## MAGAZINE



Winter 2021









### Hello All.

Well I don't know about you all but it's starting to look a bit chilly here. The traditional advent calendar seems to have been replace with different covid 'variations of interest' behind each door. Also the omens and portents indicate something of a shortage of sausages for the festive period. I suggest we all decamp to France, or possibly New Zealand. I'll see if any of our non UK members have room for a few dozen guests.

I find that Microsoft Word is awkward (or I am) in regard to magazine and converting Pages (Mac) to PDF has to compromise between resolution and size so I am looking into better ways of producing it without making the download time excessive.

I'm going to try putting up the usual PDF and a higher resolution version next to it so you can decide according to your local internet speed. I'll leave

the high res version available until the next issue. After that use the low resolution version and if needed I can find a way of getting the higher one to anyone who asks.

Welcome back Tony Regan. Member No 3!!

Remember if <u>you</u> want to be a full member it's only £10 (once) and free on return.

Stories and photographs to Secretary Jim Hewlett at <a href="mix-blue">jim@jimhewlett.com</a> or The Old Manse, Tarbrax, West Calder, West Lothian, UK EH55 8XD

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### MONTY'S BACK

Every Midge is different, Monty certainly is. the 30's styling is nicely consistent and professional looking. Dashboard, seats, lights and steering wheel tend to be more accessible for personalisation or variation from the original Midge plan. Road wheels, Spitfire steering wheels and Robin Reliant seats tend to be replaced as the owner builder imprints his own signature, but they are usually expensive. Suspension mounted front mudguards complete the image.

Most steering wheels, especially the exotic, tend to be bought, but Rob Shallcross has demonstrated that you can DIY after all and achieves a rather tasteful 30's appearance. Mechanical strength is important, and seat-belts, although not '30s in style are rather a good idea.









Rob's fabrication. Here's a home reconstructed steering wheel. 14" diameter in the 30's style made to be quite flat, The entirety is made with spokes from an original 1930's MG Wheel, bound with "proper" hemp cord, and a modified early Moto Lita small type boss. Cut down JC emblem in centre. I think driving gloves will be needed to keep the rim clean, but that's the price of fashion. The suicide doors, leather upholstery and dash mounted indicator switch rather than the Herald sticks keep the 30's style nicely consistent. Very tidy Rob.

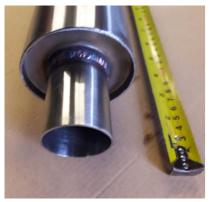


### Robert updates on Monty.

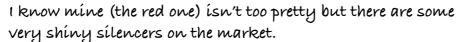
The latest on Monty is I have fitted a 10" electric fan, controlled by an on/off switch, no fancy thermostat switch.

Still not sorted the strange "rattle" but just keep running the car. Next idea is to fit side mounted exhaust system similar to the photos, on the right.

Do you know anyone who has done similar and I would be interested to know what silencer used. At the moment I'm going for an 18" hand-made stainless and a flex-pipe on the end of a convenient Stanpart original tuning manifold. RS.



Seen left and below, a couple of pictures of the new, hand-made silencer 18" long (plus end-pipes) and very shiny. Delivered to Rob a week or so after ordering.



A heat shield might be a good idea if anybody's leg got a bit close, and, although I went to some trouble constructing it, I think I might shorten mine so that it ends in front of the rear

wheel. I'm not entirely sure it is legal, as it vents at a child's head height. JH







A thought that occurred to me on seeing the photo of the car in the middle was that the D shaped tail lights are horribly expensive but look rather nice. Anyone got a 3D printer?



Silencers are called Mufflers over the pond for reasons that elude me, I thought they were made of fur for Victorians. There again



Steel to Wire wheel conversion and mudguard adjustment

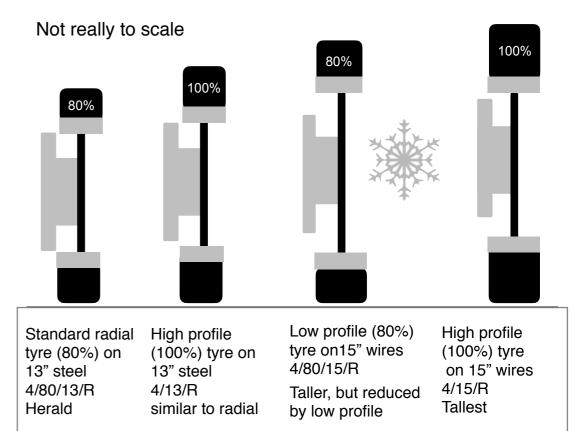
Nobody else uses the Triumph stud pattern, so as a result you can't swap the 13" wheels to a larger diameter very easily and have to go to bespoke alloys or wire wheels. Wires look better on a Midge but they are rather expensive, and the mudguards have to be adjusted in most cases to accommodate the increased tyre height and track width. Tyre width is also relevant, if you decide to reconfigure, remember to 'relax' the suspension if it has been jacked up, or it will do so as it rolls and will close the gap between tyre and mudguard.

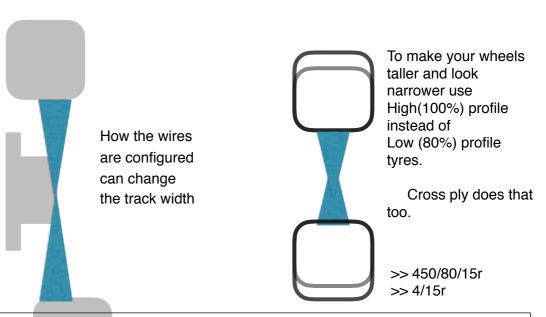
There are some 14" wire wheels that bolt onto the original stud pattern hubs directly, John Bircumshaw's Midge has those and they are probably ideal in terms of cost, mechanical convenience and efficiency. Unfortunately they are rather rare. New ones at MWS and SC parts £400 and £523 (chromed) each.

Converting to wire wheels, while expensive, provides something that looks more '1930's'. It also converts the speedo reading to something much closer to your actual speed. This is because most manufacturers make their dashboard speedometers over-read by about 10% so that motorists cannot blame speeding on inaccurate speedometers, over inflated or different profile tyres. Most modern cars with high accuracy digital speedometers have retained the over-read, but the Sat-Navs show actual speed, as do the flashing street side speed detectors. Otherwise the only difference I have found is, because of the greater wheel circumference you may need to 'change down' more often.

I'll leave the intricacies of mudguard adjustment for now, it is just too complicated and Midges vary too much, but I'll mention that many Midge mudguards are a bit big and high with the 13" setup and can accommodate the 15", especially if the mudguards are mounted on the front wheel assembly so it will sometimes only be necessary to move them if the track is widened.

On the subject of track width, converting to any other wheel, wires or steel can change the track width. I found the 14" wires and their splined hubs had shorter splines (20mm) than the 15" (30mm) and that the 30mm splines usually meant that the wheel stood out from the body rather more. This wasn't just because of the extra spline length, the depth of the wheel bowl was actually greater, resulting in each wheel ground contact patch being 11/4" further from the centre line and thus widening the track by 21/2".





Ford based Midges with the slightly larger stud pattern can take some larger wheels like those of the Hillman Minx (15"). When my Red Midge had a Ford based T&J chassis I used those and consequentially now have a spare set of Ford type splined hubs.

### Tom Sanderson has a **twin SU** carb set **for sale**. **\_**

It is Christmas and if you have been good all year, you and your Midge do deserve a nice Christmas present.

I have for sale twin HS2 carbs with inlet manifold and a modified exhaust manifold. They are from a 1300 Triumph engine, these will fit a 1200 Triumph motor, they have been cleaned with new gaskets, jets/needles, with pancake filters, an exhaust gasket is included including choke cable end fitting/to carb. A length of 6mm E10-J9 compatible tubing is also included.

The manifold has a 1/4inch BSP vacuum takeoff. The water cooling hoses/clips are also included. The inlet manifold water inlet/outlet tube was badly rusted, I drilled it out and fitted a stainless steel tube.

Whoever buys them may have to modify/make the throttle cable bracket. Also required is a new inlet/exhaust gasket and of course when fitted they will need balancing for air and the fuel delivery sorting.

I did a trial fit then found I needed a new engine side panel as the carbs came out opposite the panel louvers and never remade the panel.

I am asking £200 plus postage of £18.50.

Remember these go on the 13/60 type head which has 6 ports (the 11/47 head has 5.)



















If the winter months drag a little, here are a few images to raise the spirits. If anyone has others suitable for the next magazine, drop me a line. JH



One of the more regular items in the magazine is the odd borrowed cartoon. I'm finding it harder to source new ones as they tend to be under copyright, so I was well chuffed to find we have an artist in house, and a rather good one at that. Thank you Peter Vivian.

I just hope the story here doesn't give anyone nightmares after a large Christmas Dinner. Just hide your keys and don't irritate her indoors.

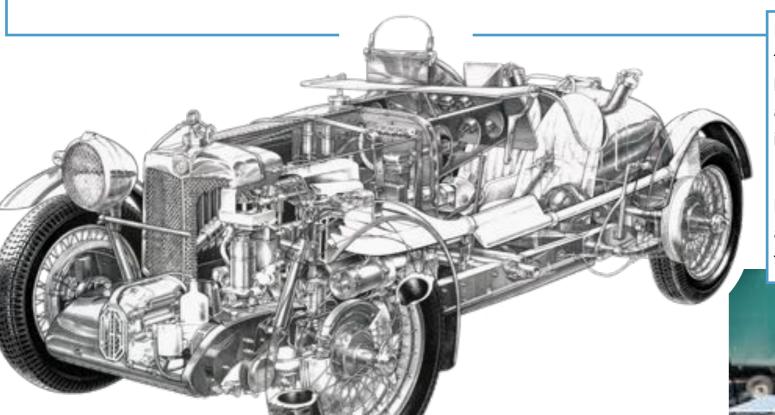
I hadn't heard of the K3 (as demonstrated below) until Peter mentioned it. Very nice, and now very expensive.



Any other MOBC artists out there?



The 1933/34 K3. You'll have noticed the exhaust being on the near-side. I think this engine was a super-charged 1087 cc Wolsley Hornet 6 cylinder overhead cam, being for the 1100 cc racing. There were 33 MG K3 made. Then about £800, which was quite a lot of money. Now worth about £150,000 if thought to be genuine. According to Wikipedia, where I stole researched most of the information it was called the magnette as it was a bit shorter than the . This one wasn't a cross-flow, as you can see the supercharger is on the same side as the exhaust, but apparently there are quite a few K1 and K2 'conversions' and new builds which might have triple SU carbs. Rather like the Bugattis there are rather more examples than there should be, but as the bodies were hand made and most of the parts were off the shelf it is difficult to be sure. The supercharger casting might be a bit tricky, but not impossible



Having been made aware of the K3 model that Peter knew about, I thought I'd do a little 'research' It does demonstrate that authenticity is difficult to pin down when items become so expensive.

I'll not say anything if any club Midges develop a bulge under the radiator, a straight six engine, up-rated brakes and twin filler pipes.

Various videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCdrSN6cSKg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 1xuTdtU2PQ



Don't get steamed up and -Importantly-Don't clog your jiggle pin.







Recently there have been some questions about thermostats. First, for the completely new Midge owners who might be unaware of the older pieces of equipment from the previous millennium, the thermostat controls the radiator

fluid temperature. It is usually found under the alloy dome at the engine end of the top radiator hose. That's going to be blindingly obvious to most of us, but I have been asked where it is to be found, so that covers the 'where' part.

The thermostat is usually a wax-stat type as above which should open at a set temperature of 80 to 92 Celsius. At that temperature it allows the water through so that it can dissipate the heat through the radiator. The car will run cold without it. Unfortunately the modern thermostats can fail 'shut' so when they do fail the water temperature will rise excessively and boil over. Steam rises from around the bonnet and can cause damage to the engine if left uncorrected.

Incautious release of the radiator cap can scald the unwary. This is, again, not news to most of us but I'd rather teach a few grandmothers to suck eggs than par-boil the inexperienced.

The older style 'bellows' type seen on the right of the newer, shinier wax-stat was less reliable and bulkier but it did fail safe, ie open, which overcooled the engine which is inefficient but relatively safe. When the new type fails, which is rare, you get the over-heating problem.

The only part that can give trouble, assuming the wax-stat has been correctly fitted and sealed, is the small device referred to as the 'jiggle pin' or 'bobble', being the focus of this article. So named for its useful jiggling or bobbling which allows a small amount of water through the closed 'stat as the engine warms up. If there was a complete block then the hotter water wouldn't reach the wax-stat to melt the wax until too late, so it's worth making sure it doesn't clog up with any kind of sticky gunge. One or two of the 'unofficial' radiator sealants like mustard powder and egg white can do that.

Recently an odd case of radiator gunge appeared in a member's radiator. As yet somewhat unidentified black sludge it does have some magnetic qualities, so it may be at least partly Black Rust which can be picked up with a strong magnet. (Keep the magnet in a plastic bag, it's easier to get the rust sludge off later). Modern central heating systems often have magnets in the circuit for this purpose and that's why I invented it (long story). It is possible to build a chambered magnet into the water hose that feeds the cabin radiator. I'm currently getting some Neodymium ones from Amazon which I hope to put in a waterproof sleeve in the top of my radiator. They rust easily and are very brittle, but sealed in a waterproof tube they should survive. Of course the corrosion inhibitor should stop rust, but this is for cars that might already have some rust sludge,

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### Winter drawers on.

I was asked what I did to see the Midge safely through winter. This below is more what I <u>should</u> do than <u>do</u> do, but you get the idea. Extra suggestions can be added next time.

First and most obviously I keep the Midges in garages with dry floors, not too much rodent activity and if possible, a cat flap. A mouse trap placed where a cat won't interact might be an alternative. Keeping the Midge in the living-room under a dust sheet would be ideal if you drain the tank, but some partners might object, especially with the weekly start-up. Now that standard petrol is 10% ethanol it is even more important to drain the tank, pipework and carburettors as the ethanol attacks paint, steel, rubber and plastic. It also stratifies and attracts water. 'Super unleaded' is only 5% ethanol and is better for your Midge, and frankly any petrol engine. (Really brand new engines are *probably* tuned slightly to compensate.)

I prefer to leave the battery in the car over winter. A poorly charged battery should be ok down to -23 Celsius and a well charged one down to -60 Celsius. There are battery chargers which turn on and off automatically. Google buddygo car battery charger, or look on Amazon. There are other models around the £25-£30 mark.

When I remember, I start the Midge up once a fortnight although it is easier to do it once a week as the routine can be set more easily. An alternative is each time the black bin is emptied or other regular routine. Check the engine for any cat that has found a warm spot.

I leave the handbrake off and the wheels chocked. I try to remember to drive it a few inches forward and back using the clutch and the foot brake, to keep the master and slave cylinders free. It's worth having the chocks two feet longer than the car so that it doesn't stand on the same bits of tyre all the time, but won't roll too far if anyone leans on it or if there's a small earthquake.

Bacteria and fungi will find any organic material like skin oil or sweat if the air is not completely dry, but that shouldn't actually do much harm to plastic but might eat stitches. It might be worth cleaning the steering wheel and seats, but don't treat with anything like wax or leather 'nourishing' compounds that they would like to eat



I would put the soft roof up so that it doesn't shrink. There are treatments that keep it and seat covers supple. They also work on tonneau covers but not on your own skin. It makes you hair go a funny colour too.

Some prefer to put it all on axle stands, I don't myself unless I was anticipating a year's storage. A dust cover is worthwhile, although I did notice the cat would creep in occasionally. Don't leave a plastic bottle of water or fizzy drink where it can freeze, boil, or explode. Remove any conventional (AA or AAA) batteries in clocks, torches etc. Check that you haven't left your phone or other device inside. Ditto cat.

One annoying element is more spring and autumn based, but I have one area of garage where the profile sheeting (modern version of corrugated iron) can get condensation forming where it is colder and drier outside and warmer and damper inside. That then drips onto the car. King-span or equivalent sorts that, or you can have (expensive) foam sprayed on. This is one of the reasons for ventilation as cold metal draws atmospheric water from warmer air.

Antifreeze is obvious enough so I'll not mention that, but remember to circulate it if you want to top it up. If I had the spare money and time to do a proper drain down, I'd use Evans waterless coolant. Their help page is here <a href="https://www.evanscoolant.com/blog/is-evans-waterless-coolant-right-for-my-classic-car/">https://www.evanscoolant.com/blog/is-evans-waterless-coolant-right-for-my-classic-car/</a>

In a shameless bit of advertising I should point out that I, (Secretary Jim) have quite a lot more stock up here in Scotland than is absolutely necessary. I've no burning need to sell them but I could do with some space. (I have already sold the roofs and radiator grilles) Factory made:-

bonnet and louvered engine panels

front valance parts (top and 2 sides)

rear mudguard supports

Fibreglass Dashtop

Windscreen

(Red) Powder coated rocker-box

Not new.

Rear axle (Spitfire I think) no brake cylinders.

Gearboxes and engines of unknown provenance

Stripped Spitfire chassis with v5.

Spare steering column and racks.

Spitfire front suspension and brake parts

Pre cut Dashboard and matching instruments plus various spare dashboard instruments

Small radiator

Various shiny bits, door catches, mirrors etc

Front torpedo side lights

Ripault type bonnet catches

5 Reconditioned (green) powder coated 15" wire wheels and tyres

4 New hubs for Triumph and Ford axles with spinners

2 large sheets of thin alloy for skinning and some unopened glue that might still work.

Front and rear fibreglass mudguards (green)

An entire mostly finished silver Mk1 Midge with appropriate V5 or the red Midge. Images on <a href="https://www.jimhewlett.com">https://www.jimhewlett.com</a>





### **UK 2021/22 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

You can get the information direct, that's where I get it. If something you know about isn't on it, tell me and I'll add it to our pages.

At the time of writing it's all a bit quiet. JH

### So why won't it start when it was running a moment ago?

We've all had that infuriating episode when the engine which was running nicely a moment ago decides to stop and refuses to start again. There are a few reasons why this unexplained failure raises its head, usually when the need is most urgent. The most common cause barring a flat battery or no fuel is having done something wrong, so my first choice is to look at whatever I did last, and that includes running the engine as cars will run out of fuel at the most inconvenient times and the fuel gauge will often only drop to 'empty' if you tap it.

Disconnect the fuel line and operate the fuel pump manually, taking care not to spill petrol. If you can pump the fuel into a jar then you'll be able to see if there's any water or diesel in the tank. Be generous as blockages and contamination don't always show up at once.

If the problem is not fuel then the spark is probably not igniting the fuel. That can be the points closing or the timing 'drifting' as the points close, or more commonly an electrical break. The capacitor in the distributor is rarely changed but has a short life because cheap modern ones absorb water, so a spare would be advisable. Water sprayed from a leak or splash can direct the spark away from the spark-plug, but HT leads and spark-plugs don't generally fail if warmed up and if they look all right then they probably are, but it's worth checking the HT lead from the coil, the rotor arm and distributor cap for cracks and the low tension ignition wire, especially if you have forgotten the anti theft switch you fitted between the battery and the coil. Beneath are some of my 'culprits'. Not all of them, but I'll not tell you which or you'll laugh.

Wedding guests had swapped the HT leads for fun

The central carbon brush in the distributor had worn out and dropped off.

The fuel tank wasn't vented, so after a run the vacuum in the tank sucked the petrol back.

The air intake was blocked by a piece of the disintegrating air filter

The old plastic mesh fuel filter had dissolved in the ethanol mix and the resultant particles blocked the secondary filter near the carburettor.

The locating lug on the inside of the rotor arm had sheared off.

The plastic float had expanded with ethanol and wedged itself.

The worn float needle had jammed into its seat.

I'd forgotten to replace the rotor arm.

It was running out of fuel just as the engine was turned off.

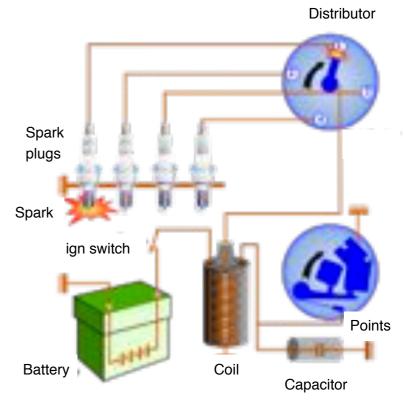
The fuel just added turned out to be water.

Air weakening the mixture where you didn't reconnect the vacuum advance and other pipes.

Not starting without an apparent cause is often a matter of several bits that are not quite right, so if it is usually difficult to start, it just got a bit worse.

Recently my electricity generator, a simple device with fewer components did the unexplained non re-starting thing, so other answers may be in the next magazine.

Why and how the ignition circuit works... or not



The spark occurs when the points gap opens for a short while and collapses the magnetic field of the heavier primary windings of the coil. The sudden change in field causes a pulse of electricity in the inner (finer) secondary coil windings and so a spark is born. The job of the capacitor is to absorb spare electricity so that the points don't arc and wear out. In modern cars the points are replaced with electronic ignition and a rotating magnet that uses the 'Hall effect'.



# A at remain ai La

A quick squint at the internet revealed the nature of a Pietenpol aircamper.

Looks like fun.



### Chris Bird, in BEA, Richard Hawke in MOO and Richard Hawke's dad Frank in the lead position.

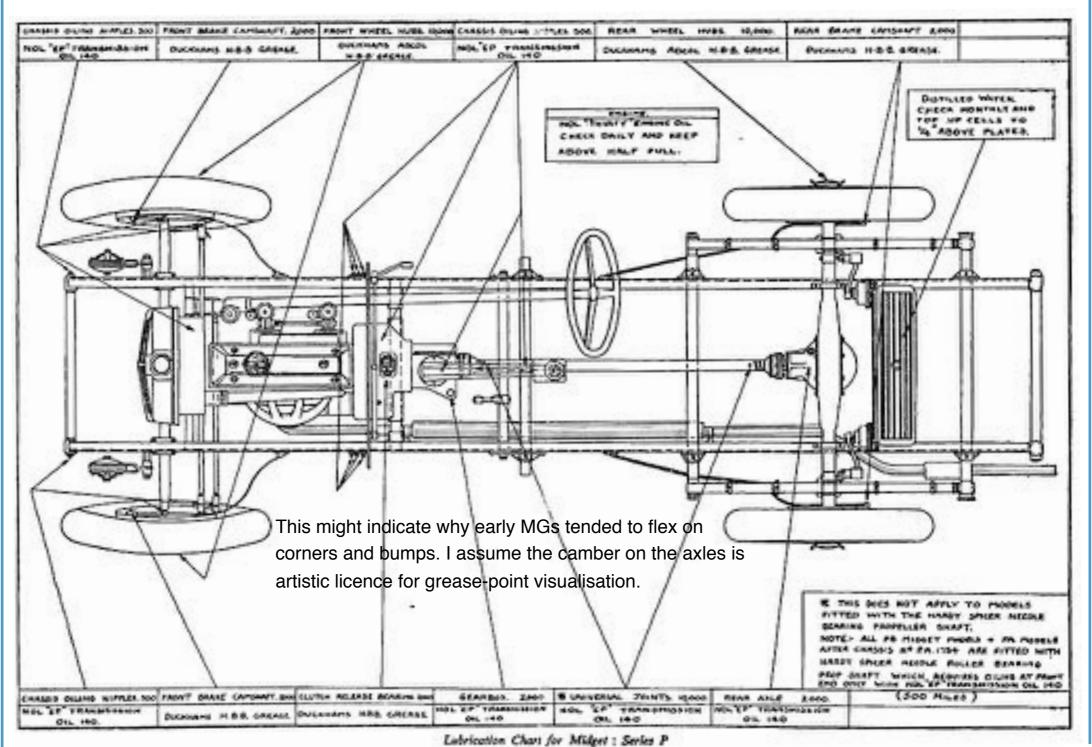
When Richard Hawke asked me if I could find out what had happened to his Midge MOO. It wasn't too difficult as in the previous week Belle had asked me if I could unearth any history of her recent acquisition. Of course I made it sound as though I'd spent months researching.

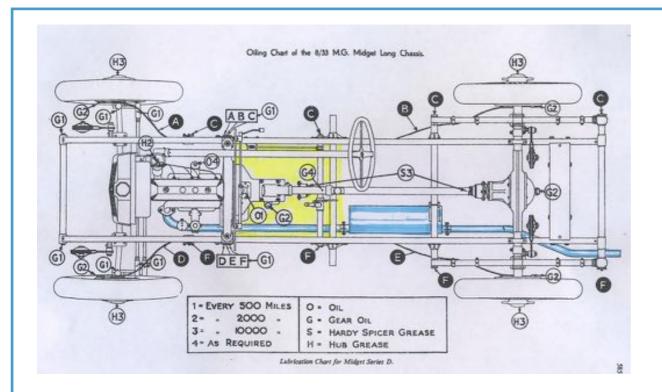
Since then Richard has written...

'My dad and I built a Pietenpol Aircamper two-seat, open cockpit aircraft (designed in 1928) in 1996 (the first in the UK). I had the PPL and we flew G-BMLT until 1991 when we sold it. What are we going to do now we thought? Home-built cars seemed the obvious answer and we built his green Midge first (duplicating a lot of the bits for MOO which made the second build much quicker). I was in MOO in the picture. I see that Dad's car, KGU 736D, Is

SORN at present but it would be

great to know where she is and in what state? I'm so pleased that MOO has been saved from the scrapheap and I hope to go and see her sometime soon and have a look at Belle and Ian's kit car company. I've been fortunate enough to own a number of classic cars over the years including a beautiful J2 a few years ago, and currently a lovely supercharged 1948 MGTC - heaven!'





The lubrication chart on page 14 and the additional servicing schedule above may not be of much help to Midge owners, but there's quite a lot of incidental information for those interested in fabricating a replica or understanding the geometry of the MGJ2. It might be useful if anyone went back to the original chassis design in the event of the Triumph chassis becoming unrepairable. It would be no safer than the original of course, and therefore somewhat suspect in a crash. The front springs are concealed by the chassis and the battery is strangely shaped behind the back axle.



If you have a story to tell or an unusual feature (on your Midge) remember to send a photo to <a href="mailto:jim@jimhewlett.com">jim@jimhewlett.com</a>. Dashboards, workshops, garages, rallies and vaguely connected projects. Also 'Sales and wants', requests for advice, homespun philosophy, jokes, cartoons, memories..., will all be considered.



### Tailpipe.

Well, life continues to surprise, Tony Regan, member number 3 on the original member's list has emerged and is re-admitted to the inner sanctum that is the MOBC. He had become a life member back in the day, and like any previous member can and has rejoined without cost. (Not that it would be excessive at £10 anyway). He was the first Chairman of the MOBC in 1991. Tony had built Ford based Q725 GDH, and was recently shown a picture of it in a club magazine. I'm having difficulty reaching him, or the person who showed the photo so...Hi Tony, phone 01501 785 206...

A small note that the facebook page is going well. It is still mostly Midge stuff with what I consider to be an acceptable amount of 'not entirely Midge but generally automotive' content. It does seem to be doing quite well in terms of general advice, inquiries, offers and requests. The amount of activity on the website is rather slower, mainly because material has to be submitted for 'translation' but the statistical analysis provided by the web hosting company shows a reasonable amount of interest. One of the advantages is that now and then people find it by accident or related searches and sometimes leave notes in the guest book. I get a message from the web hosting system when a comment is left, so I don't have to check it too often

I have recently found the website 'loads' rather slowly when using the real name ( <a href="http://mobc.co.uk">http://mobc.co.uk</a>) which may be the fault of the domain holder (Godaddy) or the website service provider (Homestead). Of course it might be that my (Mac) computer is playing up. If anyone else has this problem, drop me a note please. The direct address is <a href="http://midgebuilders.homestead.com">http://midgebuilders.homestead.com</a> and that might work more quickly if you run into the same thing.

So here comes Christmas. By the time I get this out it may even have started, so I'll take the opportunity to wish us all a happy one and I'll hope we get de-restricted soon in the new year. Be imaginative with your snowmen and have a prosperous New Year.



Ho Ho Ho