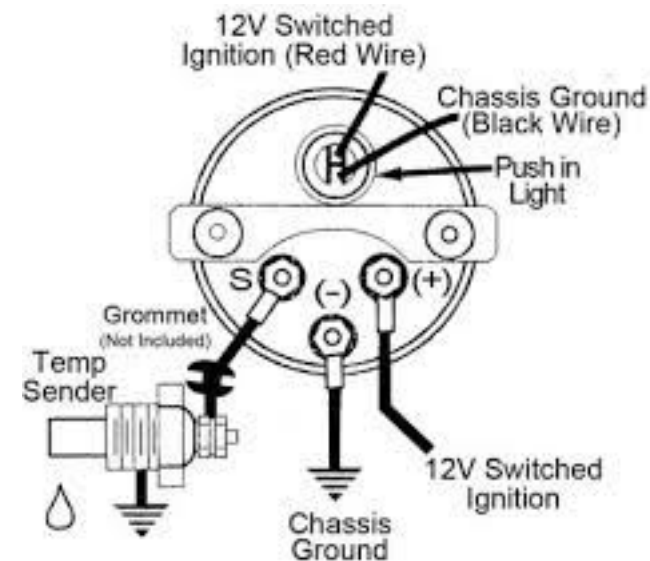
Many Midge Owners will have been looking at their Midge's wiring as lock-down means we are at home more and looking for things to do.

A question (below) was raised by Carl on the Moss Owners Club Facebook page about the electrical circuit related to instrument gauges.

He asked... *Does anyone have a link to wiring diagram for these gauges? They are Jaeger. Also does anyone have any knowledge of which terminal is which? Attached photo of the back of the temp gauge. One terminal must be the sender & one for power, but which is which? I'm assuming the gauge is earthed via the fixing nut on the case as per the connected wire?* My expanded answer...

Oil, water, and fuel gauges work differently to most other electrical equipment on a car. The earth is a variable resistor in the sensor so it doesn't use the instrument's metal body for the earth except sometimes for the illuminating bulb for night driving. The bulb usually has its own supply to the back of the bulb holder. The circuit for the actual meter comes from the ignition circuit (so it's not running all the time) that's usually the + or positive wire to one of the blade connectors. The current then flows through the gauge, out through the other blade connector (- or Negative) and then to the 'sensor' which is also the earth in the fuel tank or the temperature (or oil pressure) sender. So the variable resistor in the sender is what controls the current flow, and that deflects the needle accordingly. If with the ignition on, you take the connector off the temperature sensor then it should read zero on the gauge and if you connect it to the engine block or some other 'earth' then it should read maximum (full, hot or high pressure) That is also a quick way of testing if the gauge or the sensor is at fault.

The actual supply of electricity is usually the stabilised voltage unit often found on the back of the speedometer. So don't torment the wee thing by earthing the circuit for too long. Older cars with dynamos often had erratic voltage control that meant when you turned your headlights on you would have gotten a reduced fuel level or temperature showing. Hence the a special power supply. Positive earth cars, now quite rare, work in the reverse manner (change + to - and - to+) so if you find your gauge is working backwards then swap the wires. If it all goes bang I shall deny all responsibility. JH.



Everything above the clamp is to do with the 'push in' illuminating bulb.

If it helps, google 'wiring diagram for car temp gauge'.

The fixing nut or in this case nuts are often 'Narled' so they tighten by hand rather than spanner. They hold the gauge in with a metal bracket or clamp as shown, but the dashboard is often wood, so a separate earth (or ground as they call it in the US) is shown at the bottom of the diagram. The clamp is often not part of the earth circuit. Contrary to the diagram the bulb is not switched by the ignition but by the sidelight circuit

The Midge

U.K. Kit Retail Price List - November 1997

All prices are Ex-works, excluding VAT. Delivery is extra for which we will be pleased to quote separately.

Components.....	Price
Build Manual (incl. vat, p&kp).....	£15.60 <input type="checkbox"/>
Full size Body Tub Cutting Plans.....	£35 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Note: Plans + Manual (incl. VAT, p&kp).....</i>	<i>£55 <input type="checkbox"/></i>
Supplementary Manual for Triumph builds.....	£5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chassis (Ford only).....	£395 <input type="checkbox"/>
Trailing Arms & Clamps Set:	
(for DIY Escort II axle conversion).....	£99 <input type="checkbox"/>
Rear Fitting kit: 9 bushes, bolts, nuts etc.....	£42 <input type="checkbox"/>
Rear 'Coil over' adj. Shocks, (100lbs)/pr.....	£175 <input type="checkbox"/>
Steering Rack Extension.....	£11 <input type="checkbox"/>
*Engine Towers /pair.....	£28 <input type="checkbox"/>
*Chassis Side Rails /pair.....	£55 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>* (for Triumph chassis conversions only)</i>	
Chassis padding (8 mtrs).....	£18 <input type="checkbox"/>
Windscreen (c/w fitted glass & dashtop seal) ...	£155 <input type="checkbox"/>
Aluminium Panel Set: Bonnet, engine sides and apron, pre-cut, & louvered.....	£235 <input type="checkbox"/>
Bonnet catches (4).....	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Bonnet hinge, (stainless steel).....	£45 <input type="checkbox"/>
Radiator surround (polished).....	£75 <input type="checkbox"/>
Radiator Mesh.....	£18 <input type="checkbox"/>
GRP Dashboard Top.....	£60 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Steel Extended Cycle Wings.....	£55 <input type="checkbox"/>
Set of 10 Wing Stays (front & rear).....	£55 <input type="checkbox"/>
Loom (c/w 'Easy-fit' guide).....	£165 <input type="checkbox"/>
Petrol Tank.....	£85 <input type="checkbox"/>
Spare wheel mount & Rear Fender (Please state Ford or Triumph).....	£78 <input type="checkbox"/>
Weather Equipment: (Black is standard; please ask for other colours available. Fittings included)	
Vinyl Hood.....	£235 <input type="checkbox"/>
Vinyl Sidescreens (pair).....	£135 <input type="checkbox"/>
Vinyl Tonneau.....	£120 <input type="checkbox"/>
Double Duck Hood.....	£255 <input type="checkbox"/>
Double Duck Sidescreens (pair).....	£145 <input type="checkbox"/>
Double Duck Tonneau.....	£145 <input type="checkbox"/>
Hood Frame - 2 Seater.....	£34 <input type="checkbox"/>
Hood Frame - 2+2.....	£45 <input type="checkbox"/>
Door Locks, Hinges & Handles Set.....	£95 <input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting Set, comprising: 2 Chrome h/lights c/w halogen units & pilots; 4 round amber indicators; 2 side repeaters; 2 rear stop/tail; 2 reflectors; 1 each of Fog rear, Reverse & Number plate.....	£185 <input type="checkbox"/>

To Order: Please tick the boxes next to the items you wish to order, complete below and return to:
White Rose Vehicles Ltd, PO Box 303, Chatham, Kent ME5 8AP. Please make cheques payable to 'White Rose Vehicles Ltd'.

Terms: Full Payment with Order

Order Value £.....
 Delivery: £.....
 + VAT @ 17½% £.....
Total Order Value £.....

Name:


Delivery Address:

Tel. No:

Post Code:

Signed:

Date:

 Please debit the Total Order Value shown to my * Access / * Visa / * Mastercard. (Please note a 2% surcharge will be added to all orders under £100 net value)

Card No:

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Expiry Date

Surname: Initials:

Cardholders Address: (if different from above):

Signature:

Date:

For Office use only:

DOR: CC AC

Chris went for a socially distanced spin and reported back.

One hot and sunny August day, BEA went for a tour of the South Dorset roads in powerful company - a Jaguar XK8, a Daimler Dart and a JBA Falcon. All are V8 powered, but I had no trouble keeping up except on a brief dual carriageway dash when I topped out at 75!

When we stopped for our socially distanced lunch in a pub, we managed to line the cars up nicely and almost immediately a guy jumped up from his outside table and came over. "Is that a Midge?" he asked - and when I confirmed it he was very excited. Apparently when he was at university in the 80's, he had three car pin-ups on his bedroom wall - a Morgan, a Lotus Seven and a Midge!

Since then, he had acquired a Morgan Plus4, a Caterham Seven and various Land Rovers, but never a Midge. I am sure that BEA made his day - though my V8 friends were a little nonplussed!

Cheers
Chris



It is one of life's ironies, that I'm sure isn't lost on expensive and powerful car owners, that to get the most attention your car has to be unusual, travel slowly enough to be seen properly and ,most of all, look as if it has had a lot of TLC by the builder. The actual cost is almost inversely proportional to the admiration.

Mark Powell has been busy, so I'll just put in a few of his photos and see what fits. Starting with a very tidy looking exhaust



A really neat gearbox cover



Should make an interesting noise, I think Maserati owners favour these. Once likened, on the race track, to ripping silk. Maybe true, but who can afford to find out?



Isn't there something in the bible about coveting your neighbour's bumpers?



Nice work Mark, and no bubbles!



Trimmed twin trailer wheel guards, not new apparently but looking good.



Some of our older members, and I seem to find myself among them, may remember trafficators. Of course this was because I had some very old cars from the 40's when an impoverished student in the late '60s and early '70s.

They were considered an improvement on sticking your hand out in the rain, especially when turning left, and were effectively one of the first tiny moves toward automated lane changing and self driving cars. The trafficator, or semaphore signal, worked reasonably well considering the unreliable 'festoon' 12 volt bulb that, with luck, turned on inside the yellow plastic when the arm was extended.

The ones seen on the right were neater but harder to service than the 'bolt on' type which emerged, with luck, from their own small box on the side of a lorry. The concealed type also let the rain into the door pillar which would rust at the bottom. I wondered later if the car manufacturers did that on purpose. Trafficators required periodic oiling and new bulbs. The plastic component could be replaced after impact with hedges, pedestrians and gate-posts. Usually this was caused by the semaphore not retracting properly and probably the reason for the sellotape seen on the lower picture. I usually had to replace mine when a pedestrian crossed a junction without looking for left-turning traffic. There were fewer cars in those days and pedestrians were no brighter than now. Near my college in the early 70's, students, workers from the Ford plant and other pedestrians would often walk en masse and rather carelessly into the road and an unusually dim example would regularly thump into the side of my Morris Minor, Austin Somerset or Mini.

Now cars are bigger, brighter and faster so any propensity to wander into moving traffic on corners, has been reduced, presumably by Darwinian elimination. Back then they could bounce off the side of a nicely rounded Minor with little serious risk. They never walked into my Alvis TA14, but that was bigger.

I was considering the retro-fitting of trafficators to a Midge, but have, as yet, repressed the thought. They are probably illegal by now, for the safety of careless pedestrians, and more to the point, tend beyond the £100 mark for a pair on ebay. JH 8



Here starts the story of Michael Kanitz and an unidentified car in Germany. Well, I'll let him tell it in his own way.

12 years ago I was looking for some type of classic or vintage car, which I would like to refurbish and use as a kind of hobby.

Looking into the internet I found my actual car, a replica of a MG J-type car using a Triumph Herald 13/60 platform.

I loved this car from the first minute and I wanted to have it. Neither the owner nor I knew anything about the Midge, which later it proved to be, or the way it was built, using a donor car (it took 12 years to find out!!). We discovered it had belonged to Mr Paul Kirk of Glossop as GWA 505J in 1999

The previous owner had nearly no information about the background of the car, it had been in bad condition and not approved for use on German roads. I found out later he only did the minimum work to get the car running, to look a bit nicer and to get it approved for use in road traffic.

The German Authorities (I believe there is not too much difference to other countries) are sometimes strange with their legal provisions, e.g. I would need a separate anti-theft device for the steering wheel (as there was no fixed one installed), sun shades (if you fold them up, they will be blown down by the airflow, if you fold them down, you will not see anything, as the small window will be nearly totally blocked by the shades) and a special permission for the number plate, where the ground clearance was too small (by the way, I'm liable for any damage e.g. of roads, train tracks and many more ☺).

But at the end of the day the car was approved for use on German roads as a historic vehicle and a two year Roadworthiness Certificate.

So a lucky Michael started his Midge-Adventure, not knowing that it was one!

Over the next 12 years I became more and more familiar with the basic car, with the help of some good publications and a spare part company based in Germany. (Bastuck +49(0)6881924101)

At that time I was still believing that the car has a low mileage (the condition of engine, gearbox, differential, gear, brakes, etc, told another story). *Continue on page 10*



As the Midge was on arrival.



So I started to change parts and repair the engine (which is still leaking), renewed the brakes and a lot of other parts.

The biggest part was the renewal of the complete wiring harness except for the back of the car.

For the last 2 years my enthusiasm cooled down, I wasn't working on the car, and was even thinking about selling.

Then at the beginning of this year my wife confronted me with the decision of whether or not to invest enough money to refurbish the car properly with a view to making it smarter and allow longer trips even during rainy weather.

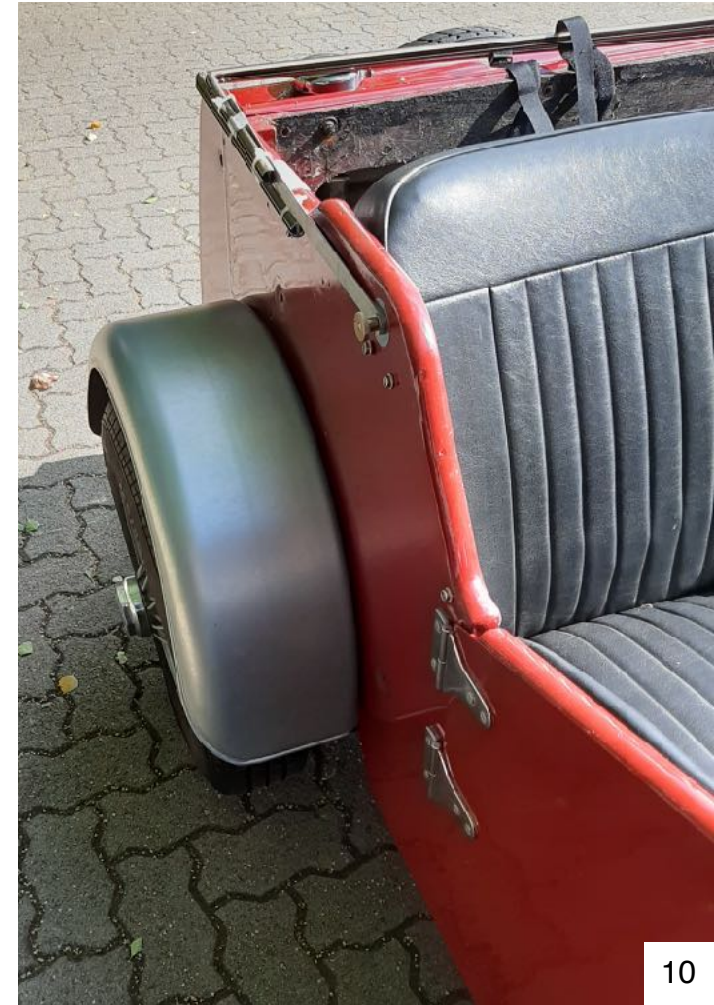
So knowing you should never contradict your wife, I decided to start a bigger refurbishment project.

While looking for the original design of the MG J-type (it was my intention to copy the original a bit better), I found by chance the internet pages of the MOBC, contacted Jim and already received lots of valuable hints and information.

The actual refurbishment comprises a redesigned back end (spare wheel attachment, licence plate, rear lights and complete the wiring at the rear), reposition and renewal of fenders, (found like that on the internet), installation of a foldable roof, new interior trim, new upholstery of the seats, complete repainting.

There is also some work to be done on engine and gearbox (still leaking) and the differential gear which seems to be damaged and must be exchanged.

Incidentally Michael is a retired Aircraft engineer and airworthiness inspector so don't feel bad if it makes your wiring look, like mine, just a little bit iffy. JH.



Michael has crept onto a third page, (well he has been working for 12 years without the support of the MOBC and deserves a little extra). He's been working on a folding roof, (largely his own design), lowering the front mudguards and stripping out the old interior.

Like all Midges it is, of course, unique. This one features suicide doors, a rather neat gearbox housing and a lift-out windscreen. Next time we'll have some information about the much improved wiring, how his roof is getting on and whether his rivets are flush, an important element in the aircraft world. There are important questions



about shock-absorber stiffness and the extent of wheel bounce, will the MOBC badges look neat enough and where should they go? Oil leaks and how to clean monoblocks. And what happened to the air intakes?? *There will be more in the Winter 2020 Magazine when we'll try to catch up with Michael's Schnake. (German, according to google translate, for Midge.)*



UK 2020/21 Events

The Car and Classic site does event prediction so much better than I can, there seems little point in copying their web page, especially as they can update as the months go by. If you go to

http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car_events.php

You can get the information direct, that's where I get it. If something you know about isn't on it, tell me and I'll add it to our pages.

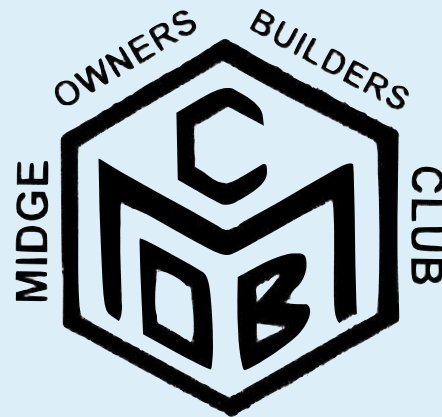
At the time of writing it's all a bit quiet.

There should be room for a couple of adverts for two (yes, two) Ford based Midges whose owners have sadly passed on and whose widows are now selling, ideally to club members. I'll try to compose something at the end of the magazine and I'll put a couple of links here to the sales and wants pages on the club website.

<http://mobc.co.uk/midge-sale-page-2.html>

and

<http://mobc.co.uk/midge-sale-page-2.html>

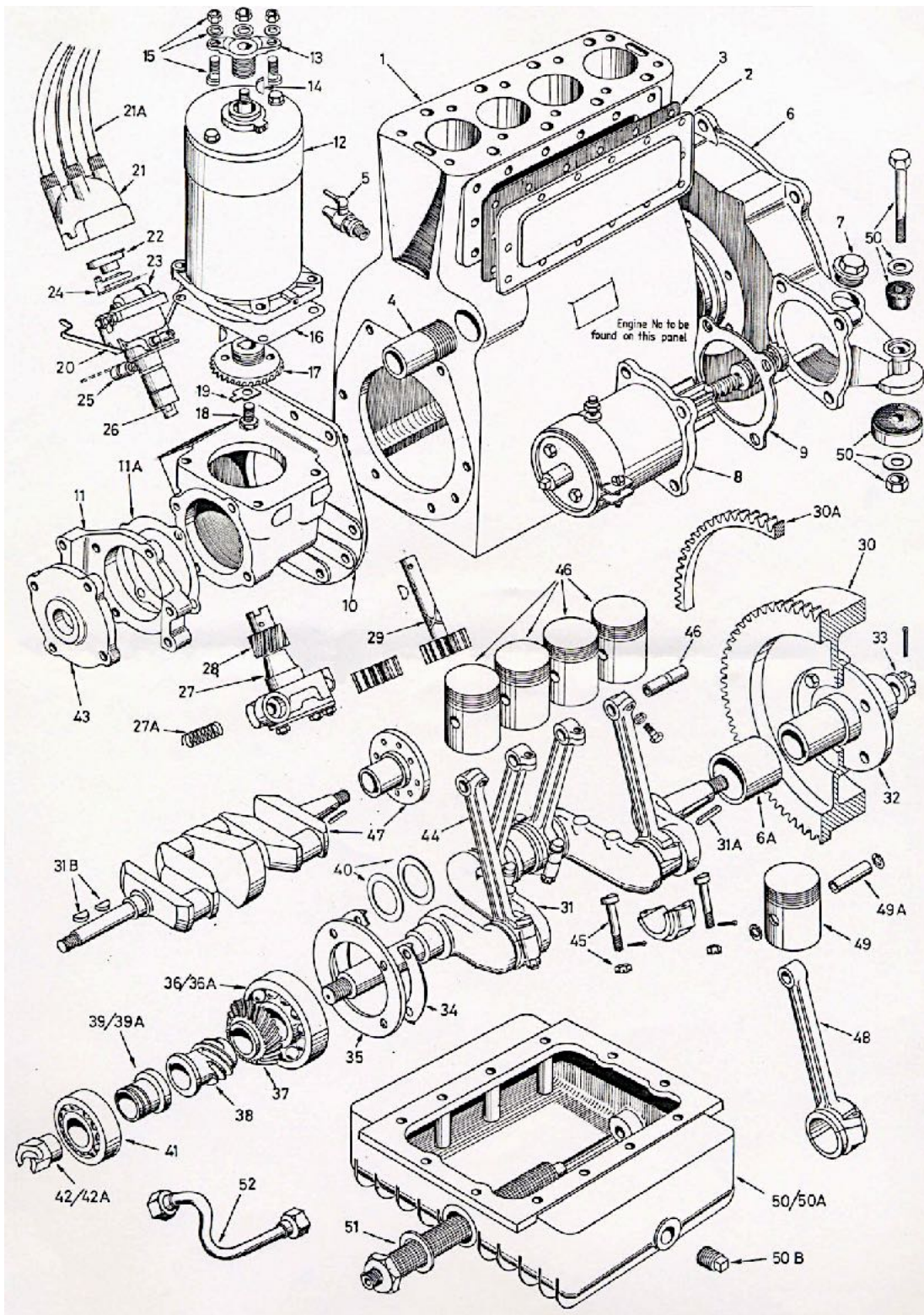


Don't forget to have a look at the sales and wants page, should you want to buy another Midge, sell one, or a part-built project or some bits and bobs.

<http://mobc.co.uk/Sales-and-wants.html>

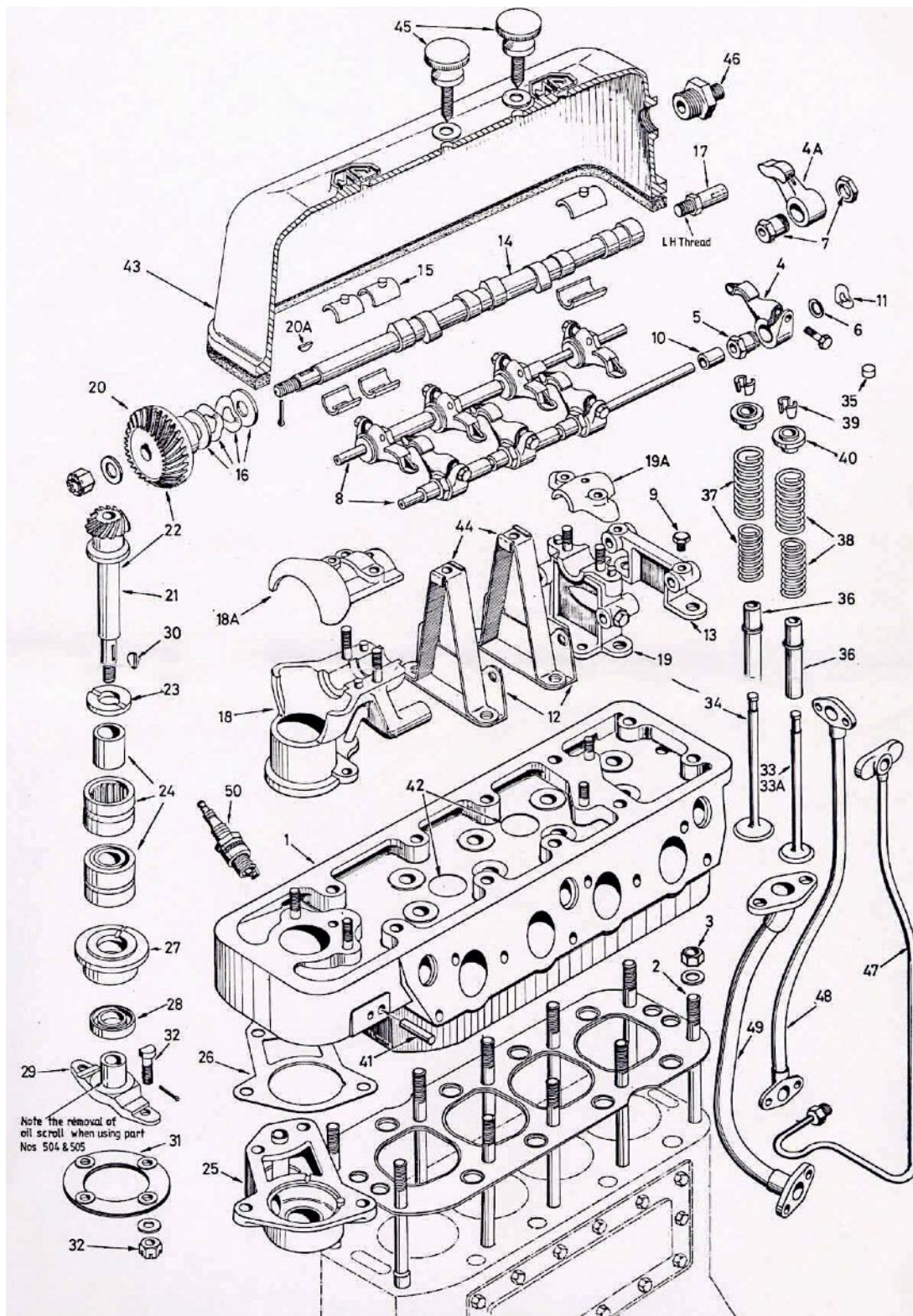
Also, if you have an advert there for something you have now sold, bought or changed your mind. Drop me a line at jim@jimhewlett.com and I'll take it down.

Does anybody have any late model (87) Suzuki SJ 410 Prop shafts going spare please - until I get some I'm not actually going anywhere! Thanks in advance Lin. 2468364@mail.com or maybe its lin.2468364@mail.com



This, I think, is the schematic for the MGJ2 engine below the cylinder head and shows how many developments there were before the Triumph 1959 948cc unit that we find in most Midgets. One of the important improvements was the 3 bearing crank. This just has a counter-weight I know this because a teacher of mine had one around 1962 and exploded the engine in the drive when arriving late one morning. The story went that he'd put a piston through the bonnet, but considering the mass of the cylinder head I think that was probably an exaggeration.

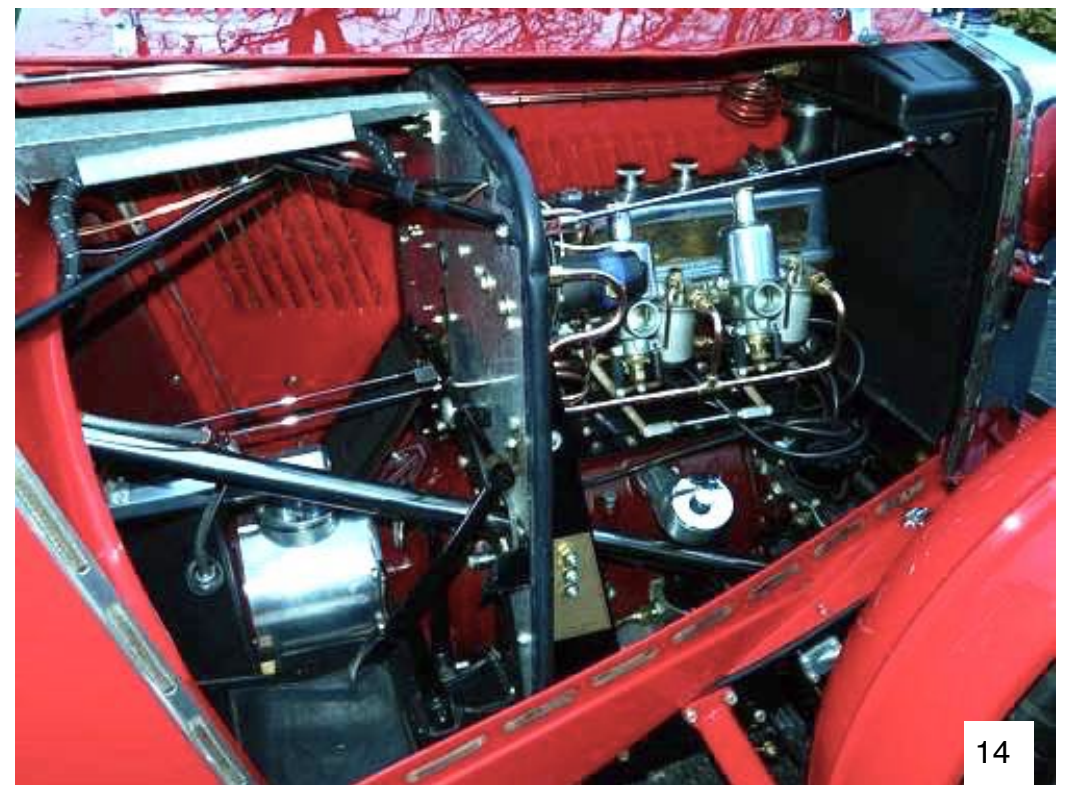




The one serious error that Triumph made, in my opinion, was keeping the exhaust and carburettor ports on the same side. Boiling petrol makes a noise that I find a little disturbing. It is worth maintaining the heat shield and ensuring good air flow through the grille for this reason.

Incidentally these parts are still available according to <https://mg-parts-spares.co.uk/parts-catalogue/mmm-engine-early-style-upper/> and <https://mg-parts-spares.co.uk/parts-catalogue/mmm-engine-early-style-lower/>

The bare engine block is, for instance, £1800 plus VAT. So if you want to make your Midge seriously authentic and remove the danger of boiling petrol you might need a second mortgage



Keith Pickstone (keithpickstone@gmail.com) in the midlands is selling...no not a Midge, it's a Burlington Arrow 1300cc.

This is a trimmed version of a potential ebay advert It's fun to drive and gets lots of attention but now needs a new home and some more work to make this car even better. The chassis is in great condition, the body like a Midge is wood based with aluminium outer so there's no rust on it.

I've bought it for a £970 spent a lot of money on it to get it working and roadworthy (approx £4000, I have receipts) I had most of the work done professionally at a classic car restorers and some basic work done at my local garage. I now drive it on the roads, It's in full working order and roadworthy - tax exempt and has all the paperwork and invoices. Everything works including the Klaxon Horn, it has a Wolseley grill with a classic AA badge. All five tyres are in great condition with loads of tread.

New Parts I've had fitted:

Brand New Twin carburettors (cost £495)

Brand New Front Brake Callipers (refurbed originals) Discs and pads, air filter pans Clutch master cylinder and slave cylinder oil filter, Throttle cable, choke cable, Brand new Wiper motor. Full stainless steel complete exhaust system, Newly refurbished radiator. New coil, electronic ignition, new distributor cap, rotor arm, spark plugs and HT leads And lots more bits like new brake pipes, flexible hoses, light bulbs, bulb holders etc.



Things that need doing:

There is one mechanical issue I can think of, reverse gear, it works but jumps out of gear unless you hold the gear stick. There is a slight oil leak from the sump gasket. Needs new seats but I drive it with these. They're comfortable enough but they're a bit rusty and the stitching on the vinyl edging has come apart. Needs new seat belts

There's no soft top but I do have the soft top frame and the holding brackets and pegs are still on the car and on the windscreen.

The steering wheel (not the steering) needs attention. It needs new carpets and side carpet trim, and the wooden window frame needs attention

I'm looking to get around **£4000** for the vehicle

Please feel free to come and see it and test drive with me but I won't accept ridiculously low priced offers!



Just in at the last minute. Two Midgees both offered by widows, both stored in dry conditions and both Ford based on T&J chassis

Ford based Q plated Midge which was running and road legal and is now SORNed. It's been sitting untouched for a couple of years and needs a caring home. The bonnet and radiator parts disassembled and the chairs doors and mudguards taken off. Ditto petrol tank and tank surround. There are various old MOTs from 1991 and V5 identifying it as a **1300cc JC Midge**. The car is in **Lancashire** and has been kept warm and dry and has 4 relatively 'new' 3 year old 13" tyres. There is a soft roof, roof frame and side-screens, condition unknown at the moment and I think all the bits have been kept. Obviously it is going to need some reassembly and general fettling.

Incidentally Shipley appears to be moving cars but it would probably be best to pickup with a van and trailer in view of the number of unattached bits. For understandable reasons Elaine would like to see this go to a good home and I'd like it to go for a reasonable price. Jim.
(jim@jimhewlett.com)



Registered as a 'White Rose Vehicle' **Alice** 1600cc. Built on a **Ford type T&J chassis** registered in 1997. SORNed. Dry stored, MOTd when parked and reported running at that time.

Another Ford based Midge available, sadly also because of the passing of its owner. This one has been standing in a dry garage for 10 years (just after it's last MOT in 2010) It is in Enderby, **Leicester**. There's a tonneau cover but the



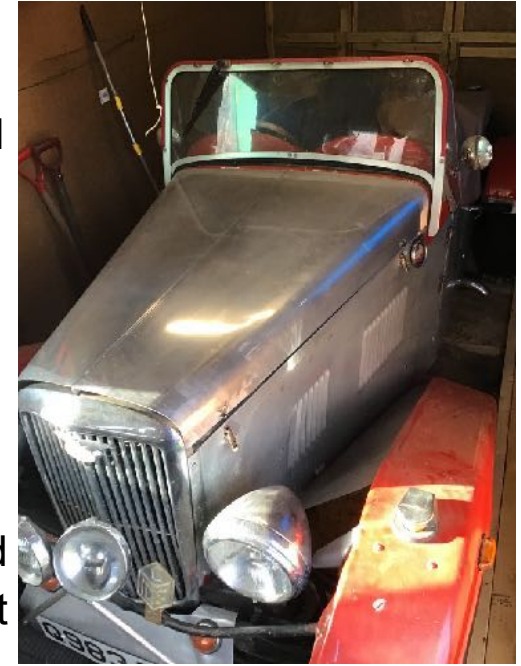
roof was about to be replaced when it was parked up.

Registered as a 'JC Midge' and previously owned by club member Rob Hayward.

Unsurprisingly it is not running at the moment.

email jim@jimhewlett.com if interested and I'll pass it on.

It (Alice) looks pretty sound from here but I haven't seen it in person. JH



Tail-pipe. Just when you thought it was safe to go outside

Well that all turned into a bit of a rush just before I 'went to press' and no doubt Keith on page 15 had a slice of luck as I was a bit short of material when I made up his page. I tend to make things up as I go along so I don't have any principles to worry about beyond being inoffensive. I'm not going to get precious about whether cars for sale are accredited Midgees owned by MOBC members because they may well be bought by members. We have lots in common with Moss, Burlington, Triumph and Gentry owners, and although I'd not want to encroach on those club's territory I can see no reason not to be welcoming. Especially when the in-tray is a bit empty.

It is sad to lose MOBC members to the clubhouse in the sky but rather nice that their creations live on.

If you are offering to buy one of the Midgees please remember their current owners may feel a bit conflicted about selling, but that's not unusual. I often get enquiries from ex-owners about cars that were sold and disappeared. On that thought you might want to write your name somewhere under the bonnet in case somebody is looking for some history. Of course that may not be such a good idea if you've filled in a rust hole with newspaper and filler and/or driven about on the beach a lot. I was slightly surprised to find a sump bolt had been replaced with a wooden plug on one vehicle. Fortunately I discovered it before it fell out and emptied its oil onto the garage floor Unsurprisingly the culprit was unidentified.

Should you want to be remembered as a part of your car's history then it is best to write a story about it and get it into the magazine. Saves me a bit of effort too. If you are a full club member the chances are your details will be buried in the files somewhere until the sun expands to a red giant. Data storage is getting so cheap and so easily upgraded that anything digital will probably be collected en-masse and any writing scanned and uploaded to any decent sized University or star ship (Well that happens on Star Trek anyway). The web-pages and online records of course have to be periodically cleared of personal data according to the new data laws, and we all rest easy in the knowledge that the government would always keep to its own rules...

Fortunately for the archaeologists, this doesn't apply to tombs, pyramids and scrolls. That should give you all something to think about, and it fills up another page.

Seriously though, do remember to write, photograph and send, it can be hard work when I have three pages filled and one month to go.

Keep calm and drive to the shops carefully in these interesting times.



September 2020