



## Midge Owners and Builders Club Spring 2013

Secretary: John Bircumshaw,  
15 Westminster Drive, Burbage, Hinckley LE10 2HA  
Email: [johnbirc@btinternet.com](mailto:johnbirc@btinternet.com)

*Dear Members,*

We're now into March 2013 and at last my Midge has stirred from the garage. I really do admire those members who use their cars for daily transport in spite of the weather. Photographs of Midges in the snow are hard to find, but here are pictures sent in by Jim Hewlett from West Lothian in Scotland and Greg Hackett from North Wales. Our English members cannot be made of the same stuff, or perhaps, like me, they didn't think a heater was necessary when building their car!



Greg Hackett's Midge in a winter landscape on the Isle of Anglesey.



Here's Jim Hewlett who is suitably dressed for the Scottish winter.

Now that Spring is just around the corner our thoughts are turning to the shows that we shall hope to visit. The National shows are well documented, and further details are given below. Local shows can be just as enjoyable so if you know of any events taking place in your area then please let me know.

Please make a note in your diary and let me know if you would like to attend any of them.

*John*

### Kit Car shows in 2013

<b>Detling Kit Car Show</b>	<b>Kent County Showground, Kent</b>	<b>April 13-14</b>
<b>National Kit Car Show</b>	<b>NAC, Stoneleigh</b>	<b>May 5-6</b>
<b>London-to-Brighton 2013</b>	<b>London-to-Brighton</b>	<b>June 2</b>
<b>National Kit Car Festival</b>	<b>Newark, Nottinghamshire</b>	<b>June 16-17</b>
<b>Silverstone Classic</b>	<b>Silverstone, Northamptonshire</b>	<b>July 26-28</b>
<b>Donington Kit Car Show</b>	<b>Donington Park, Leicestershire</b>	<b>Aug24-25</b>
<b>Peter James Insurance totalkitcar LIVE</b>	<b>Blyton Park, Lincolnshire</b>	<b>September 21</b>
<b>Exeter Kit Car Show</b>	<b>Westpoint, Devon</b>	<b>October 26-27</b>

## **ARDINGLY VINTAGE AND CLASSIC VEHICLE SHOW - Rob Garrett writes-**

The show is held on Saturday and Sunday 13/14th July, with camping from the Friday evening (12th). This is a good all-round show, with a small auto-jumble, old style Fairground rides, some Traction Engines and Static (Steam Engines), Kit Cars, Classic Cars and some PVT car classes, plus Commercial Vehicles. It is run by the Horsham Historic Vehicle Club and the nearest two towns are Turners Hill and Haywards Heath on the East/West Sussex Border. Both the TSSC and Kent Kit Car Club usually have stands and I am sure Midges would be welcome on either of these stands with prior notification.



**Seen at Ardingly in 2011- Can anyone identify it?**

Entry Forms (one for each car) are to be returned to the appropriate Class Marshal BEFORE 30th April, and Rob has provisionally arranged for any Triumph based Midges to join the stand for the TSSC West Kent Area. The NG Owners will welcome a small number of non-Triumph based Midges to join them; especially on the Saturday as most NGs are attending for the Sunday. Rob is willing to liaise with either the TSSC or NGOC if required. Please contact him on 01732 453639 or email [rgmidge.rgnkent@gmx.co.uk](mailto:rgmidge.rgnkent@gmx.co.uk)

## **IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR CLUB.**

Over the last few weeks I have been in discussion with JC (John Cowperthwaite) the man who started it all by designing the Midge, to find out if there was any way in which we could involve him in the Club on a more regular basis. My thoughts are that if we could use his name and his expertise to market the Club, this would only be to our mutual advantage.

At present, if anyone wishes to purchase a set of plans and a build manual then I am able to provide them. In the future, John will also be marketing the plans more positively (although the Club will retain the copyright) and prospective purchasers will be given the opportunity to join the Club as part of the package. He has already updated the build manual to remove any reference to the Ford based Midges which are no longer feasible. Some of you may have seen an advertisement on eBay which attracted a number of enquiries and John is now preparing a follow up advertisement. He would welcome pictures of members' cars which can be included. In particular he would like to put together a photo representation of a build sequence as follows;

1. Rolling chassis
2. Bare wooden tub
3. Tub on chassis
4. Next stage possibly skinned with grille in place
5. Then with side panels
6. Finished car.

If anyone has any suitable pictures, please email them to me or directly to John at [lightning.cars@btinternet.com](mailto:lightning.cars@btinternet.com) The photographs are important because they help to show how straight forward the construction of a Midge can be, even for those with basic wood and metal working skills. He also needs a  $\frac{3}{4}$  front picture of a classy looking Midge to finish the set. There must be many such photographs in members' albums!

I hope that all members will agree that our co-operation will strengthen the Club, as it comes at a time when the EU regulations make it more difficult to register a newly built car for use on public roads and our membership is not increasing as rapidly as I would wish. If you have any concerns, please get in touch with me and I will do my best to answer them.

***James Orr visited the Goodwood Revival in 2012 and has sent this account of his experiences. I'm sure it will make everyone wish to attend the event in 2013!***

## **THERE'S NOTHING IN THE WORLD THAT COMPARES.**

The Goodwood Revival really is a magical step back in time, leaving our modern world behind. It is a unique incomparable opportunity to live in the time capsule of the world's most authentic motor circuit. The Revival is the world's most popular historic motor race meeting and the only event of its kind to be staged entirely in the nostalgic time of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. ***But that's definitely not all!***

For a start there's the car park! Restricted to tax-exempt cars, there were rows, and rows and rows of classic sports car and saloons - there must have been over 1000 of them!

Above me there was a squadron of Spitfires - the sound of 6 Merlin engines remembered from my boyhood days, and in the distance the magnificent deep roar of race car engines later identified and watched, as The Silver Arrows. The Mercedes and Auto Union racing cars built in Hitler's Germany to win; and they did. Last raced in 1939 there must have been very few of the spectators that had ever heard or seen them before. A real spine tingling experience!



**A montage of Goodwood images**

Heading for the entrance we passed through original Fairground attractions of the period before crossing over a bridge and entering the event proper and mingling with the crowd browsing in hundreds of shops and stalls all filled with vintage

items for sale, and stopping in cafes, restaurants, and bars. All around us were many people dressed in the uniforms and fashions of the 40's, 50's, and 60's and music from the period also from a number of bands. You could feel the atmosphere of excitement, anticipation, fun and sheer euphoric pleasure. What a day - everything I expected, and much more!



After a picnic lunch on the grass - it was a most beautiful warm sunny day (one of very few in 2012) we watched the car and motorbike racing for some time before spending time wandering around the pits fascinated and mesmerised by the huge collection of racing cars of all types and sizes.

Oh, did I mention there were 3 runways within the perimeter of the race track? Yes ....3 runways! Goodwood was a key Battle of Britain airfield during World War II, home to several RAF squadrons. After the war the aircraft perimeter track was turned into a racing track with the first race meeting taking place in 1948.

During the event lots of interesting aircraft could be watched taking off and landing in the parking area. Plus there was a special section entitled The Freddie March Spirit of Aviation bringing together around 25 of the world's finest, most elegant, original and rarely-seen aircraft from the evocative pioneering days of aviation to create a spectacle at the Revival that all race-goers were able to get close to and enjoy. These included a Tiger Moth, Boeing Staggerwing, Catalina Flying Boat, De Havilland Dragon Rapide, and Dakota to mention a few.

So that was Goodwood Revival 2012; a most memorable day for me, never to be forgotten.

I could only spend one day there unfortunately - it was on all weekend and that would have been best. For those with a caravan or tent park; there are facilities for these too.

Check out **The Goodwood Revival 2013** on the internet, and you'll get all the details. Tickets are on sale now. *You just have to go to Goodwood at least once in your lifetime!*



Evocative pictures of a great day out at Goodwood.

*Many thanks for this fascinating account, James. I'll book my place for the 2013 Revival immediately!*

## NEW MEMBERS

- **Bryan Coventry from Stafford** has recently re-joined the Club. In the following paragraphs Bryan reminisces about his long association with the Midge he has owned for more than 20 years.

### *Bryan writes:-*

On a dark cold day recently I was looking around the internet, when I found the MOBC. I thought....It's still going. I joined the club in 1991 and soon after I bought a Midge for my 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday. It had been built and run as an everyday car 5 years before by a chap in Aylesbury. My wife knew I had been looking for a Midge for sale, and when I found one so close to home she said, go and have a look. It could be your birthday present! We had years of fun out of Madge the Midge and I changed the wheels for an old set of MGB wires on a conversion kit within the first year.

We attended a Kit Car show at Sandown Park each year where the club always had a stand, and we would line up with the rest. I remember there was one Midge who was used in Hill climbing a strange looking beast, but used with great effect. At an early meet J.C was looking over the cars on the stand. He came to mine, and by looking at the windscreen said oh, this is a very early one...and walked off!

We ran Madge as a hobby car, for Sunday runs to a tea room where ever we could find one. Then I discovered Narrow Boating, and Madge was kept in a Barn on a local farm. She sat there for four years. We moved home from Buckinghamshire to Staffordshire. My wife asked what I would do with Madge. We were running out of time, and very close to the move. The day of the move came and off to Staffordshire we went, leaving Madge in the barn. A month or so later, I returned to Buckinghamshire to spend a day trying to sort out Madge, with a view to getting her "Home". I pulled her out. Did some work on a seized brake calliper and took her for an MOT that I had booked late in the day. As was always the case...she passed.

So no time to tax her, I decided to leave my car with the farmer, and take the chance of driving her back to Staffordshire. I was in the AA with Relay, so thought at least I will get there one way or another.

Madge sat again in my garage in my new home. I ran her up from time to time, but I was still into Narrow Boating. She had started to show the damage of the years in the barn. Her mudguards were badly rusted and in need of replacement. Then sadly I lost my wife. Any thoughts of boats or cars were far away. 5 years on and Madge is still with me. I have bought new motorcycle mud guards, and am in the process of spraying them. I don't intend re spraying Madge, as she wears the age patina well. So Madge and I grow old together. We will again run the country lanes, sadly, now without my best friend, my wife, but Madge will enjoy the wind in her grille once again.

I've always fancied a boat tailed Midge with a Dickey seat. I might buy a second car and convert it to one, so watch this space!

- **Jamie Jameson from Monckton School near Bath** runs a garage in the school, and among other on-going projects, they have recently restored the chassis, running gear and engine of a 1200 Herald. They have three garage bays and are building a Locost, the Herald, and preparing to put a Renault Clio back on the road. They meet on Wednesday afternoons for about two hours, and

have the tools for most jobs! The building of the Midge will compete with the building of the Locost. Good luck to both teams!

- **Derek Smith from Windsor in Berkshire** has just celebrated his 69th birthday. He started at a BMC garage as an apprentice mechanic in 1959 and, of course, fell for all the usual pranks that they inflicted on youngsters. "Go and get a pint of pigeon's milk, a tin of blue sparks etc. etc. After finishing his apprenticeship, he moved onto Aston Martins and Jaguars, then stationary diesel powered plant and then left the trade altogether, being fed up with being a grease monkey, and having to spend 4 hours a night trying to get himself clean. He moved into process engineering for the next 10 years and eventually into building maintenance. At the age of 61 he decided to retire. His interest in cars has always remained and has just completed (last year) a Mark 2 version of a Citroen 2CV engined 3-wheeler. Along the way he has amassed every manual for a plan built car that has been produced. Plans for the Midge were purchased from John Cowperthwaite in February 1985 so it's only been 28 years in the planning!



Here's a Lomax 3-wheeler similar to the one Derek has just completed. He shouldn't have any problems building his Midge!

- **Sir Roger Read KT.HKt.B. from Doncaster** was apprenticed in the vehicle repair industry during the early 60's and so has a fair knowledge of what we now call "Classic Cars" He also worked as Regional Service Engineer for Mono Pumps. During the early 70's he joined London Ambulance Service, trained for frontline work (A&E) then went the USA to train in their trauma units and subsequently joined the Cambridgeshire Ambulance Service. Roger co-owned an upmarket nursing home and had a successful classic and vintage car hire business at the same time. He then went into community care as support/liason/carers until his retirement.

Roger's title is far older than a Knight of The Realm; it goes back to the 1100's (second crusades) and was granted for services to and within the community. His knighthood is from the order of the Knights of The Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (Knights Templars) Roger is a member of his local car club in Doncaster (Trad Car Club) and The Spartan Owners Club. He has a working knowledge of all Triumphs, and is always ready to help. Roger has notified me of the annual **Doncaster Classic Car and Bike Show** to be held on Sunday 14th July 2013 at the Doncaster School for the Deaf opposite the Doncaster Racecourse. For more details go to [www.doncasterclassiccarshow.org.uk](http://www.doncasterclassiccarshow.org.uk)

- **Tony Arnold from Colchester in Essex** is underway with the construction of his Midge. As the pictures show, it does need a small amount of work for the MOT!

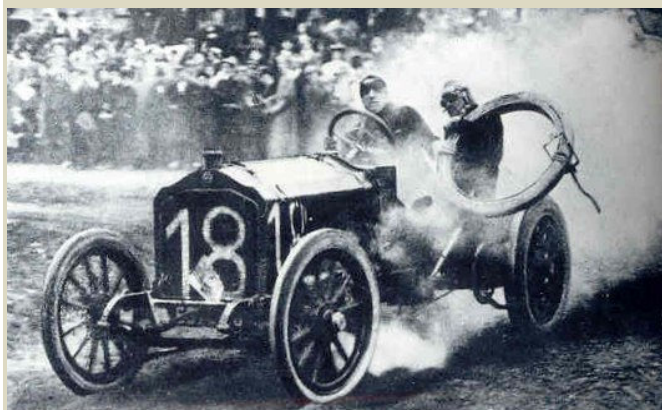
Good luck Tony, and keep going. We look forward to having pictures of your finished car.



**Pictures of Tony's Midge. We've all been there!**

*Welcome to all our new members. We hope that you will enjoy being in the Club and hope that you will keep in touch as your Midges reach completion.*

If you're undecided about the location of the spare wheel for your Midge, this picture may help - provided you carry a passenger!



### MODERN CLASSICS

It's easy to overlook the cars we take for granted, those that we never thought of as rare, or special, or even very nice - metal from the 80s and 90s that was once a feature of everyday life. What's worse is that these cars are quietly, slowly and surely disappearing. Though most aren't paragons of classic design they are getting increasingly rare, and many are now in imminent danger of being lost forever.

A lot of these 'at risk' cars might be ridiculed by the classic car fraternity - but how many of you still hold a soft spot for the humble Morris Marina? When was the last time you saw a Ford Sierra or Orion, an Austin Maestro, or Vauxhall Chevette? These cars were once commonplace on Britain's roads, but now they are truly an endangered species.

In the year 2000 there were 463,751 Ford Sierras roaming our roads - now there are fewer than 16,000. The Austin Maestro's position is even more precarious, its 73,531 strong number in 2000 having been whittled down to just over 1000 cars today. The Marina and Chevette have suffered the same fate, with a collective total of only 1400 survivors.

*Do you have a favourite 'modern' Classic? If so then please write to tell me about it. My 'other' car is a Triumph 1500TC and from a total of 25,449 cars made, 83 vehicles now remain, of which about half are still on the road. Makes you think, doesn't it?*

### CHAMPION MIDGE DRIVER OF THE YEAR



Without question, this award has gone to David Harvey who made a marathon journey to Greece (and back) from Derby as a sponsored charity run in aid of 'Help for Heroes'. A copy of David's account of this epic journey has already been circulated, but if you would like to have another copy then please let me know (the text is copyright, but you are welcome to read it for yourself before it is published elsewhere.)



David prepares for the journey and collects sponsorship money in Derby.

That's all for this time. Please keep those articles and pictures coming, and have a great summer in your Midge!