



Midge Owners and Builders Club

Summer 2013

Secretary: John Bircumshaw,

Dear Members,

I often wonder just what the magic ingredient might be that keeps us all together as a Club. It's certainly not our day jobs (for those that are still working) It's not our money, or lack of it, nor is it this quarterly magazine, although that may help.

I believe that what we all have in common is a practical streak to be able to construct our own car which although of a common basic design, the end result is a unique piece of engineering which is reminiscent of the golden days of motoring. Thanks to European legislation and advances in technology the cars produced today might be more reliable, comfortable and economical but they have lost that unique quality that Midge builders enjoy. There is also no doubt that Midges make friends where our everyday cars insulate us from what is going on outside our tin box.

Today it becomes ever more difficult to be an individualist, and this applies to life in general and not just to our cars. Long may our hobby be able to continue. Where there are rules then the challenge is to work within them and not to be subsumed by the bureaucracy around us.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this magazine and the contributions from our members who are demonstrating that the spirit of the motoring pioneers is still with us today.



An Ancestor of the Midge spotted at a recent Classic Car Rally in North Wales

UPDATE FROM ON MIDGES MK1 AND MK2

You will recall in our Spring issue that we teamed up with John Cowperthwaite to market the Midge plans through eBay in an attempt to give our car an extended life span and increase our Club Membership at the same time. The eBay advertisement had over 6000 views but only sold six sets of plans so the interest is terrific but the legislation seems to be a major stumbling block for UK customers. In addition to this there were difficulties in manufacturing the alloy grille surround, the dashboard top and the windscreen.

JC did not wish to market the plans unless he was able to provide all the unique parts necessary for completing the build and is now concentrating on developing the MK2 Midge which has the same simple method of construction but is planned to be built on an unmodified chassis and will therefore avoid the problems associated with the SVA.

JC writes as follows:-

The MK2 Midge is nearing completion. The plans are finished but need re-drawing on to fewer sheets. The instructions are 70% complete and the car has everything it needs other than seats and wheel nuts.

I am in the final stages of wiring and then the scuttle top windscreen and bonnet can all be put back on ready for photos. I am assuming it will start and run as I have never actually fired it up!

I have had some new fabricated parts made to mount the headlights and along with four front wing stays and a fabricated battery carrier. They have all been drawn and were taken for powder coating. Because my regular fabricator closed his business I have now taken these finished products plus the drawings to a new man for him to cost them up. This means I have to wait before I can assemble the front end and take photos of the sequence of assembly. Meanwhile the windscreen frame is elsewhere being assessed for the best way to make it using a press. Once we have cracked that nut we will be able to replicate the MK1 Midge screens as well. The car is now waiting for my friend to sort out the wiring and the engine turns over on the key. The radiator is piped up and full of water and the brakes are ready for bleeding.

Many thanks for this latest news, John. We all await more details and a picture of the 'Son of Midge' with great interest!

ANOTHER MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE



**Follow us on
FACEBOOK**

I'm very grateful to Jim Dolphin for setting up a **MIDGE OWNERS GROUP** on Facebook and I hope that we shall be able to use it as a discussion forum and to increase our Membership. Currently there are only two members of the Group, so if you're into Facebook please join and let us have details of your car. I'd love to see us reach 100 members of the Group. You don't need to be a Club Member or a Midge Owner to join.

TO FRANCE AND BACK (HOPEFULLY)

My comment in the Editorial about Midge owners being individualists is borne out by a recent note from Richard Hazelgrove who writes:-

I know this is not my JC Midge - but I will be taking the 1933 Singer to France in July and have set up a 'just giving' page to raise money for Rowans Hospice. The challenge is to drive an 80 year old car from Portsmouth to La Ronde in the Deux Sevres, a distance of 276 miles or 444km.



La Ronde, Ici, nous allons venir!

The Singer is believed to be the only 6 cylinder model 14 in existence and has not been driven over 70 miles round trip in the recent past. We will stay in France for about 6 weeks and then drive back.

Any donation is welcome and please do not feel that this has to be by miles/km. Every little helps!

<http://www.justgiving.com/Richard-Hazelgrove>

THE AMPHICAR



The underside of the Amphicar

WITH LACK OF SUNSHINE AND ABUNDANCE OF RAIN, TERRY WETHERFIELD HAS CONCENTRATED ON MAKING HIS MIDGE HOOD LOOK GOOD AND EASY TO OPERATE. HERE'S HOW HE DID IT.

Do you recall the amphibious Triumph Herald which appeared on a Top Gear programme and almost sunk without trace, taking Clarkson and Co with it to the murky depths below? What a waste of a potential Midge donor! Of course they could have gone for the real thing, the almost forgotten Amphicar. The first such mass-produced vehicle was 'launched' in 1961, driven by propeller and steered when in water by the front wheels. The vehicle was designed by Hans Trippel and manufactured by the Quandt Group at Berlin-Borsigwalde. It featured a strengthened Triumph drive train, but the main thrust of its marketing was aimed at the USA. Compared to the majority of either boats or cars, its performance was modest, and only 4000 were produced by 1965. Nevertheless, it is among the most successful civilian amphibious cars of all time, and is prized and preserved as a novelty today.



Terry's superb Midge with the hood up

Does your Midge hood look a little baggy or do you have to struggle to fit the press studs of your 'tight as a drum' hood?

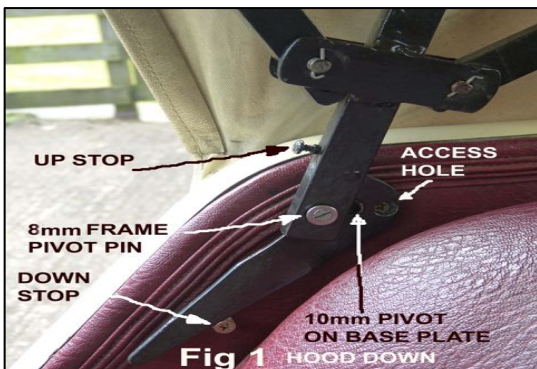
Not if you do as I have done by doing away with the press studs at the top of the screen and fitting a pair of hood tensioner devices.

When I built my 'Midge' I made the cockpit 2" longer than standard and made my own windscreen steel frame. Hence, I had to make my own hood, because the standard hood would not have fitted

properly, so I had the opportunity to design my own hood frame. However, the basic design of my hood tensioner mechanism may be adaptable to other owner's hood frames.

I made the hood frame from three hoops of 20mm x 10mm steel strip. It might have been advantageous to use 6mm instead of 10mm strip.

To avoid a build up of thickness where the three hoops overlap each other at the pivot point and to reduce the bending moment on the pivot, I joined the hoops as shown in Fig 1 below.



The pivot pins for the front and rear hoops could be thin headed pins or machine screws with thinned down heads. There are self-tap screws which are for adjusting the 'hood up' stop for the position of the tensioner levers. There are also screws in the inside of the cockpit to act as down stops when the tensioner levers are down and in line with the edge of the body.

The ends of the front hoop are left long so that they can be filed to size to limit the hoop's forward position.

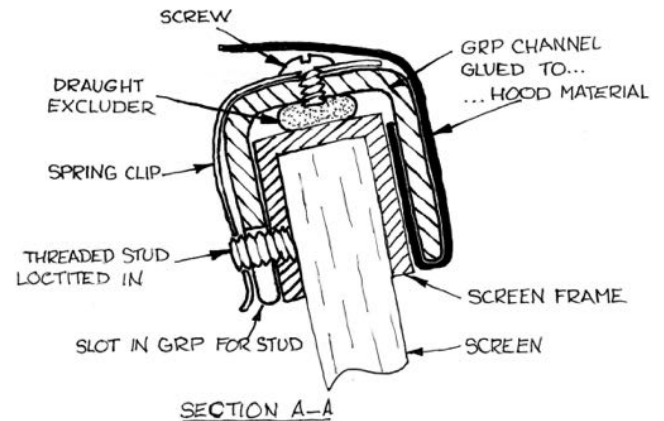
The tensioner mechanism shown consists of a base plate having a 10mm diameter pivot welded in. The pivot is counter bored so that its end can be peened to retain the tensioner lever.

The lever has an 8mm diameter pivot pin welded in and the lever is cranked by 5mm so that it will engage the adjustable stop screw. It also has a hole in it to access the base plate fixing screws.



In operation the hood is erected then the tensioning levers are raised to their stops to tension the hood. In this position the throw of the mechanism is slightly over centre which retains it in position.

Instead of using press studs around the top of the screen, my hood has a GRP channel bonded into its leading edge which is retained by two spring clips. See section A-A below.



This was produced by wrapping the top of the screen frame with 3mm of cardboard held on with Sellotape (to allow for draught excluder) then moulding approximately 2.5mm thickness of GRP around the top of the frame, taking great care to protect the bodywork from drips of resin which would have instantly eaten the cellulose paint work.

Two spring clips were then fashioned from bulldog clips (heat softened, then, after shaping, re-hardened and tempered) and these were fixed using

short self-tapping screws over the top of the GRP channel. This was then glued to the leading edge of the hood and draught excluder was stuck into the channel. Two short lengths of screw thread were screwed into the rear face of the screen frame and secured with Loctite.

In operation, the channel along the front edge of the hood is clipped over the top of the windscreen and pushed down until the spring clips engage the threaded studs and the hood tensioner levers are raised.

Job done: you are in the dry!

Many thanks to Terry for this excellent article. A brilliant example of applying some original thinking to a familiar problem.

NEW MEMBERS

- **Jörg Westerfield from Wermelskirchen in Germany** has a Spitfire based Midge and intends to build a second one.



Jörg's Current Midge

Jörg writes:-

When I bought my Midge I was absolutely unknowing about this car. I saw this car in the internet and bought it only from the photographs I'd gotten before. The Midge was in a very bad condition. The history of the Midge became more and more interesting for me. So now after 6 years of screwing and hammering and of course driving the Midge, I want to build one with a Herald chassis because the Spitfire chassis is too short for me. My wife comes from Polesworth, Warwickshire, and her uncle was a mechanic in Coventry (Triumph/BLMC) until he retired. I joined the Club to improve my vocabulary regarding technical stuff and special conversation.

- **Graham Pearce from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire** has spent a lifetime working on Triumph Cars and motor cycles, and has even designed his own Triumph based prototype racer using a Mk2 GT6 chassis with the later, Rotoflex rear suspension and a 2-litre straight six engine. Original equipment was twin SU carburettors but Graham has gone for triple Weber 40 DCOE, twin-choke carburettors on a Triumphtune inlet manifold. The result is around 150 bhp with bags of torque and the smoothness for which the six-cylinder units are renowned.



The Triumph Special constructed by Graham. Building a Midge will present a series of totally different challenges!

- **Stephen Rollo from Clackmannan, Scotland** has a superb Midge and is looking for a windscreen to protect him from those Scottish gales. Let me know if you have one to spare!



Stephen's Midge in British Racing Green

- **Kevin Carpenter from Eastleigh, Hampshire** has a Midge under restoration based on a Herald 13/60



Kevin's Midge 'as bought' but it's now almost ready for the open road.

- **William Urquhart from Wirksworth, Derbyshire** has a Triumph 13/60 based Midge and enjoys a

trip into the beautiful Peak District near to his home.

- **Jonathan Pegg from Woking, Surrey**

is Health, Safety and Environmental Director at a Property and Surveying Partnership in London. His background in recent years has been in Facilities Management - although his deep dark secret is that he was once a Bank Manager!

Jonathan has always been a practical guy and has already built 2 kit cars (A Jago Jeep & a Pilgrim Family Tourer)

JONATHAN HAS GIVEN US HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY FROM A KIT CAR ANGLE AND I'M MOST GRATEFUL FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION.

He writes: - For detailed guidance can I suggest that you read the recent "Practical Classics" garage safety article about it - which is very good. Instead, I'll let you into a secret - most people actually love safety -as it hits all the right buttons. Wearing front seat belts remains our best piece of safety legislation ever. What people hate is when elf n' safety is used as an excuse for not doing something. Please challenge them to explain. Is it a health issue (asbestos in brake linings) or a safety issue (too heavy a load to lift)? If they can't give you an answer, then you know that they haven't thought it out.

So what good safety tips can I pass on?

- Try to plan you work so you iron out the risks. I built a small sturdy workbench so that I could use it to rebuild a gearbox. It helped me to avoid un-necessary lifting and was more comfortable to work on.
- Get the right tools. (Use "safety" to justify buying yet more tools)
- Working outdoors? - think environmentally. Keep spill kits handy. (Use a bucket of sand?)
- Oily overalls cause testicular cancer. Wash them both!
- Lastly do remember that a kit car build is a very green thing to do, if you do it properly. Most of the pollution surrounding the whole of a vehicle's life comes from its manufacture and eventual destruction. By

reusing a vehicle you are potentially doing a good turn for the planet



This Chassis is Jonathan's starting point for his Midge. There will be many opportunities for Health and Safety before his car is completed! Here are details of a show in Kent which local members might wish to attend. Thanks to Roger West for sending the details.

EVEGATE CLASSIC VEHICLE, KIT CAR SHOW and AUTOJUMBLE, 2013

Saturday 17th August 2013 -10:00am-4:00pm



Display vehicles, - drivers and passengers free of charge.

Kit Car shows in 2013

Silverstone Classic	Silverstone, Northamptonshire	July 26-28
Donington Kit Car Show	Donington Park, Leicestershire	Aug24-25
Peter James Insurance totalkitcar LIVE	Blyton Park, Lincolnshire	September 21
Exeter Kit Car Show	Westpoint, Devon	October 26-27

Private autojumble stands £20.00, trade stands on request.

All kit cars, classic commercials, agricultural, motor bikes and classic cars welcome! Huge display area with room for everyone. Free entry into the 'Display of the day' competition which will be judged by a "mystery shopper". Presentation and award sponsored by and supplied by the British Vehicle Salvage Federation.

This event will be held at Evegat Business Park, Station Rd, Smeeth, Kent, TN25 6SX
Please phone 01303 814325 for a Booking Form or call in at Evegat. www.evegat.co.uk .

MIDGES FOR SALE AND SOLD

These two Midges have been spotted on eBay recently:-



And finally.... It's goodbye from him (thanks to James Orr for the picture).....



and it's goodbye from me! Don't forget to keep sending in those articles and photographs for the

autumn issue of our magazine.

This attractive Midge is 1968 Triumph 13/60 based, with unleaded head, 4+1 manual gearbox, and free Road tax and 12 months MOT. The vendor says it's in very good condition and can be driven away. The car was rebuilt in 1996 and it sold for £3611. What a bargain for such a nice Midge!

John.

Secondly, this Midge is currently being advertised and is also shown on our Club Website



Bidding starts at £1295, so it could be a bargain for someone looking for a project.