

Dear Members,

Summer is here at last. Your Midge has just been serviced and given a new MOT, so what are you waiting for? Now is the time to enjoy Midge motoring at its best and to take a few pictures for our 2016 Calendar, more details of which appear in this Newsletter.

I'm delighted to see that our Facebook page is becoming better used. Although I attempt to keep members updated with the Newsletter; the social media are becoming a big part of our lives because of their instant appeal. We can also show pictures on our Group page of members' cars in much greater detail than I am able to show in print, and these are helpful for problem solving as well. Have a look at the Midge Owners and Builders Group for a new insight into our Club's activities and the enthusiastic owners we are lucky to have.

The final paragraph of my letter is one which I am sorry to write. I have been the Secretary and general factotum of our Club for nearly ten years now and it has been a fantastic experience. I have made many friends world-wide (even though I've never met some of them) and the camaraderie within the Club is just brilliant. However, I feel the time has now come for me to hand over to someone who will be able to take the Club forward. I've set out a 'Job Specification' but the Club is very much what the individual wishes it to be. Please give careful consideration to this opportunity and get in touch if you are interested. If several members volunteer their services this would be so much easier!

Have a great summer and keep sending in your pictures and articles (to me at present)

John

Midge Owners and Builders Club Summer 2015

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SITUATION VACANT CLUB SECRETARY

Keeping Membership records
Encouraging new members
Producing Quarterly Newsletter
Attempting to answer technical queries
Keeping Club Accounts
Liaising with Club webmaster, Neil Russell
Anything else you can think of!

MIDGE CLUB CALENDAR FOR 2016



In our previous Newsletter I mentioned news of the Club Calendar which James Orr will be producing with your help for next year. It's an opportunity to showcase your Midge so don't miss it!

We are intending to produce a full colour 12 page A3 calendar with the top half image, and the lower half showing the month with space for each day and this is an opportunity to have your Midge in a colour picture which will be available worldwide! These themes are given as suggestions, but imagination is the key!

- Midge building in Garage
- Winter/Summer Midge
- Country road/lane/Farmhouse
- Hill Climb/ Midge at Speed

For our members who are not in the UK why not show your car in an environment typical of your Country? Our Midges are in the style of MGJ2 of 1930's so why not have the Driver/Passenger in 1930's clothing or related to Art Deco?

All images should be sent to James at james-m-orr@hotmail.com by October 16th, so please start taking pictures now.

Our special event planned for all Club members and friends has so far had a poor response. Can we do better? Please get in touch if you would enjoy a visit sometime in August.

BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

Roger West has very kindly agreed to arrange a Club visit to Brooklands Museum where we can meet up together and enjoy seeing the cars and the place that was so instrumental in the development of the great British racing cars of the 1930s. Do you recognize any of the cars below?



An early 90's MOBC visit to Brooklands

Brooklands was the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit, constructed at Weybridge, Surrey in 1907. The website gives further details about this magnificent place of pilgrimage www.brooklandsmuseum.com

MIKE BAMBRIDGE'S MIDGE

Occasionally, we see a Midge that is truly exceptional with a large amount of original thought incorporated into its design and construction. Even rarer is an owner who is willing to set out the unique features of the car in a comprehensive write up. Mike Bambridge is

such a person, and I'm delighted to bring you the first part of his account which contains many useful tips on Midge building. The finished car speaks for itself.

PART 1

I built my first Midge in 1998, I was very proud of it, and used it as my daily driver all year round. Forward 11 years or so, and nearing retirement, thoughts returned once again to Midge motoring. Unfortunately, in the intervening years we were subjected to SVA then IVA, the requirements of which, I believe, do not lend themselves to the ability to build a truly period style car. I didn't want recessed switches, everything radiused etc etc, so the only way forward was to purchase a car that was already registered as a Midge, and put my own stamp on it. I found such a car way down in Kent that had been off the road for 12 years. The seller wanted £1700 for it, but when I pointed out that after that length of time it would require extensive restoration, we stuck a deal at £1000. Result. I had intended to carry out a running restoration, but on closer examination this plan was quickly ditched.



Mike's starting point for his Midge

When I stripped the car down I found just dust in the master cylinders, a leaking rad, a partially seized engine, seized brakes, one bent shock absorber, and a rotting body where the ally skinning had started to peel off. This was actually "a good thing" because now it gave me the excuse for a virtual build from scratch that I had originally wanted to do. I stripped the car down to a bare chassis, which I then found to be twisted. This was not a Triumph chassis, which I had discovered when I went to see the car initially, but one that was manufactured by White Rose Vehicles, one-time owners of the Midge manufacturing rights. I was not impressed. I straightened the offending cross member by cutting it, and welding in a wedge of

steel. The build-up of the running gear was pretty straightforward. Cleaned parts were treated to a couple of coats of Rustbuster Epoxy-Mastic paint, chosen as it had recently won the Practical Classics long term rust preservatives test. The engine was treated to a +60 thou re-bore, due to the existence of some deep rust courtesy of seized piston rings. The crank was reground, and the head fitted with hardened valve seats to enable the use of unleaded petrol without resorting to additives. A pair of Spitfire twin SU carbs, camshaft and tubular, four branch manifold were fitted. The gearbox and diff both appeared to be in good condition, so these were just cleaned up and fitted with new seals. Instead of just bending the gear-lever back to gain length, I bought a second remote gear-lever housing, cut both this and the original in half, and welded them back together to form one extended housing which has proved to work very well. As the radiator was beyond repair, by research I discovered that a Nissan Sunny rad from the 1980s would be suitable, and a new one was found on E-bay for a bargain £40. New mounts for this and the grille surround were welded up and bolted to the suspension towers.



The new body tub takes pride of place in the dining room - it's just as well that Mike has an understanding wife!

Don't miss the next episode of Mike's Midge build in our Autumn issue to learn more about how this beautiful Midge was built



MOBC BADGES

Do you have a grille badge or perhaps a dashboard badge like the ones here?



If the answer is 'no' and you would be interested in purchasing a pair, please let me know. The price for our previous order came out at about £15 including UK delivery.

There's an even cheaper solution for those who would like a resin Club badge. These can be painted to match your car. They are available from me for the price of the P&P. For UK members, just send £1 (one pound) by coins, PayPal or cheque (to MOBC) and I'll be pleased to let you have one whilst stocks last. There's no catch, honest!! If you are not based in the UK, then please contact me first.



SAFE DRIVING FOR HISTORIC MOTORISTS- GAINING THE INFORMATION ADVANTAGE

I'm quite certain that Midge drivers are amongst the safest on the road, and fortunately accidents in our favourite cars are few and far between. However, we can't be too careful, so here's a bit of advice for drivers of classic cars

There are many good reasons why the classic car enthusiasts should take additional care when driving. In the past, vehicle braking systems were not as efficient as today. Tyres were generally less

effective at holding the road, and if the worst happened, safety systems designed to protect the driver or passengers in the event of a crash were not as advanced.

One way to mitigate these disadvantages is to notice more about what is going on around you- gaining an information advantage. That way, you can make sure your position, speed, gear and acceleration are appropriate, giving you time to react safely.



This classic car does NOT belong to a Club Member! Thanks to Ken Nichols for the picture.

Use all your senses.

An advanced motorist uses all his or her senses to gain as much information as possible: it could be a smell from a field with mud on the roads - could there be a tractor nearby? A street lined with wheelie bins - is there a dustbin lorry on the rounds? A queue of passengers at a bus stop - will that bus in front suddenly stop? And so on...

Look beyond your 'bubble'

Many motorists are just aware of the small bubble occupied by them and their car. The advanced motorist looks further- looking across bends or looking deeper in the rear view mirrors to see what is going on behind them. Do the telegraph poles signal an unmarked junction ahead, or a tight bend?

Know how to read the road.

It is amazing how much information is given by road signs and markings, and how few drivers really understand all of them. Do you know that when the lines in the middle of the road lengthen and the gaps shorten, there is a hazard ahead? Or that edge lines (the white lines along the side of the carriageway) may be used in areas where hazards are likely, such as areas prone to fog or mist? These signs are constantly improved, but how many

of us have read the Highway Code since we passed our test?

Keep your concentration.

By keeping distractions to a minimum (phones, radios, passengers!) you can concentrate better on your driving, especially on motorway journeys, where long periods of concentration may be necessary. Plan your trips so you don't have to rush.

Accept other people's mistakes.

We all make mistakes and some people are just poor drivers. Make allowances for this in your driving plans- it doesn't matter whether you are in the right if you've still had an accident.



Here is Stan Marriner's Midge at speed. Is this the best way to enjoy your Midge?

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CARS WITH NO ROOF

So you have built your Midge, and it doesn't have a roof. What do you call it? Here is a handy guide to top-down motors, but which category does the Midge belong to?

Cabriolet

Cabriolet comes from the French verb cabrioler (to leap) and was used to describe small, two-seater, two-wheel carriages with a folding roof. Now it is a general term to describe a car with two or four seats and a folding roof that sits on the rear body or is housed in a special compartment.

Drop-Head Coupe

Drop-Head Coupe (DHC) is most seen when describing British cars. Generally it describes a four-seat car with a soft-top which ends in a sloping rear end. Typically another version of the same car will be offered with a roof (the Fixed-Head Coupe or FHC).

Spider (or Spyder)

This is another term borrowed from 19th Century carriage makers. The original Spyder was so-called by Dublin coachbuilder Archibald Holmes, who saw the arachnid-features of his small two-seat carriage which had a large wheel at each corner. Borrowed by Italian car makers early in the 20th Century, in 1924 the Coachbuilders Federation of Milan decreed that the term would be spelt 'Spider' and never 'Spyder'. It now describes a small, generally two-seat sports car with a soft-top.

Torpedo

This pre-war design consists of an open body with a folding hood stowed behind the removable rear seats. With four or more seats and three or four doors, the Torpedo tends to be a large and streamlined car.

Quatres Baquets

Another pre-war design, this is an open sports car with four bucket seats, no doors and cycle wings. Sometimes this design has a windscreen and hood, other times it does not.

Deux Baquets

An open, very basic sports car, the Deux Baquets often has no roof. The main features are two bucket seats and a spare wheel often mounted on the back deck.



Here is the Midge of Bernard Pimoult. A Deux Baquet perhaps?

Targa

The 'Targa' term was first used by Porsche in their 1966 Porsche 911, and it remains a registered trademark of the company. It describes a car that has a removable section of roof, usually retaining the rear screen (which may fold down). Derived from the Targa Florio race, the design was intended to comply with US safety regulations which threatened open-topped cars.

Coupe de Ville (Sedanca de Ville)

The Coupe de Ville is a luxury four-door car with the front seats for the driver exposed to the elements and the rear passenger compartment enclosed in a hard-top.

Landaulet

Very similar to the Coupe de Ville in terms of luxurious trim, the Landaulet had the opposite layout- the front seats were enclosed under a hard-top, and the rear seats exposed with a folding soft roof.

Speedster

The Speedster is an open-topped car, generally with a small or very steeply-raked windscreen to create a low-drag look. Typically an American term, the most famous Speedster is arguably the Porsche 356.

Roadster

Typically an American term used to describe a two-seater sports car with no weather protection; the term is now used to describe two-seater convertible cars.

Having looked at all the categories I've concluded that UK Midges can be described as cabriolets (if they have a hood), French Midges as Deux Baquets and Italian Midges as Spiders, but perhaps we should just go for Roadsters for all our cars!

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome one new member and one returning member.

- Bienvenue to Bernard Pimoult who lives in Joue Les Tours, France, and whose Midge is shown opposite
- We also welcome Chris Bird from Dorset who is returning to the Club and restoring the Midge he built nearly 30 years ago. That must be a first! Chris tells us the story below.....

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

BEA is a very ordinary Midge - if such a thing exists. She was built pretty much to John Cowperthwaite's instructions, using basic tools, but she is great fun and still in the family after 27 years. BEA's story started back in 1987, when I happened to pick up a kit car magazine as I waited for some tyres to be fitted. For some time I had rather fancied owning a 1930's type sports car, but sadly there was no chance of the budget stretching

to that. Then I saw the JC Midge - and I was hooked. Fortune smiled on me and I located an abandoned project with a stripped Herald 13/60, the plans and a few key parts, just round the M25. Six months and about 400 hours work later, in April 1988, my car was on the road and my wife's patience had just about run out; she was not impressed with the speaking tube from the kitchen to the garage! After the second trip out, though, she was a convert and has loved BEA ever since. Why the second trip? Well on the first, it was drizzling, we had no hood, and I managed to spin her on a greasy roundabout - not my finest hour!



Ready for the road in 1988

In the first year we mainly explored Surrey's leafy lanes (it is a beautiful county) but then we ventured farther afield - over the channel with the Moss Owners' Club and up to Stoneleigh for the Kit Car Shows. In fact BEA was on the T&J Sportscars stand for the 1989 show.

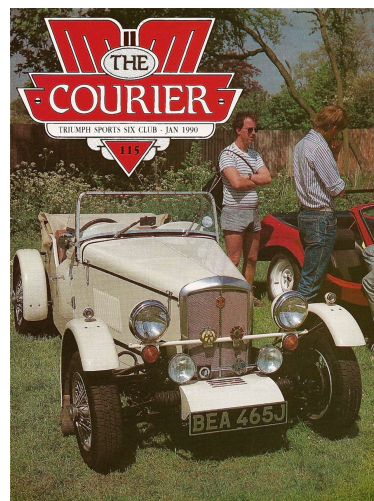


T&J Stand 1989

If I remember right this was more by accident than design, as when John Cowperthwaite phoned to ask me, he thought I was someone else! It all worked out though and I had a great day answering hundreds of questions.

BEA is now on her third engine. The first suffered terminal oil pressure problems which even an oil cooler couldn't help. The second was a disastrous cheap recon unit that blew a piston at 70mph on the M25 (that was spectacular). The current unleaded one was from a main supplier, and once we had

diagnosed the terrible rattle as a lack of timing chain tensioner, it has run well.



Triumph Sports Six Club magazine

BEA was a regular at the Triumph Sports Six Club meets which were held a few hundred yards from my house at the time. She won a few awards in the 'Specials' concourse class (as luckily there were virtually no other 'Specials') and even made it onto the cover of the club magazine and into a tiny photo in the hallowed pages of Classic Car Magazine!



Classic Car magazine

After three house moves, BEA was still with us. Now in Dorset, she was looking very tired inside so in 2005, I re-trimmed her with maroon carpet and had the Herald seats re-trimmed in red leather. She looked great, but really didn't get much use as we had a Mini Cooper convertible, that ticked most of the open-air motoring boxes. It was decision time, and in October 2008, I drove her up to my son in Bristol and handed her over for him to enjoy. So that was that - and if I am honest, I barely glanced at her under the car cover in his drive. And there she sat, for the next seven years.

In April this year, fate played a hand again. I had watched a classic car programme on restoring an Aston Martin and as a result, bought a copy of Octane magazine. As I browsed through the

articles on mega-expensive classics, I suddenly felt a twinge - but it was not for a Bentley or Ferrari (the budget definitely would not stretch!), it was for my old friend BEA. Within a few days it was agreed that she would return home to be restored and enjoyed - and unlike the first time round, Liz was delighted!



Homecoming 2015

So as I write this at the end of May, I am making progress and with a following wind, I should have her back on the road in June. And I have avoided the danger that lurks in magazines in garages - I bought a new set of tyres on Ebay

Chris has mentioned about the danger that lurks in magazines. If you're looking for a second classic to live with your Midge then this CAR ADVERT TRANSLATOR will be useful!

'Sympathetically Restored'

Translation: We've spent the minimum possible to make it look shiny and get it to pass an MOT. Rust bubbles have been ground off and filled with a mixture of chewing gum and newspaper before being painted. The entire underside of the car has been painted with an inch-thick layer of underseal. Plus the tyres, despite being half a millimetre away from the legal limit, are now covered in tyre paint, and look like new!

'Period Racing History'

Translation: Like Trigger's broom in Only Fool's & Horses, this car has been re-bodied, re-engined, bent, fixed, bent and fixed again. The only part that originally left the factory was the chassis plate and the washer fluid bottle. Now restored to a superb finish, it's being advertised at three times the going rate because a famous bum once sat on the (long-gone) bucket seat.

'Re-Commissioned After a Period of Storage'

Translation: Sat in a shed, rotting for years. We've repainted it, dropped some oil down the spark plug holes, cleaned out the carbs and (with a new battery attached) fired her up.

'Some Minor Bodywork Issues'/ 'Surface Rust'/ 'Minor Bubbling around the Arches'

Translation: These phrases all mean the same. The car is rotten, from the inside out. If it's a convertible, you can't open the door without the car sagging in the middle.

'One Careful Owner from New'

Translation: This can mean two things. First, it could mean that someone bought the car new, carefully polishing it every weekend and driving it regularly but sparingly, and only on dry Sunday afternoons. Or it could mean that it was bought by an eccentric farmer who parked the car in one of his outbuildings in 1973 and forgot where it was, until found forty years later surrounded by chickens and with a dog living in the boot.

'Restored to Concours Condition'

Translation: I've spent the last ten years, and £40,000 making this the best Robin Reliant on the planet. I've added up my time and expenditure, and believe it is worth every penny of the £89,000 I am asking for it.

'I have reluctantly decided to part with...'

Translation: PLEASE SOMEONE BUY THIS CAR! This money-vacuum has taken my life's savings, caused my marriage to break down, and put me on the verge of a mental breakdown.

'Pristine Bodywork'

Translation:but the engine has a holed piston, the suspension bushes are all shot, and the wiring catches fire if you turn on the lights and the wipers at the same time.

'Superleggera'

Translation: So rusty that half the bodywork has dropped off the bottom of the car, or missing a few heavy (and unnecessary) items such as an exhaust pipe or bumpers.

Of course, all Midge owners are far too sensible to be sold a classic car which isn't quite what it appears but if you have an interesting story to tell about a vehicle you have purchased then please let me know!



David and Stella Taylor with their Bugatti replica. David is now rebuilding his Midge.

THE SHOW SEASON

As the Summer Show season is now with us, I can't help but feel a little nostalgic for the major shows of the past. For those members who enjoy visiting shows, the following list may be of interest, but it is not exclusive and there are many local shows taking place in most parts of the country. If you know of a show which might be of interest to our members then let me know and I will circulate the details.

Goodwood Festival of Speed	Goodwood, West Sussex	June 25-28
Kent's Kit, Custom & American Car Show	Aylesford Priory, Kent	July 19
Retro Cars LIVE	Rockingham, Northamptonshire	August 9
Petrol & Pistons	Croft Circuit, North Yorkshire	August 22
Haynes Rare Breeds Show	Sparkford, Somerset	Sept 6
Goodwood Revival	Goodwood Circuit, West Sussex	Sept 11-13
Kent's Classic Car Show	Aylesford Priory, Kent	Sept 13
NEC Classic Car Show	NEC, Birmingham	Nov 13-15
totalkitcar LIVE	Brands Hatch, Kent	Nov 21

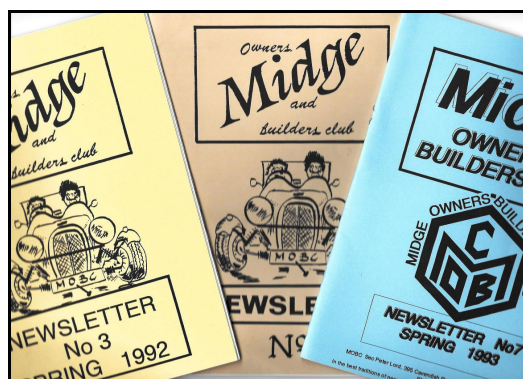


The Midges of Terry Brown and Keith Warren.

MIDGE INSURANCE

A number of members have been in touch regarding Insurance for their Midges. Although some of the well-known firms may seem to be the obvious choice, I have used Diamond Insurance of Tring for a number of years and been very satisfied with their service - and their premiums! As an additional incentive, if you mention the MOBC they will provide the additional legal insurance for £5 instead of £20. Why not contact them for a quote? Their website is <http://www.diamondinsurance.net/> and before you ask, I don't receive any commission!

MIDGE NEWSLETTERS



I have been very fortunate to obtain a number of copies of the pre 2000 MOBC newsletters from our founder, Pete Lord. If you would like a copy of a particular issue or one which deals with a specific subject, then please let me know. They are available for the cost of p&p on a first come first served basis.



And finally, here's a picture of Pete with the outgoing secretary and the inevitable Midge in the background. Please think about how you might wish to be involved in the running of this great club in the future. I shall be delighted if my mailbox is overwhelmed with offers!

John