

MIDGE MAGAZINE



Autumn
2016



MOBC. the Midge Owners and Builders' Club

Mike Bambridge's Midge

Style. Should I have one and where can you get them?

So Midgers (well I know it sounds odd, but Members sounds worse) Its not cold yet as I type, but looking forward I hope we have a few more days of nice driving weather before it all gets hibernated. Of course several of our tribe are in warmer climes, and even on the other side of the planet, they will have different weather. For me Crisp Autumn Days are fine, and cold is quite acceptable in the right gear. It's the slippery ice and paint chipping grit that I avoid, and nobody wants to go near the dread salt. Of course I'm grizzling without due cause, Midges can, as has been demonstrated, go out in all weathers, cross seas (on a boat ideally) and mountains. If it gets a bit nippy, flying goggles, helmet and white silk scarf keep out the worst of it, though being referred to as Biggles can grate eventually.

I was going to ask a relative for my sheepskin flying jacket back, having regained a more youthful waist, but the ratbag had given it to someone else. Ah well, that's the problem with gifts, you can't add a contract. Perhaps I'd better build a heater into the Midge.

On the editorial front I'm trying a new format or 'style' here. The magazine should be wider in 'landscape' and should fit modern computer monitors better. I could still do it in the old format if preferred, so let me know how you feel about it. It feels a bit more flexible like this, but I can do it either way as the actress....never mind...

There is an increasing Mk2 element, and our congratulations to John C for his successful persistence in the face of bureaucracy, gremlins and life generally. Maybe an electric version next, or should we go amphibious?

Incidentally could everyone reading make sure they are members of the club? It is after all, only £10 to join and free after that. That way it is fair to those who have paid.



Page 1	Editor's rant. Index
Page 2	Mike Bambridge heads South
Page 3 - 5	David Harvey part 2
Page 6 & 7	Malcolm and Hoppy
Page 8	The Secretary wields a spanner or two.
Page 9 & 10	Rare John B & John C conjunction
Pages 11 & 12	More about Poppy the Mk2.
Page 13	UK Events
Page 14	Cartoon
Page 15	Wiring worries
Page 16	Richard goes to France
Pages 17 & 18	Bits and bobs, mainly because I accidentally made an extra page.

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

Welcome to **Craig Woodhouse** and **Derek Fisher**, who are Mk2 enthusiasts, **Steve Mercer** who has bought GGI 309C and **Judy Kilduff** who has GPG 734C



From Mike Bambridge

As I had often considered a holiday in Jersey, yet never actually got as far as doing anything about it, I was intrigued by an advert I saw a couple of months ago for the Jersey International Motoring Festival. Much to my surprise, when I suggested taking the Midge to this event, and combining it with a few days sightseeing, my wife was quite enthusiastic, whoopee!. We persuaded our friends, Jane and Roy, owners of a very nice Scimitar GT coupe to join us, and once the hotel and ferry were booked we were off. We sailed from Poole on a Condor Ferries catamaran, much to my wife's dismay, as she had heard that these boats can give rather a choppy ride. However, the Channel was like a millpond, and in company with dozens of other classics, we landed in Jersey a few hours later. We spent a couple of days wandering around the island before the festival started on the Thursday evening, with Kart racing on the closed off Promenade in St. Helier. On the Friday night there was a preview of the show in the Peoples Park and a sprint, again on the prom. This time entries ranged from classic racing motorbikes to all sorts of full race and rally cars, both classic and modern, a mighty V8 Capri, and the most gorgeous sounding full race V12 E-Type Jag. On the Saturday, the show officially opened with car displays, a Wall of Death act, displays of Motorcycle trials and stunt riding, a French Market, etc etc. Right next to the show site was a Hill climb course, with classes for bikes as well as cars. The antics of the guys on the bikes was unbelievable, front wheels reaching for the sky as they powered out of the bends, brilliant. On Sunday, we had signed up for one of the Touring Events. For £50 per car, we were provided with a very professionally produced road book, which provided details of the route, and complimentary tickets to visit the Jersey War Tunnels en route, finishing with cream tea at the Grand Jersey Hotel. Whilst enjoying this tea we were treated to more racing right in front of the hotel! We then



exhibited our cars in the showground for the rest of the afternoon, where Roy and I spent hours explaining to visitors exactly what our cars were. On our last full day on the island we again went exploring, ending up at a delightful beach side cafe in Bouley Bay, called Mad Mary's, where we tucked into a tasty crab sandwich. Now for those of you who don't know, the road down to Bouley Bay is a well known Hill climb course. Many hairpins, short straights and sweeping curves, and very, very steep. Well I couldn't resist the temptation, and with my wife holding tight I gave the Midge the gun. Full revs in 2nd and 3rd, we were flying, and left the Scimitar for dead. 2.5litres.....not a match for 1300cc of Triumphs finest. Perhaps

it was a little irresponsible, but what the heck, it was brilliant fun, my wife and I laughed all the way to the top. Sadly, the next day we had to leave, but we had a great time, it didn't rain, and we never put the roof up once.



David Harvey's Journey to Greece (from his diary) continues...

The ferry to Kepkypa (Corfu)

On arrival in Venice docks, I went straight to the “Anek lines”-dock to be told, they are closed till 08:00 o'clock next day. So I had to sleep rough in the car in a multi store car park. It was now dark and about 22:00 hours. I made myself a cup of tea and tried to sleep with horrible piped music playing and car tyres screeching on the painted floor, the sort that it does not matter how slow or careful you drive, it still makes a horrible sound. At 06:00 o'clock in the morning I left the car park, which cost me 21 Euros (£18), had to queue and wait a further three hours for the gate to open, which is supposed to open at 08:00 o'clock. By this time I was well shattered and very tired. Once in the parking area, a lot of people were coming over to look at my car, and one person in particular waited till I was on my own again and came over. While we were talking about the engine he suddenly said: “I know you, you have been to my bar in Pelecass”. I replied, that I do not recall visiting his village, he then said: “your wife was with you and two friends, you had a grey Volvo car, and you had been to Paleokastritsa and decided to drive up to Pelecass, to find a quiet Taverna to have a meal.”

I was shocked, that somebody could remember some one that far back. Because that was, when my late wife Shelia and I drove to Greece, towing our sailing boat; friend of us, Rose and Tony joined us later, when they flew out to us in 1993. It never ceases to amaze me, what memories the Greek people seem to have. Anyway, to resume the story: by 11'o'clock we were able to buy our tickets. I was hoping to have a cabin,



regardless of cost. Yes, I could have one, if I am willing to share one! Who with, take your chance, could be a two-beds or a four-beds-cabin. No, thank you. I will sleep on deck. Once we had got our tickets, we had to wait until 20:00 hours before we could board. And that was, when my Greek friend told me, his name was Vasilli and he suggested a walk into Old Venice, to kill some time. And it was beautiful. I took lots of pictures; some of them were on my phone and some on my camera, which was stolen. We both had a scrumptious giant three flavoured ice cream, and we both laughed all the way back to the ferry

terminal, and finally boarded.

Sleeping on deck was not as bad as I thought it would be, we had a choice of being under cover on the after deck, or in a large lounge with aircraft type seats. I choose the lounge; it had all facilities, toilets and showers, but the seats were not that comfortable. So we ended on the floor in our sleeping bags and surprising, we had a good nights sleep. There were children and their parents plus singles such as myself, all sleeping together. When I awoke next morning, I found myself next to a very nice young lady in, I think, maybe about her late twenties. She was in a group and they were back packing to Athens across Europe, to learn languages and gain experience of other cultures, before returning to university to complete their causes.

Later that day after sun bathing on deck, I went to the self service restaurant, where again I met Vasilli Kosjinias. He then told me, he was a Greek transport boss, who also regularly drives a 44 ton lorry to England, where he also has a base. He also appeared to be very well known on the ferry, as many other drivers sort of appeared to be reporting to him. I could be wrong and probable am, but he was a great person to talk to, plus he generously shared his discount with me that he had, which was quite a big saving on food and drink the 24 hours we spent on the ferry. And we parted company when I disembarked at Corfu, as he was going onto Patras. He gave me his phone number and we arranged to meet in a little village called Pelecass the following Sunday.

On Corfu

On arrival in Corfu at about 23:30 hours, I then drove the 46 km to San Stefano's, up the twisting mountain passes, until I reached the top, which is called “Trumpeter pass”. From there it is a twisting in places very steep and a narrow down hill-run to the village San Stefano's, arriving at 00:15 hours, Thursday 21st of June 2012. - Friday was lost to exhaustion and sleep; Saturday was taken with lots of people taking great interest in my special two-seater-car, and a lot asking if I had had it shipped out. Some could not believe, that I had driven across Europe from England, and of cause many questions to answer: “what is it, what make is it, can we see the engine, and have you really driven it all the way...?” Yes, and I'm driving it all the way back, I hope. English reply: “good luck, good on ya mate”. “You must be nuts, but good luck anyway”, that was a young ladies comment. She also asked, if I wanted a passenger, but when I told her when I was returning, she replied: “just my luck, I am going home on Monday”. I thought, “yes, just my luck too”, but later my luck changed.

Sunday 25th of June

I set off for Pelekass village, high in the mountains, north west Corfu near Paliokastritsa, a beautiful drive, but very steep twisting roads, which have been a real test for my car: twice down to first gear, but the views are stunning with a picturesque village perched precariously on outcrop rock formations, with a very narrow almost shear drop road, down to a sandy beach and hotel. My curiosity got the better of me and I had to ask, because getting down to the cove was extremely nerve racking, even for the excellent steering of the "Triumph Herald". And I had visions of never being able to return to civilization again. In Pelekass I found the son of my lorry-driver-friend Vassily. I asked my friend: "how do they get visitors here and supplies down for the hotel?" He replied: "That's easy, they all come by boat from Paliokastritsa, and most of the guests are regular through out the year. Some come and stay for two weeks and do not go anywhere else, except up to the village. The boat calls twice a day." Well, when he said, they go up to the village, I immediately asked him: "Where is the chair lift?" He laughed at that and said: "No chair lift. It is easy to walk down." So getting to the top is a challenge, some cannot resist; a challenge to them, yes, but what about my poor little car? Well, she did make it back easier than my friend's old Volkswagen "Beetle", which had to have two or three shunts, to get round. Whilst the "Triumph steering" won hands down, as many of the folks with us were amazed at the turning circle of the car, and how she made it to the top without stopping. But I must admit I had butterflies and cramp in my stomach, when I saw the drop over the edge. Everyone was applauding.

But now I have to go back again to Pelecass, because both, my still and video cameras, which contained a lot of my pictures of that trip had been stolen, and I am now waiting for a replacement video camera to arrive from England. I have already bought a still camera in Sidari, but even so, you can never replace the first pictures which were spontaneous. Plus quite a lot of other pictures were lost of Corfu-town.

Well, that was last Thursday, 28th of June. I phoned Chris, my son in-law, and he acquired and sent me a replacement video camera by DHL. - It is now Tuesday 3rd of July, still no sign of the camera and I am feeling lost without it; Wednesday now, still no camera. - It takes three hours to fly here, and for the delivery were necessary two to three days. - Not counting Thursday 28th. Thankfully the new camera arrived later on Wednesday evening, in time for the Corfu classic car run on Saturday 7th of July. Saturday arrived, new camera in hand, I head for Corfu town to find: no Classic car show. Later I find out, that it had been cancelled.

Still let's look on the bright side, the weather here is fantastic, glorious sunshine, very hot. I have been to several places, but I was lost without my video camera, because I want to raise a lot of money for "Help for Heroes". Food is excellent, hospitality great, the Greek people are the best. I have been around to other countries, most of Europe and further a field. Before I am accused of prejudice, although I must admit, the four Austrian people I met were the salt of the earth: nothing was too much trouble for them in getting me on my way.

As I have toured various parts of Corfu, I have met a lot of tourists of various nationalities, all showing a lot of interest in the car and what I am doing and why; they have also said, that they would go on the internet and place a donation online; I hope they do. So far I have really enjoyed my trip and all the lovely people I have met. I know that I am only half way, but I have survived, close to giving up a couple of times. I have never been a quitter, so here's to the rest of my journey.

To meet a dream

Having now completed 1,778.4 miles to today, which is Wednesday 11th of July, my spirit has greatly improved. I think that this is due to meeting a very pleasant German Lady, her name is Marlene. I am not sure if that is the correct spelling or not; I will correct it later, her age doesn't matter, although I am guessing at about early 60. She was in a similar position to me, on her own, although she had come to Corfu with a travel group. She sat on her own with a little dog by the side of Spiro's pool and we got talking, subject? Well, it was the car! So I took her for a spin around the local villages, where in conversation I realised that although this was her second trip to Corfu, she had not actually been anywhere. So Tuesday, 10th of July, we went on one of both, Shelia's and my favourite trips, which covers about 125 or more miles; not sure of the exact mileage. I forgot to take a reading before starting off.

From North to South

So we started off at 09:00 after having breakfast, to Pagi, a tiny little village with beautiful views across the valley. As we climb higher, sometimes down to second gear, towards the peak, we eventually reach the rim of an extinct volcano named Mt. Kastro. You can see distinctly the clear view around of the ridge with two dips on either side, where you drive in and down, round a half circle road and up then out through the ridge.

The other side in the centre is now a massive vineyard, which, when Shelia and I first visited it, was a large market garden growing every type of vegetable. One could imagine plus grapevines also, and I feel certain, the daughter of the very jovial lady giving tastes of the wine produced there, that served us on our first visit, was the same lady. And that was when there was only a dirt track up to the top. Every body had to get out of the car and walk approximately a mile and a quarter, whilst I gingerly nursed the car, over rocks and rough ground, to the top, Anyway, that was back in 1988 (the last century). “Marlene”, her name is actually Magdalena, bought two bottles of the red, I had a taste of the white wine, and it was lovely. But other than a taste wine does not like me. So we proceeded up and over the ridge, down to Makarades, a little village high up the side of the extinct volcano which, as you approach, soon becomes for the unwary a massive tourist trap, with every shop selling much the same thing. Still there is a very nice Taverna with reasonable prices and very good food and service. - After a short break we continue on. Now it is a mixture of using 2nd and 3rd gears, plus what I call: “economy braking”, to avoid over-heating of the brakes as it is very steep and twisting. And it is not unusual to see smoke coming from some vehicles brakes, and according to the local villages it is a mixture of tourist, not realizing the steepness of the twist and sharpness of the turns. One elderly Greek gentleman, I spoke to a few years ago said “new cars and crazy young Greeks with no brain, racing to the bottom, on motor bikes as well”, he added.

So we continue our journey through the ever changing beautiful country side on to a brief glimpse of Paliokastritza, what was a superb bay which has been ruined by total commerce and high prices.

On towards the mountains again to another unspoilt village, Pelecass, perch high on a ridge of rock, overlooking a horse-shoe bay, which you cannot see, until you go down the almost sheer zig zag track of ten bends. All cars I saw go down, had two or three shunts on every bend to the bottom, and sometimes more were coming back up. I know, I was stupid enough to go down and come back up again in my car. Thank goodness, I had Triumph-steering. People could not believe that only on two bends did I have to shunt; never again will I do that. After that I needed a stiff drink to continue on our way to the Ropa valley, the market garden of Corfu. It is a lush flat plain for quite a few miles where everything is grown, every kind of vegetable, fruit, herbs, wheat and corn. It has long flat smooth straight roads as long as 15 to 20 miles. After passing the Ropa plains I turned towards the east passing lots of scenic

little villages, Kobitsi and Kastania, being two of the biggest. Then turning right to Kanali and on into Corfu town, where we stopped for a drink, we met Demitri Toxotis the jeweler, whom I have visited for many years. Then we carried on back towards the Trumpeter Pass to Sidari for an ice cold fresh orange drink and triple ice cream. We finished in Arillas at Eftichia Taverna for a late evening meal, returning to San Stefano’s, very tired after a wonderful day.

The following day I decided that I would show Magdalena more of the southern part of this lovely island. Following almost the same route as before, turning towards many small and picturesque villages, we ended first at Pelecass; how I do not know, because we went a totally different way which shows, one that who thinks he has been everywhere, that there are many hidden little roads. If I went a thousand times I would probably find a different way in to these nooks and crannies in this Island of Corfu. After the usual cold drink and large ice cream we proceeded to go south again, through the Ropa plains, this time traveling on the western side, and eventually after passing many villages and ancient monasteries we turned east to arrive at Benitses; then again driving due south along the beautiful coast road. The road has many holes that I nearly lost my car in, but the scenery compensates. Past long stretches of sandy beaches and on to Moraitika, Mesogi and Agia Paraskevi, then turning right to the west through the mountains to Argyrades, and on towards Perivoli and Lefkimmi at a small village called Ringlades. We again turned on to small twisting rough roads through giant olive groves, which must have been there since time began. Roads were non existent, but the aromas and the beauty more than compensated for it.

We drove sometimes quite slowly because of the roads being so bad, twisting and turning, this way then that, and we came to a cross roads in the middle of nowhere: five directions to choose from, and nothing to see but trees in all directions; we sat for I think about ten minutes in silence, engine stopped, and just the wind, birds and crickets chirping, it was so lovely.

Then the human race intervened. Two young men appeared out of nowhere and I called to them: “beach, taverna” their reply: “the four roads!” We had to choose from the left, one to “beach and small taverna”, the second and third “beach”, and the last “beach and taverna”. So we went to the right, down a very deep drop, and ended in a lovely taverna restaurant called “Plori” on a clean but stony beach.

So we'll leave David there for now. Better off than he was when we left him in Austria. More next time.

Malcolm Hopwood writes about ‘Hoppy’ and how it all happened:-

Way back, when very young, to celebrate my 60th birthday I built a Pembleton three wheeler which I love to drive (and do to this day) There is one problem however, it's got no weather gear at all, not even a windscreen.

In 2007 I started thinking about building a trials car special, like the 1950 specials I used to see when I was a young cyclist. The idea was a two seater with weather gear, something I could use all year around and in all weather. One of my main concerns was I didn't want something styled low with no doors, (where you have to practice getting in and out of a washing machine before you could use it.)

I wanted something that had quite a high stance to it. I did some drawings using a 2cv as the base vehicle. I remembered a local car club called the Nutcrackers group. In their March 2007 news letter there was an advert for a Midge on sale. It was a wet Wednesday morning and I had nothing better to do, so I phoned up about the Midge. At this stage I had no intentions in buying it. I was told the Midge had started as a Triumph Herald 13/60. I had in my thirties owned two Triumph Heralds so I was familiar on their running gear... next thing I am saying is can I come and have a look?

And there's no harm in that, is there?

We all know what happens next don't we? A week later it was sitting in my yard. I had become the not so proud owner of Hoppy the Midge. The day after my wife caught me looking out of the window looking at this sad little Midge and she said "surely you are not regretting buying that are you?" I said not but I was.

It looked sad, but all the time I could see this picture of this 1960s trials car ‘special’ winking at me. It was very faint but it was there.

I must admit my thoughts at the time were to tidy it up, move it on, and be rid of it. When I

told the lads at the nutcracker group that I'd bought the Midge I was met with dismay, they knew the car. It went something like “what for! You must mad, You'll never do good with that. You can't polish a turd you know. There was only one lad that said he could see something in it, he was thinking the same as me, that was (on the plus side)

*I hadn't given a lot of money.

*It had a 12 month Mot. And

*It was exempt from road tax. And

*I knew I could get my money back if need be.

I spent the next few weeks giving the Midge a good looking at, some things I liked, lots of things I did not. There where things that to my mind that were down-right dangerous

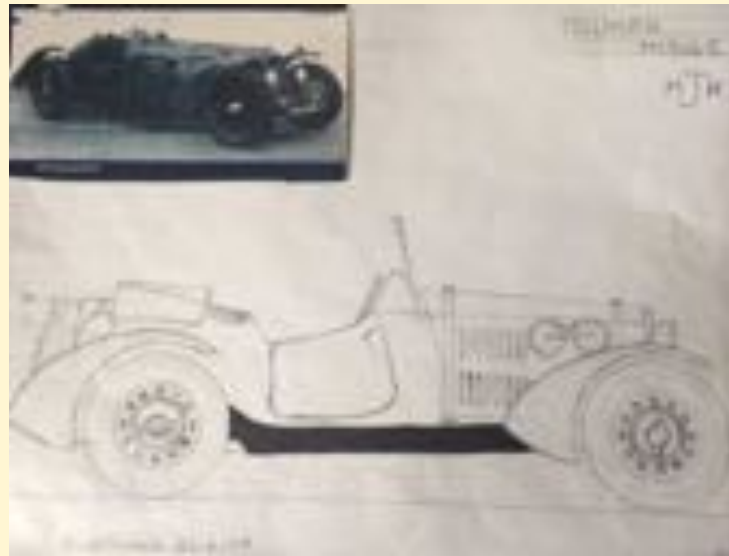
I did drive it around the block.... It was awful. My plan of attack was mend, repair and alter all the things I considered dangerous. So the next thing I did was a scale drawing of the side elevation of the Midge altering all the things I don't like. I made two drawings, one 'weather gear down' and one with it 'up'. I wanted it to look right on both drawings. The first real thing I changed were the wheels. I had some Citroen 2cv 15 inch wheels with cross ply 'cammac' tires fitted on my trike. So I tried one of these, it had an overall diameter of 26 inch so I changed the wheels on my drawing and then lifted up the mud guards to give a trials car clearance.

“Wow! this is more like the picture in my head.” The next job was to compare the Citroen and trial wheels. I found the inside dish was very nearly the same! This was looking good. Now was to make up an adapter in wood to fit the Citroen 15 inch wheels to the triumph hubs. I couldn't believe my luck, everything cleared on full lock both ways.

This was the way forward, I could now see my 1950s trials car special coming to life. One night one of my mates came around and saw my drawings of the midge.

“What's this?” he asked.

>>>>>



>>>>>>Malcolm continues...

"It's the Midge - with bigger wheels" I say.

"In your dreams" he said, "it would never look like that."

I got to work and made up some steel adaptor plates and fitted its bigger wheels. For the first time I now started to like what I was seeing, and so were all the Doubters. I was now hearing comments like "I never saw that in this car."

The Midge still had no weather gear. This had to be my next step. In the early 90s I had owned a Marlin 1800cc, a lovely Motor until you put the weather gear up, then it felt claustrophobic. it steamed up, it felt damp, I always felt trapped in it. I didn't want anything like that for the Midge. At a car show we met a man who had a lovely Alpha Romeo that had raced at Brooklands with the weather gear they had to do so many laps with the weather gear up and so many with it down, so the quicker you could get it up and down the better. The man was one of us and gave us a demonstration. I was seeing just what I wanted for the Midge. I'm managed to do a few sketches... Its main points - where it would look right on the Midge - were that the hood over-hung the windshield on either side by about 3 inches so I wouldn't need side screens, the hood frame was on the outside of the body work thereby giving as much internal space as possible. The design was simple and practical and has always worked well, making a car useable for me all year round. I've driven a car in rain, snow, wind and blizzards for days on end.- and never at the end of the day



dreaded the next as you would in a trial.

Do I think the midge would be any good as a trials car? Well, no, mainly because of the limited ground clearance.

Over the years most of the things I didn't like about the Midge have been altered

but there are still a few left to do. I have now owned the Midge for 9 years, in that time I've covered 22984 miles and have enjoyed every single one of them.

The Midge has been continually on the road and been used every winter. It has taken part in 4 or 5 Raid-Tan Hill

events which are always held at the beginning of January and can be a test of endurance for car and driver. There is even a picture in Classic & Sports Car, March 2008 on page 156. I have had trips down into Wales and up to Scotland on a number of occasions and last year its longest trip up to Durness right at the top of Scotland. The way I have always looked at it is I'm a member of Green Flag and if it all goes pear shaped they will bring me home. There has only been one time I have had to be brought home and that was when I crashed coming down Kirkstone Pass.

How would I describe the Midge? Lots of fun, lots of charm. As rough as a bears bum in places and it nearly always wants cleaning. I think it seems to look better with a bit of mud splatter.

MH.



"Ah yes" you say, but what has your Secretary been doing? It's all very well printing other peoples stories about what they have done, but have you been sitting on your bottom all this time, or is there some serious mechanic activity to be shown?

Well, as described in the previous missive, I had taken on Tony Arnold's Midge OTJ 506G. As far as I could tell it had never actually run, although like most Midges it is made of various recycled Heralds and Spitfires, so dating and history can be confused, especially if it is the product of two or more builders. The running gear seemed in good condition although the points were wired so that the current went to the pillar rather than the spring and coil had failed, meaning that it wouldn't have run or driven, and that meant extreme caution. The Stromberg had a bent needle and a mangled jet which wouldn't have helped. The question was whether to repair the body or replace it. The Morris 1000 bonnet made a reasonable beetle back, but there were problems not least in the fact that it looked like a Morris 1000 bonnet. The build style precluded doors. Doors and wind-screen are needed if you want a roof, and a roof is quite useful here in Scotland.

This and other problems led, inevitably, to a whole body transplant, fortunately the Red Midge body was available, having mechanical and legal issues. Stripping down to the running gear was reasonably easy and uncovered a few design features intended to be 'fixed later' that I was glad I needn't retain. The chassis proved sound and I had already run the engine and checked the brakes and clutch. I was pleased to find that the body fitted the Herald chassis, although some thinking was needed to dodge the starter-motor bulge in the clutch housing and the differential mounts, and the pedal box needed reverting to Triumph specifications.

I was rather lucky to have the Herald based Green Midge to refer to when reaching those 'How the heck?' moments of bafflement. The radiator and housing on Tony's Midge had been built rather further forward than usual, with some Forth Bridge struts



Body off T&J chassis

..and dropped neatly onto the Herald chassis



between the engine and the radiator resulting in a long bonnet. The T&J based Red Midge had a rather shorter bonnet. At first I thought I'd have to build a new bonnet and grille as well as the engine side panels. Instead I was able to move the radiator back 4" and the grille 6" so the red bonnet fitted and I was able to remove some heavy metal in the process. Sadly this meant losing the Austen 7ish grille, at least until I have fabricated a skirt to make it deeper. The radiator cap is still difficult to reach, but it usually is. (I do miss the great big external filler cap of the Alvis, but there always was the risk of some light fingered toe-rag removing it.)

One of the interesting things about continuing other people's work is that you never know which bits are finished. I found several bits that (I hope) were going to be 'tidied up later' One of which embarrassingly was mine, where I'd never quite got around to replacing two short suspension bolts. I think the expression is "Don't take anything as granted." And it is important to drive cautiously at first. Possibly with a written snag list

The next phase will be the wiring, petrol tank, dashboard and seats. The wheels are due to get taller and I think I have worked out the folding windscreen, though I'll be looking for a wiper motor to mount above it. I'm hoping to make a working speedometer with matching instruments out of the several bits and bobs. I seem to have accumulated about ten speedometers in various states of decay, but it is surprisingly difficult to match the styles, there must be 5 types just from Spitfires. As to the gearing, well I'll find out about that when it rolls under its own power, I was pleased to find putting 15" wires on the Green Midge made the speedometer exactly correct, here's hoping.

More later if there's room, progress and luck.

PS: T&J chassis available to a good home.

JH

**John Bircumshaw and Barbara have an encounter of the Mk2 kind.
The meeting is related by JB.**

We all have our own 'Bucket Lists' of things to do. Some want to walk on the Great Wall of China and others travel from Pole to Pole like Michael Palin. I've done the first and have no wish to do the second, but top of my Bucket List for many years was to build a car, and not just any car but one on which I could express some individuality. The Midge fitted that wish completely and 25 years later the same principles appeal to me. Next on the bucket list was to meet John Cowperthwaite (JC) who's brilliantly simple concept has been a source of pleasure to many of us and given us the opportunity to own and maintain a Classic Sports Car without paying out huge amounts of money to do so. I have been in touch with JC for many years through the Club but had never had the opportunity to meet him until recently.

I was amazed to have an email arrive one morning saying that John and his wife Rose would like to visit us in North Wales, and not only that, but they would use the Midge Mk2 as their transport for its maiden journey. That was the two topmost items on my bucket list achieved in one go! We made arrangements for them to arrive on a Tuesday, but they

didn't actually reach us until the following day. This was NOT due to any mechanical failure, but merely that they enjoyed the scenery of North Wales, as they took the route through the mountains



for which the Mk2 was very suited.

If you're wondering how the Mk1 Midge and the Mk2 compare, the short answer is that they don't. The Mk1 was designed in a far more liberal time when getting a car road legal involved a cursory examination by the then DVLC, who then issued a V5. The proud owner could pick the name of the model. I have seen Midges registered as Triumph specials, Triumph Herald specials, T&J Midges, and other combinations of interesting

words. Over the last few years it has become progressively more difficult, in fact impossible, to register a newly built Mk1 Midge, and hence JC thought of a way to overcome the current legislative mayhem



by designing and building a 'new' car on an unaltered chassis to comply with all the current European regulations. My guess is that in the post-Brexit era it will be many years, if ever, before that legislation is repealed.

With that background, it is even more amazing that the Mk2 has seen the light of day. All the legal hoops have been jumped through and we now have another JC model which can be built by the impecunious enthusiast and enjoyed on the public highway. In appearance, the Mk2 is significantly larger than the Mk1. It is based on the Suzuki SJ chassis, so it is four wheel drive, with a more commanding view from the driver's seat. It uses aluminium panels and black (self-coloured) high gloss, heavy duty thermoplastic mudguards, which can be painted. Steel mudguards and GRP are also an option but they are twice as expensive so choice may depend on budget. Access to the engine is reasonable, but as in the Mk1 the bonnet side panels are easily removable. >>>>>

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The secret of entry into the Mk2 is to sit on the seat and then rotate the legs into position, which is actually easier than the 'left foot forward' method which I need to adopt for entry into my Mk1. The performance on the road is adequate, and passers-by turn to look at this unique mode of transport. We had the hood raised (another useful option which can be made on a domestic sewing machine) but I can imagine that on a hot summer's day to ride in an open Mk2 would be a very vintage experience.



The car was designed in the simplest and cheapest way for the less skilled or those on a low budget. Some will build outstanding examples at a much greater expense than the average build cost of £1500 including the donor and some will probably fit full flowing GRP wings and running boards sourced from other types of car.

Specialist body parts have been avoided to keep costs low, and the car utilises only commonly available items and materials apart from the full windscreen frame which is available for £50 ready for glass fitting. There are many ingenious little features built in: for instance the step behind the door conceals an outrigger, as do the chrome tubes which form the front and rear bumpers. To all those thinking about building a Mk2 I would say 'don't hesitate', enjoy the build and then the trips out.



JC has my great admiration. He is very modest about his achievements which include the designs for the early Moss cars, and Real Life Toys were initially his creation. He is already thinking of his next project, and what makes this even more amazing is that his eyes prevent him from holding a Driving Licence so Rose also performs the duties of chauffeuse and test driver in the Mk2. Thanks for everything, John. You have given many amateur car builders an excuse to retire into their 'man cave' and produce something fascinating and tangible which they can enjoy for many years.

John Bircumshaw 15.08.2016

Now, after the previous article was written by JB I was lucky enough to get the sequel, from John Cowperthwaite's view. It started as an email to JB and expanded from there. I'll let him pick up the tale....JC writing to JB after Poppy's Trip

Yes we got home safely after a few interesting detours thanks to Rosie's wayward satnav which has a mind of it's own!



The rain set in and visibility was very poor with misty patches especially on the A57 over the snake pass.

Luckily by this time I had solved the problem of a mysterious intermittent misfire along with much snarling and popping from the exhaust! (The car is now officially called 'Poppy')

It started soon after we left you and kept coming and going and on fast roads with no hard shoulder it was er... rather worrying.

Sitting in the worry seat, I had plenty of time to ponder the cause. It didn't seem like

carb problems as before, and from the spitting and crackling exhaust I deduced we had unburnt fuel that kept igniting so the problem must be an intermittent ignition fault. First I found a slack connection on the coil and when we set off with no misfire, I proudly considered the problem solved, well for at least the next 200 yards! Then I remembered that there is a solenoid connection on the carb which I found was also a slack spade connector. Dark raining and roads too hectic for this nonsense!

We set off, again no luck! ...and I was just commenting to Rose that intermittent faults were the hardest to cure when the fault stopped being intermittent and we were suddenly reduced to 3 cylinders and as Rosie put it 'sounding like an old motorbike!'

'Thank goodness we have Green Flag recovery' I thought as we staggered through traffic to a safe stopping place.

This time I prepared to check for oiled up plugs and found the lead to no. one cylinder detached and dangling limply !

It had obviously been resting close enough to the plug to arc to it intermittently but was now completely detached and no longer intermittent.

The Midge sang like a bird all the way home! and so did we! Good trip. Great adventure.

In the meantime Rosie has got the serious and incurable Midge bug and can't wait to visit Bob Duff in Wigan!

So as a sequel, two days later we headed for the east coast and the problem returned in a big way. It was finally traced to the coil.

When I built the car I had no loom or instruments from the donor. The loom I acquired had the old style cylindrical coil. After the first few journeys the car started spitting and banging and I correctly diagnosed the problem as the coil breaking down. I thought that this was because I had left the ignition on and flattened the battery. When this happens the coil can overheat and burn out.

Failing to realise that this only happens with contact breakers when the points are shut and the ignition is left on, I ordered and fitted an e x a c t replacement. As my car has electronic ignition this only solved the problem for a few trips and then the car, now known as 'Poppy' started popping and banging again.

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This blind sided me to the real problem as I thought that as the coil was new it must be something else.

I duly changed the (cracked) plug leads and fitted an in-line fuel filter, had the carb cleaned out, float level reset etc etc.

Still the problem remained but strangely when driving at night with the lights and wipers on, just like when we returned from Wales, the problem vanished and the car ran sweetly.

This was driving me nuts until the Haynes manual revealed that this year of SJ should have a ballast resistor coil fitted, which as you know runs on reduced voltage.



So although my original 'faulty coil' diagnosis was correct, it was fitting an identical replacement that was the problem! Obviously my loom had been salvaged from an earlier model, possibly an SJ410.

I finally concluded that having the lights and wipers on for prolonged periods created enough voltage drop to have the same effect as a ballast resistor! and that explained the anomaly!

Ah well, all's well that ends well!

We just completed a 190 mile round trip to (Returning via Matlock for late night fish and chips) Wigan to see Bob Duff who is also building a MK2.

He is the tall guy in the photo next to me.

The lower pic is me and my wife Rosie (The intrepid pilot!) Yesterday was a hundred mile round trip to Leicester to see my daughter and let her have a drive in it.

John C



UK 2016 Events

Check before you go, my information might be out of date or just plain wrong.

If you go to http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car_events.php you can get the information direct, that's where I get it.

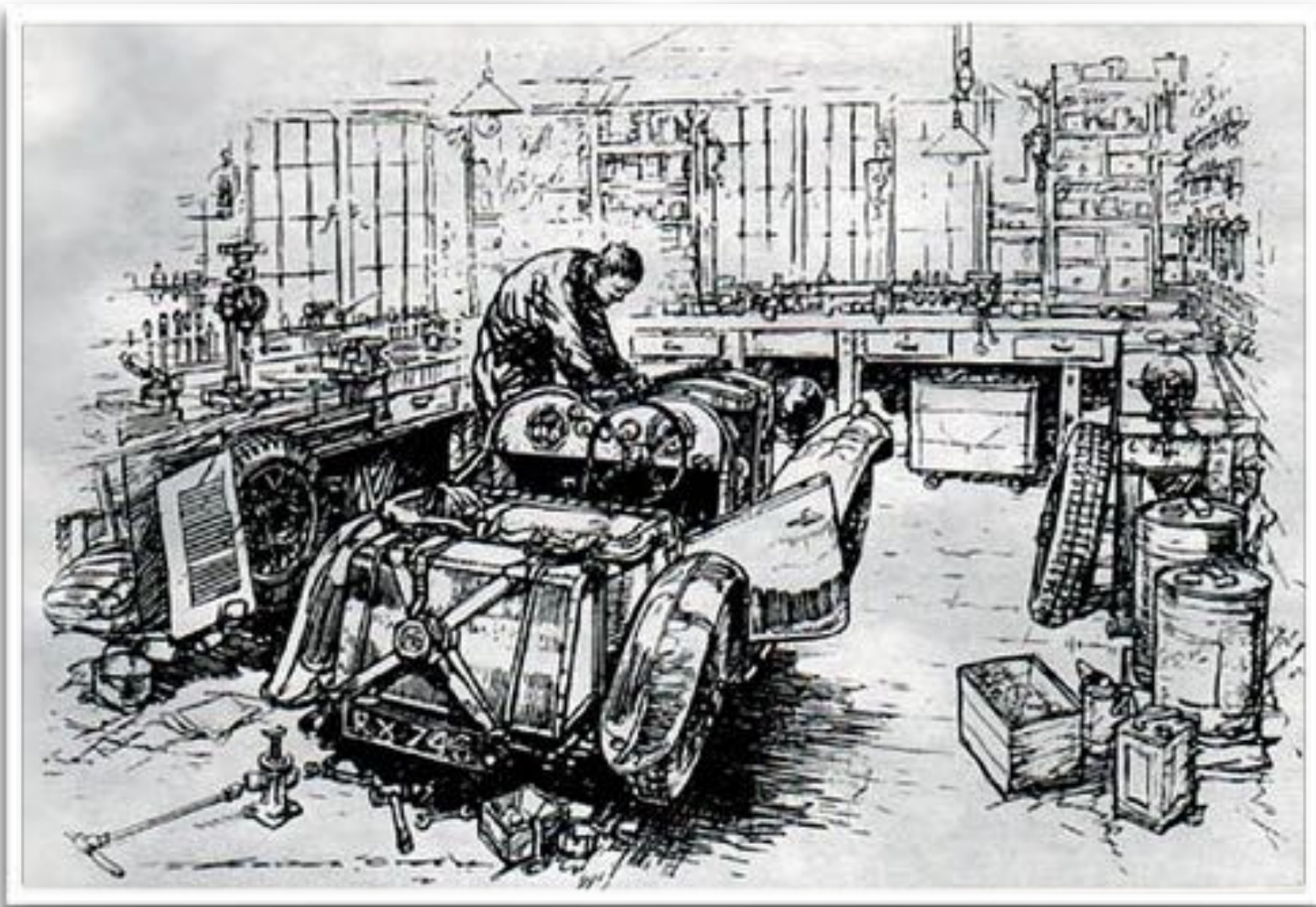
23 October 2016	<u>National Restoration Show</u>	Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
12,13 Nov 2016	<u>NEC Classic Motor Show</u>	NEC, Birmingham
3 oct 16	Gurkha Kitchen Classic Car Meet	Nottinghamshire
5 oct 16	<u>B5000 Barbers Monthly Vehicle Meet</u>	Warwickshire
9 oct 16	KENLEY AUTOJUMBLE	Surrey
16 oct 16	Classics on the Quay	Hampshire
23 oct 16	The Carole Nash Restoration Show	Warwickshire
18-20 Nov 2016	InterClassics Brussels 2016	Brussels

Don't forget we can update the magazine, so if you have a correction, suggestion, addition or whatever I can put it in. It does mean a bit of work, so I'll not be adjusting individual apostrophes, but if it's important.....

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

<http://www.classicshowsuk.co.uk/>

and <http://www.kentkitcarclub.com/2014events.php>

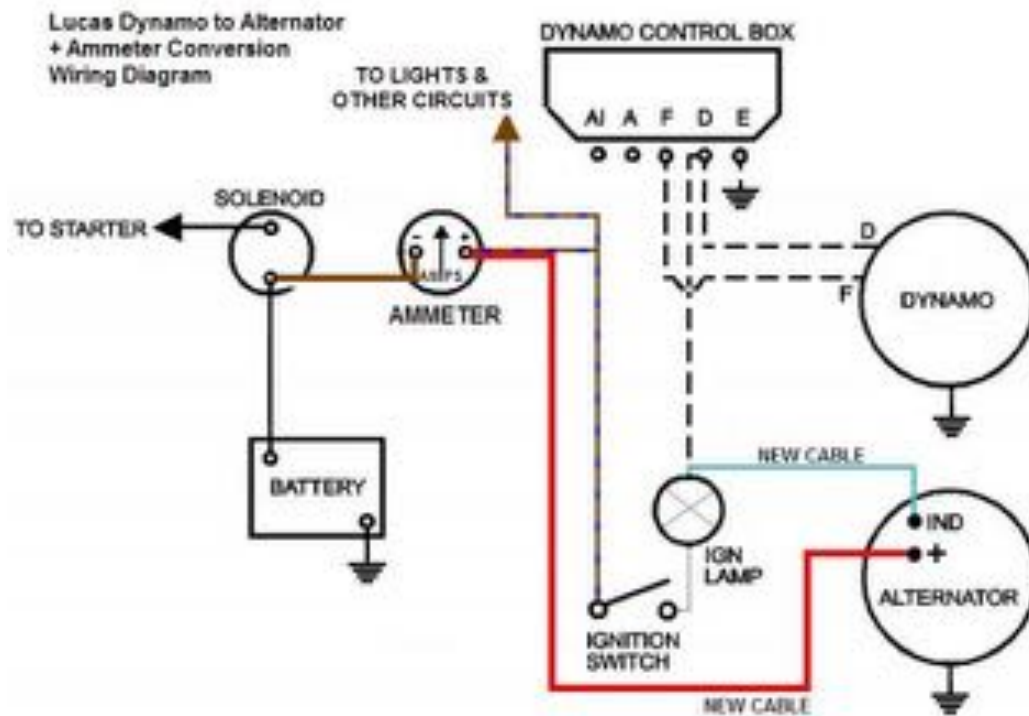


I believe Louis Cezar, drew this, which I think has the general feel of what we do. Although the garage is looking better organised than mine.



Dynamo to Alternator conversion, with extras.

In merging the Ford and Herald Midges and their wiring looms, I have discovered a few odd corners in the circuits, and thought they might be of interest.



First the question of whether to convert to an alternator. I have stayed with the Dynamo for now because I think it works, it is original and I don't want to make too many changes at the same time. In this particular case, because there are so many significant variations between looms of different ages I really need to understand what is required and why. That way I can work out how. The dashboard instrumentation includes a speedometer sized unit with a triple set of ammeter, water temperature and oil pressure gauges, so the first trick was to find out how to wire the ammeter in, (the answer is essentially between the big blade (+) solenoid terminal and everything else electrical except the starter motor). As yet the only real puzzle is the red ignition 'on but not charging yet' light. I suspect the dynamo charge isn't getting through.

The wiring process wasn't helped by my wanting to put a better fuse box in, and a 4 position ignition switch which prevents 'double starting'. I'm looking for an old style dashboard light switch as I wanted to make the circuit as simple as possible by not having relays and electronic components that can fail. I have, reluctantly, allowed an electronic radiator fan, necessary for the shortened bonnet, and a flasher unit for legal reasons, MOT stations tend to balk at trafficators. I may fit electronic points if I get any bother from the mechanical ones or the capacitor.



Next comes fitting the horribly expensive new 15" wire wheels and hubs, which will involve rebuilding the rear brakes (don't ask) and extending the front mudguard stays. The good news is that the new hubs are 1.5" longer, and so clear the rear bodywork. The bad news was that the old hubs although usable are tired and being shorter only match the 13" wire wheels, so in practical terms I can only sell them to Midge (or Triumph) owners. Since they are probably going to be club members I will have to A. offer a discount, and B worry that they are not new. You can see them go past on the [you-tube clip](#) (blue car). I should point out to the few members less au-fait with computery that if you click on the words [you-tube clip](#) you can watch it. For your delight and delectation those are two different clips.

From Richard Hazelgrove.

The event is the Bressuire Historic Grand prix. In its 11th year this is a revival of the original grand prix held there in the mid 1950's. Around 70 cars were in attendance this year. In our class (cyclecar, they call it), cars included a genuine 30's Bugatti, a modern replica Bugatti, two super fast Austin 7 racing specials, a newly built racing Austin, 1950's MG, a racing Matra and no less than two JC Midge.

I had never raced before this event last year so was very pleased to have gone 'all Lewis Hamilton' and won the class with a 1st, 2 second places and a 3rd. The award is made for driving and sportsmanship.

Despite a failing petrol pump which meant I stopped dead on the slow down lap of one race, to the jeers and cheers of the crowd. Huge fun.

You can enter and take it steady going around as I did last year and have just as



much fun.

As well as having racing on the Saturday and Sunday there was a night time running as well which was terrific, In fairness although I got second behind one of the Austins, some did not run as they had no lights!

A highly recommended event with the usual French Joi de Vivre. Entry was about 60 euros which included a fantastic lunch on the Sunday. RH



Here are the new wires. Just showing off really, the mudguard supports have yet to be adjusted for the wider track and increased height. Hopefully the reincarnated Red Midge will be on the road for the winter issue. Rain, sleet, ice, snow and salt may influence that.



Well that’s about it for now, hope you enjoyed it and don’t forget the usual suspects can’t write it all, so as the darker months approach get your keyboard / typewriter / pencil / crayon into action. Other interests are acceptable, within reason and the editors discretion. Adverts can be added, opinions voiced etc. The production staff hope you liked the ‘landscape’ layout, font size and presentation. If anything doesn’t work then use the contact details at the front page to point it out. Suggestions, praise and abuse will all be listened to and, on the odd occasion, acted upon. The Editor retains the right to add or subtract



Mark 2 Midge Roadster
2 You-tube clips.
Moving magnificently.
and back again.

SMALL AD. At the moment of writing there are for sale (including the discount to members of course)....

5 x 15” Hillman Minx Wheels without tyres (fits the Ford stud pattern) £50 + p&p

T&J Chassis designed for Ford Parts £ offers?
Various ford bits like front callipers and rear slaves, some steering bits. Brilliantly engineered side to downdraft 1.5” SU carb

5 x 13” used wire wheels with good tyres and matching (non MWS) hubs and spinners £200 + p&p (Same wheel track width as Herald wheels) Life history and expectancy unknown, hence the startlingly low price.

JH
contact details on front page.

random punctuation, add pithy comments, and look critically at any contributions involving kittens. Photos of contributors, spouses and teddybears in flying helmets are still acceptable in spite of the latest EU rulings.

Keep Calm and Keep Driving. JH.



Hold the press, Additional extra bit. I'm getting some brass MOBC and Midge badges made. The oval Midge badge is seen in the middle of the dashboard on the Red Midge in the previous page and is about 3" wide. The Hexagonal MOBC badge (right) is about 3" wide and has a square tab at the bottom for bolting it onto badge bars. Both are unpainted and un-drilled (this one has been filled in with black paint) and made by the previous supplier from the same templates. The hexagonal one should be about £5 including vat, the oval about £4 including vat (Postal charges will be added when I know what they are.) I'm hoping total UK costs will be close to £15 for the pair. Time will tell. They will be available separately and I should be able to put further details on the sales and wants page at...

<http://midgebuilders.homestead.com/Sales-and-wants.html>

...with more precise costs, though that will probably be after the magazine is published at the end of September. For obvious reasons the Hexagon is only available to paid up members, although I could be flexible on the oval one. Incidentally I will buy back Hexagonal ones if reasonably re-usable, I have noticed quite a few on ebay Midges when the seller isn't a member and should point out that they do not in themselves confer membership. I have a few resin hexagonal MOBC 'coasters' that are the same sort of size but without the tab. The perfect christmas present for your loved one. (That's your spouse not your car) and only a pound plus whatever the postage costs). Helpful if you have just emptied the bank account for a new set of wire wheels. If he or she doesn't like it you might be able to stick it on the back end (of the car) or somewhere, or wait for me to arrange MOBC coffee mugs. Don't hold your breath though. Great Scott, that's 18 pages !

Jim



Just in under the wire, an offer from John Cox in North Yorkshire
(john.randolph.cox@gmail.com)

All parts are from a Spitfire 1500cc Mk 4
2 axles / diff / front and rear suspension.
Trunnions very good. Master cylinders good.
Steering rack / rear spring / hood frame / heater.
>>Chassis too far gone, Midge plans up the spout. <<
A job lot at £100.

Contact by email.