

# MIDGE MAGAZINE



Spring  
2017



**MOBC. the Midge Owners and Builders' Club**

**David Harvey's Midge**

## May have over reached, but not too badly.

It looks as though this magazine, due out at the end of March, was going to be a bit light, or so it looked in February when there wasn't much in the in-tray. I could reduce the volume to six pages or so, or hope for the best.

I should really build up a bit of stock, but I can rarely resist the urge to make it bigger brighter or even more interesting. However I must cut the suit to fit the cloth. (It's that or use a really big font.) So if the magazine is a bit lighter than before, remember your contributions are the bulk of it. I can deal with bizarre grammar, weird spelling, tear soaked hand written bits of cardboard and almost any kind of faintly Midge related story, picture or cartoon. By the way, I think the club history may be more than 32 years so whoever was kind enough to send me the 32years logo, and I'm sure I have that information somewhere, (somewhere other than where I have looked,) could I have a 33?

So... Spring is sprung, the grass is riz

I wonders where the Midges is,

Some say the Midge is on the mudguard

But that's absurd, the mudguard is on the Midge.

mmm, it works better with 'wing' but... oh, never mind, get Midgeing and then write about it. Have fun first though.

Jim.



Page 1	Editor's rant. Index
Page 2	Mk1 Roof evolution
Page 3 & 4	Dave Harvey. Heading for home.
Page 5	He's off again.
Page 6	Web Work
Page 7	Joep (You tube video)
Page 7	Drive it Day.
Page 8	Some useful adverts
Page 9	Jim tinkering
Page 10	Birthday Wish for mechanics?
Page 11 & 12	JC. A slice of history
Page 13 & 14	The Flying Scotsman Rally

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

Welcome to David Gibson, Paul Brushett, Baptiste Maulion,  
Wayne Cartlidge Carl Gore and Edward Clifford



I (Jim) was talking to John about soft tops and other matters for the MK1 and 2. This led to looking for pictures generally and the one below turned up.

John explained...

This was a photo of the first Midge which started life as 'soft pin board'. The picture was taken on my drive for the first magazine advert. It had to be taken there because the car was not finished and not drivable. Luckily the lead time for magazine advertising is several weeks, by which time it was completed.

The picture shows the original Wolseley grill which had to be modified by having a flange added to support the bonnet and engine side panels. The slats were removed and a sand casting taken of the modified surround. One casting was kept as a master, and all the successive surrounds were cast from it. A local metal polisher then finished (sanded on a finishing belt) and polished each one.

The windscreen was Perspex, the surround was a piece of aluminium channel crudely notched and bent to 90 ish degrees at each corner. The actual frame pattern was made later and the complete windcreens produced in Leeds.

What appears to be a hood is in fact a Moss

Malvern tonneau cover draped around the back to complete the image. The bulk of a folded hood adds to the design balance. If you look at early pictures of the MK2 you will see that it looks odd without the folded hood in place. I design the cars to look right when the hood is fitted. You will notice this even on pictures of MK1 Midges not yet fitted with weather gear.

If you design the car to look right without the folded hood the end result, when one is fitted and folded, is that it looks like a pram.

Even my first special (Photo attached) you will see the back slopes away to accommodate the future hood, which incidentally was made from heavy black canvas stuck at the seams with black Bostic. Each section was trapped between sheets of wood overnight with my dad's



Hillman Minx parked on top to ensure it all stuck together!

Even the sidescreens and rear window were stuck in this way.

There were no hood fittings. The hood was screwed to the car around the back and sides with screws and screw cups. There was an inverted flat aluminium single coat hook at each corner on the front of the screen. The leading edge of the hood was formed into a double seam through which a length of 3/4" dia. aluminium tube was threaded (Like a curtain pole!) so that it protruded at each side.

The modus operandi was that when it rained you seized the pole within the hood, pulled it over the screen against the tension of the fabric and simply hooked it under the inverted coat hooks!

It worked brilliantly and was very quick to put up!

I considered using it on the MK2 but abandoned the idea in favour of conformity!

JC





## The Last leg of **The Long Journey to Greece.**

We left David Harvey in Germany where he, ignoring the advice of his Sat-Nav had met up with Magdalena (I have my suspicions it was jealous) Onward then for the last part of this adventure.

My next trip, whilst I am in this area, is to Arnhem. It is not just the Heroes of the present day that we should only think about, but the Heroes of all senseless conflicts around the world, where men of all nations have given their lives, in the belief, that they were not only protecting their country, families and comrades, but saving the world, to make a better place to live.



Arnhem is another picturesque town sitting on the Rhine which was severely damaged in the Second World War. There are monuments everywhere to remember the dead on both sides of this conflict, a waste of life and a complete failure, which did not achieve anything: 13000 British troops lost, 1<sup>st</sup> airborne division including Polish forces and pilots RAF pilots and crew. 7528 soldiers lost on this one mission, these figures are just a few. I do not think there will ever be a true account of just how many perished.

I have found it interesting and most disturbing to read the reports of two Cities, of Arnhem and Nijmegen, which I have visited; also to read the date that WW2 conflict began being 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 and ending with the surrender of Japan on 2nd September 1945,





## The final part

The final part of my Journey will take in visits to the battle fields of the Somme to the memorials of the First World War, where my granddad was killed on the 1st July 1916, no known grave, but his name is on the Thiepval monument in France. I toured several cemeteries in the area and although I have read about the death and destruction caused by war, it is not until you go to these places and see the rows and rows of white stones, standing there quietly in their thousands of all nationalities, that one begins to try to understand, ask why, what for? And who gained from this tremendous loss? When you read about the trenches and see films, it does not give a true story of what life was like in the mud, freezing water, cold food, shells flying over head, not knowing which one will be yours, the smell of death all around, while our politicians sit safely at home in big houses, in warmth and comfort, after signing papers to send the next thousand men and now women to conflicts around the world, very often ill equipped for the environment that they are going to.

We left the Somme area of France and made our way in the brave two-seater to the channel tunnel, passing through small picturesque villages in bright sunlight. It



was a lovely drive, and for this part of the journey I had two passengers, my new companion and her little dog "Jonny" to accompany me.

We arrived in Calais at about 18:00 hours, booked in, and were soon on our way to England. After eight weeks driving around Europe, on leaving the tunnel, the final part of the "long journey" began from Folkestone to London. It

started to get dark, cold and rain circling around the city. To eventually join the M1 motorway, that final part of the trip, seemed to take longer than the whole trip put together.

We arrived in Derby at the end of August to start collecting the donations in, and making arrangements to return to Germany. -

I have seen and spoken to a lot of people across Europe in the eight weeks with the intention to raise funds for "Help for Heroes". How much, I do not know, as some people were slow in paying what they promised. Moreover, at seventy five, I feel very proud of what I have achieved in doing this crazy challenge in a crazy two seater old car, and to finish off I say a final big thank you to all the lovely people I met and helped me through some difficult times, plus a big thank you to my friend Magdalena for doing my first and final edit bringing my trip to a final conclusion.

DH.

Post-script, June 2016 from Dave Harvey, He's not stopped yet. After a long drive across the EU. from Derby to Presov in Slovakia 4'634 miles and only two breakdowns, one in Czech republic and the other on my return to England.

The first was when 3 wheel studs sheared off. The last holds long enough to stop safely on the hard shoulder of a very fast 'no limit' motorway in Czechoslovakia in less than 10 minutes the police arrived demanding that I drive off the motorway as I am not allowed to park there, I eventually got though to him that it was not possible to move until I had got the other wheel off to get two studs off that side and put on the other side so as to get moving. I informed him that I had phoned ADAC and they were on their way to me he said that was not good enough and he phoned for a breakdown removal service who arrived almost instantly. It took both my car on the back of the lorry and towed my caravan some 12/15 miles trough



narrow lanes to a very small village of about ten cottages and a small workshop no bigger than the average double garage. Three men came out to look at the car, no chance of studs to fit, and it would take a couple of days to find some.... then the older man of the three said "give me one that is not broken", got in his car and was gone. Well , what does an Englishman do in this situation? He puts the

kettle on and makes a cuppa. About an hour later the man returns... big smile on his face. He has found 6 studs and 6 nuts identical to the originals.... when asked where from his answer Skoda |Octavia 2008 they fit and have helped me to complete my journey. Total cost including removal from M/way? 20 euros! I gave them more which was like trying to put money into a money-box with no slot. They were just lovely helpful people. DH.

~~~~~

well... That definitely counts as epic, and he doesn't seem to have stopped yet. I don't know about the rest of you, but after that I feel as though I haven't really driven much beyond the end of my village. J.



Being short on time and long on things to do, it might not seem the most sensible move to take on another task. However, having been given the title 'Webmaster' - possibly stretching the title beyond its limits - I have helped John Cowperthwaite set up a new website for the Mk2 Midge Roadster at [jcsportscars.co](http://jcsportscars.co) and a linked one for the Lightning, at [lightning-cars.co.uk](http://lightning-cars.co.uk) The 'Lightning' and the 'Zoom' are similar construction style but for children, rather smaller, and not based on a donor. The Lightning Cars site and the JC Sports Cars site are essentially separate but have links. There are other children's cars and other constructions that John has designed so here is a basic list of the things you may not know about, extracted for your entertainment and amazement.

The Original Austin 7 Special, The vintage Mercedes replica  
The Locust The Moss range ie; Malvern, Roadster, Mamba, Monaco.

Real Life Toys range, Mayfair veteran style car, The kid's Jeep  
( A miniature Husky), The Scout (Mini Moke style) The Toylander.

A full size Tardis,

The Midge, well you know about that, but I couldn't really leave it out.

A 4 foot high, fur covered, realistic looking rocking horse where the legs stood still and the body rocked with a hidden mechanism. Adults could use this!

A free standing four poster bed frame to surround a double divan bed.

A commercial system teaching a method for making and fitting of fitted wardrobes and associated bedroom furniture

A roof rack mounted large folding car top tent with a side awning next to the car having ladder access into the tent from the underside.

Plans for The Mk2 Midge Roadster, Lightning and Zoom are currently available, as is the Mk 1 Midge, (but putting a new Mk1 on the road is going to be tricky.)



I was wandering through the internet and found this. Picture clue below. Surprisingly Joep hadn't seen it either. Click to view his creation being admired. Not a standard Midge, but obviously fun.

<https://youtu.be/yOijy6ixwMw>



## **DRIVE-IT DAY** **SUNDAY 23rd APRIL** **2017**

The bit above is a link,  
I hope,  
to the site.

As the Official Supplier of Drive-It Day Rally Plates for the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, we are pleased to let you know that Drive-it Day Rally plates are now available for purchase!

We can send out a single Rally Plate direct to any Classic vehicle owner who wishes to participate in this nationwide FBHVC organised event. Clubs can also order in larger quantities so that their members can take advantage of better unit prices.

Here is a link to Drive it Day:-

<http://www.fbhvc.co.uk/heritage-culture-and-museums/drive-it-day/>

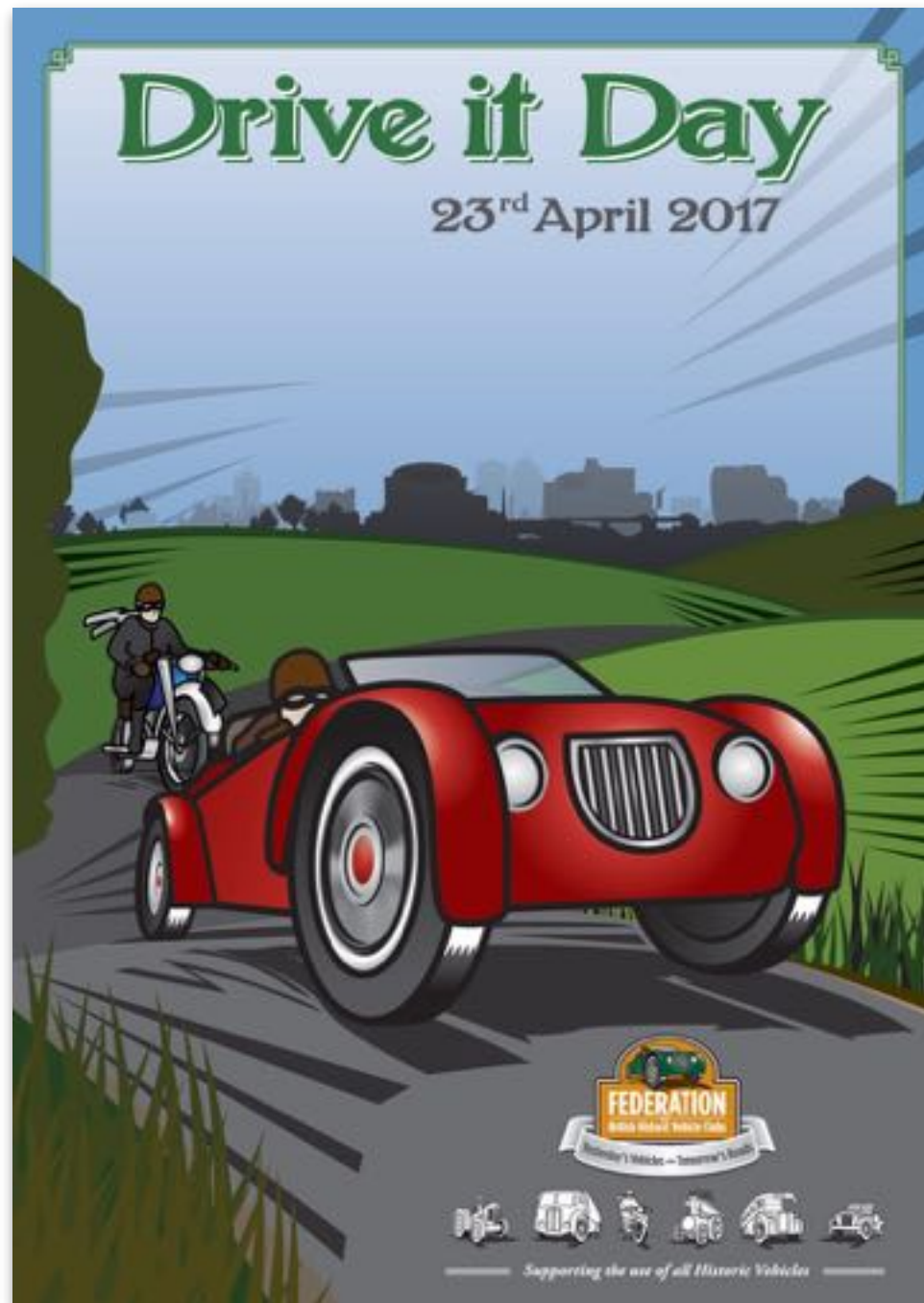
And here is a link to the people who do the Rally plate:-

<http://www.dragonflyhouse.co.uk/driveit>

for those who prefer the personal touch their phone number is 0800 7838634



John B received this  
notification and advert,  
sent it to me,  
and here it is for you.)



John Bircumshaw also found these two firms and discovered some products he was looking for, so since I have a reasonable amount of space, and the stuff looks very useful, here is a copy of some of their advertising material. I haven't tried them myself yet. J.

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Imperial Hexagon Head Stainless Imperial  
Hexagon Nuts Stainless Imperial Machine  
Screw Stainless Imperial Socket/Allen  
Stainless Imperial Studding Stainless Imperial  
Washers Stainless Jensen Cars JIS Standard  
Small Hex Stainless Left Hand Thread Nut  
Stainless Left Hand Thread Screws Left Hand  
Thread Studding Metric Carriage Bolts  
Stainless Metric Hexagon Head Stainless  
Metric Machine Screws Stainless Metric Nuts  
Stainless Metric Pipe Plugs Metric Socket/  
Allen Stainless Metric Square Head Metric  
Studding Stainless Metric Washers Stainless  
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*Just think how shiny your Midge could be!*



Your Editor writes....

My 3 into 2 Midge conversion progresses slowly. Very slowly. Life seems to get in the way, repairs to the house, visits to the mother, do-gooding generally, like putting a kitchen in the village hall. Fettleing a neighbour's central heating (Air Source). Going for walks, holidays. Spending vast amounts of money on the conventional (Zafira) car's engine management thingie when the Midge needs proper lights in the garage to aid tinkering. Computer work, reading, drinking, eating sleeping. It goes on, no doubt for you too.

The body came off the red Ford based Midge easily enough, ditto the blue Herald body. A bit of chopping got the red body on the blue chassis, although I'll need to re-work the floor where the Triumph rear suspension is a bit further forward than the T&J Ford axle.



A bit of fiddling moved the radiator 10" back so that I could re-use the bonnet and side

panels and retain the 30's look. Re-configure the steering, carburettor linkage and brake master and pedals. I removed the Japanese radiator and mechanical fan and substituted the electric fan and Escort radiator. Merging the Triumph and Ford wiring looms produced a few puzzles, so I just went back to basics and disconnected everything before re wrapping the wires in the original black tape.

Changing from dynamo and regulator to alternator was easier than I expected. I'd hoped to keep the dynamo but it wouldn't produce enough charge, so out it went. I widened the front apron (photo) by a half inch or so and put in an access point for the steering rack. I haven't painted that yet, I have found if you need to put a patch on the bodywork it is best to make it look deliberate, trying to hide them looks awful, but round off the corners and it looks OK (Well, I think so anyway).

Next was welding in a new steering support because the previous system was mixing Triumph parts with something else, probably Ford or Volkswagen. I chucked the home made petrol tank after much deliberation, re shaped the 'boot' and fitted a Spitfire one. Whipping off the 13" wires and fitting 15" (New!) with new splined hubs brought the bonus that the rear wheels stopped chafing on the bodywork (Anyone looking for a set of Ford splined hubs or a set of Minx steel wheels?)

Remaining tasks:- bolt the body down, make good the transmission tunnel and re-jig the mudguard supports as the 13" ones on the blue chassis were already showing metal fatigue. Invent a rear mudguard support system. Tidy the wiring, leave the windscreen and soft top to later when I can explain the cost of a new roof, (better talk to Bryan about that), remount the spare wheel carrier so that the wheel is 20mm further back. Replace the clutch master (again), bleed the slave..again. Re design the air filter, I don't think the biscuit tin will do this time, and think about a windscreen wiper system for later. Build the rest of the air heater ducting (bit of a luxury - I know) Remount the seats and seat-belts and work out a new handbrake.

Just a few hours work?

I was sorry to lose the Morris 1000 bonnet / boot, but it was rather integral with the body, and was not compatible with my spare wheel and tank, it was also rather heavy, being mounted on a very solid 2" square box section sub-chassis. I've kept the lateral exhaust for the moment, though a friend has wondered if it is legal, in case some child sticks its nose in it JH





Sometimes it all gets too much. A cup of tea required here, possibly even a chocolate biscuit.



A new member has obviously landed on his feet as he has, not only a large garage, but a two poster in it...and a rather interesting Midge on that. I'm rather hoping he'll introduce himself in a later magazine, so I'll say no more, and will just leave you thinking about mechanical aids to Midge happiness. He hasn't explained why the Michelin man is so depressed, and I didn't like to ask.





John Cowperthwaite has quite a lot of Midge stories. Here is a part of one of them.

About 8 years ago I chanced across a Triumph based Midge being offered for sale by Peter Hodson in Devon.

He was an experienced mechanic and had built the car himself twenty or so years earlier.

The car was now in the way and needed to go in order to make room for something with a more thoroughbred pedigree.

The car was advertised in the MOBC magazine for offers over £400.

The first thing that struck me about this car was that it was not only bare aluminium with red mudguards, just like the original prototype, but even had an extremely similar original Wolsley radiator grille fitted.

I contacted Peter and explained that I was looking for a project. He told me that despite its shortcomings the car still started and drove and still had some MOT in force.

OK! Er .. what exactly were the shortcomings?

It transpired that the car had been standing outside for most of its life with only a tonneau cover for protection.

The red painted steel mudguards had serious rust infected gravel rash,

The bodywork was bare aluminium with a 20 year unpolished patina!

There was no hood or side screens and no windscreen.

It did however have a pair of Brooklands aero screens fitted which had served as the only protection from the elements for him and his wife (!) on not one, but two charity runs from Land's End to John O' Groats, both in the middle of winter!

As an after-thought he added .. "and you need to bring a battery!"

I toyed with the idea of going down by train and simply driving the car back,

but Devon is a long way from North Derbyshire without any weather equipment and no guarantee against mechanical failure, in a car that had hardly been used for years seemed a little bit Gung Ho, even for me!

So a Transit van and a trailer were commissioned along with a co-pilot for the trip in the shape of my son Rob.

We arrived on the appointed day without too many problems, and we were introduced by Peter, first to his wife and then to the the Midge.

>>>



>> Basically the car was in a bit of a state and it seemed sensible to Peter that if you are going to spend money it should be on something with an appreciating value. The Midge had served Peter well, but it had stood outside for a long time and the rear panel in front of the dummy tank was completely rotten where rainwater had collected between the tank cover and the body and slowly penetrated the join.

As he was latterly employed by an exhaust systems manufacturer he had fabricated and fitted a very nice looking raunchy side mounted stainless steel side exhaust.

It looks good, I said, what does it sound like?

Well we'll start her up so you can hear it! and you can even take her for a spin!

OK, we fitted a charged battery and the car spluttered into life.

Rob had motor trade insurance so he was honoured with the first test flight!

Peter lived on a country lane and we gingerly headed out into the Devonshire countryside for a quick circuit.

Well the car certainly seemed to drive OK, and anyway I was committed.

Rob, who was too young to remember these cars and had never driven one before said that I probably should be committed!

Well after much tea and coffee, an exchange of paperwork, and much documented history plus a V5 and an ignition key in exchange for some coin of the realm, we loaded the old girl onto the

trailer and said our thank-you's and goodbyes.

By the time we arrived in the vicinity of home it was nearly dark, but I insisted that we stop about a mile from home.

We parked up on an old disused industrial site well away from the public roads,.

I undid all the ropes and rolled the Midge off the trailer.

This time I was in the driving seat. I had not driven a Midge for over 20 years and it felt good. I was quite beside myself.

As we were so close, one of us drove it home!

JC



## UK 2017 Events

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

If you go to

[http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car\\_events.php](http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car_events.php)  
you can get the information direct, that's where I get it.

Useful links

[http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car\\_events.php](http://www.carandclassic.co.uk/car_events.php)

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

and

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

Don't forget I 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.....





Just before putting the magazine to bed, as we publishing types put it, the ERA (Endurance Rally Association) were kind enough to organise the 9th 'Flying Scotsman' rally, just in time for us to see and write about it.

Since they came through Woolfords, one of our local villages in South Lanarkshire, about half a mile from home, it seemed churlish to not stick my nose, and the green Midge in. I imagine it was a tad cold for any of the contestants used to the sunny southern climes, although the locals considered it warm enough. Many of the motors had either no roof, or had them folded down for the benefit of the onlookers. I'm sure many would rather have been warmer.



Many variations on the flying helmet were in evidence, with the occasional deer-stalker and a few of the rather less protective flat caps seen for instance in the 1937 - Cadillac 60 Series Coupe on the left. The Bentley (10) top middle sported a hatless goggle free driver, I can only hope he had a hat available as the temperature was falling as they passed. Many non open-top driving types have made derogatory remarks about my replica leather flying helmet, usually on the Biggles theme, but none that have Midedged, they remember cold ears always out-rank fashion.

There were 110 entries for the 3 day event from all over the western world and viewing points were advertised along the route including the Sleafy Hall Hotel where they started, Glamis Castle, and Gleneagles at the finish. Curiously Woolfords wasn't mentioned in spite of the world renowned roadside Wollfords Hall where coffee and biscuits were available. Local postal difficulties probably accounted for my invitation to the rally being delayed.



Obviously a fair number of the cars, and contestants were somewhat mud spattered, so by way of solidarity I decided not to polish the Midge. This convenient idea occurred to me since I only decided to take her out at the last minute, the weather looking unseasonably reasonable.



Fiona volunteered to drive the Support Car, always advisable if the Midge has been awoken from hibernation. However I felt an unspoken request from the car that she be polished a bit before being seen in bright sunlight. Such requests are generally best complied with lest I find myself immobile in the rural backdrop with no mobile signal.

The machine may be supposed to be unfeeling by scientists, but I'm not taking the risk. I've not met the driver with more than a few years experience who would, and I think most successful rallyists surreptitiously pat their car, on safe arrival, for not mis-behaving. JH



In the line-up there were Bentleys, Alvises, Lagondas and many others, all no doubt commanding respectable insurance values. Many of them very well designed for their era and doubtless fun to drive, but I've seen an advert for a Silver Ghost at £1,250,000, think how much you can save in a Midge.

So go and have a drive, save thousands of pounds, and if you can, avoid the golf course and the riverbank. It'll save you even more money, keep you out of trouble and you can wear what you want.

Jim.