

# SPRIDGET NEWS

THE WORLDS ONLY RACING MIDGET & SPRITE NEWSPAPER

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## Brands Hatch Race Report

Stephen Watkins made a welcome return to the Midget & Sprite Challenge in his MG Midget, and won both Brands Hatch races from pole. And for the first of them he got the Steve Everitt Trophy, an award Watkins was delighted to receive as he raced closely against Everitt for two years.

Neither of Watkins' Brands wins were straightforward though, as he got a strong challenge from a host of Class E cars, particularly as they got heat into their tyres more quickly than Watkins could with his slicks, in often-cool conditions.

In the first race Watkins had to resist three chasing foes, led by an effervescent Richard Bridge – now in a Class E Austin Healey Sebring Sprite – who attacked Watkins throughout. Watkins though got an early reprieve when the race ended ahead of time with a red flag with four minutes left.

The red flag came about as Hugh Simpson's MG Midget was stuck in the Paddock gravel. He was disputing the Class D lead with Dean Stanton's Austin Healey Sprite and Simpson spun just after a small touch with Stanton entering the Paddock turn.



Stanton therefore got the class victory.

Reigning champion Pippa Cow meanwhile started both races from the back, after spinning out of a wet and tricky qualifying. But in both race encounters she rose quickly and impressively to get with the lead group.

In race one she was third home, and second in Class E.

Watkins in race two looked more comfortable in first in Bridge's absence, but then he had the spanner in the works of a red flag – due to a couple of cars pulled off and plenty of oil deposited on track – and a subsequent five-minute sprint for the spoils from a re-formed grid.

And at the restart Cow got the lead from Watkins on the outside of Druids first time through. But two laps later, at the same turn, Watkins with his slicks heated up and the oil cleaned off them retook first place and stayed there.

# Brands Report



Cow was second home and got the Class E win from James Hughes. Stanton again beat Simpson in Class D, and was awarded the Midget & Sprite Challenge's driver of the meeting.

# New Racer



We would like to welcome a new Spridget Racer Amelia Storer to the Lackford Challenge Race Series this season. Amelia has already competed in the VSCC Pomeroy Trophy at Silverstone back in February this year.

Amelia used Show Jump competitively but now prefers wheels to hooves! Amelia was introduced to Spridget Racing by a friend of her father's Charlie Marriott and it his car that Amelia now races.



## Parkers Corner



First meeting of the season went well, and thanks must go to all the drivers at the meeting for entering on time. The closing date is always 2 weeks before the meeting and we all need to meet that date. Also, I would like to thank Equipe Racing Rob, John, Graeme and from the MGCC

We were only given a few weeks' notice that we were going to race with Equipe for the 2023 season, so we all did very well!!! As we go to press the current entry list has 23 cars for Oulton Park on 13<sup>th</sup> May which is more than an F1 grid! This will be a home meeting for the editor and the Hughes so they will have their fan club there!

Mike

## Championship Points

### Class A

Position	Racer	Points
1	Steve Watkins	5
2	Mike Chalke	1

### Class E

Position	Racer	Points
1	Pippa Cow	7
2	Richard Bridge	5
3	James Hughes	4
4	Jason Meredith/John Hughes	1

### Class D

Position	Racer	Points
1	Dean Stanton	9
2	Barney Collinson/Ed Easton/ Hugh Simpson	4
5	Ian Wright	1

### Class H

Position	Racer	Points
1	John Collinson	3

## 2023 Calendar

- 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> April- Brands Hatch Indy
- 13<sup>th</sup> May- Oulton Park
- 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> - June MG/Triumph Live Silverstone
- 30<sup>th</sup> July- Cadwell Park
- 28<sup>th</sup> August- Castle Coombe
- 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> September- Snetterton

## Oulton Park 13th May Timetable (Revised 30<sup>th</sup> April)

Qualy 9.00 am to 9.20 am

Race 1 – 11.35 am to 11.55 am

Race 2 – 15.30 pm to 15.50 pm

The Meeting is run by MSVR for MGCC

## Paddock Natter



The paddock was busy with through the weekend with repairs and adjustments. John Hughes had a failure in Race 1 with o/s front axle bearing which had welded itself to the stub axle. Richard Perry came to the rescue with a replacement which the Hughes talented spanner man Ian Blaine(see above) fixed for second race.

Hugh Simpson had a big spin into the kitty litter in Race 1 which resulted in getting shale stuck between the tyre and rim. Hugh changed to his spare set which are Avons as usually races on Yokohamas. Hugh reported that he does not like the Avons but that did not seem to affect his speed too as he finished second in class. However, on his favoured Yokohamas in the first race he did post the quickest D Class lap of the meeting with a 57.6 seconds.

Kim Dear retired from before Race 2 as his diff started to chew itself up with Amelia Storer having differential problems to. Richard Perry ( !!!) came to the rescue again lending Amelia a spare. Amelia's partner managed to replace the diff overnight and she got going for second race. Class E winner (Race 1) Richard Bridge retired from second race with a suspected cracked head.

Experienced racer Mike Chalke had handling problems with his Class A Modsport in qualifying going off at Clark Curve. Mike managed to get the car back (see picture above) on track for Race 1 but was hampered with handling throughout the meeting.

## 3 Front Ends and 3 Rear Ends from Brands



## Racing Dynasties- Jon & Hugh Simpson



The Lackford Challenge has many father son/daughter partnerships which reinforces the values of our championship. When racing fast becomes the family business following in the footsteps of other racing dynasties such Hill, Schumacher and Rosbergs what goes on behind the scenes. In no particular order we will highlight a family partnership in each newsletter. If we have not asked you yet we are coming for you, now it's over to Jon Simpson:

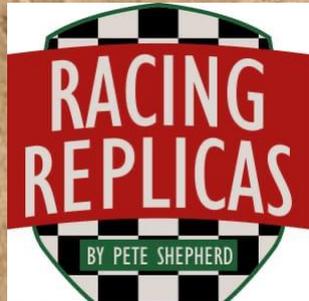
It's been fantastic to have Hugh racing our car. Simpson Racing has always been a family affair and we had long talked about the possibility of Hugh sharing the car with me. We reached the stage of "so you think you can do better...?" and "it's not as easy as you think..." and then when testing at a track day, he had a go and went half a second faster than me – damn it – but I was also very proud and impressed. Of course, you are not supposed to lap time on track days – we weren't, but we did look at our phones a lot...

Hugh went for his competition licence and towards the end of 2021 we jointly entered a championship round at Castle Combe. There was a strong field at the meeting and we were all well chuffed when he went out and won the class. Despite finishing fourth in my own race, this was a great day for us all. Watching Hugh racing so competitively and seeing how the car behaved from trackside was just great.

My health issues accelerated the full-time handover of the driver's seat and since then Hugh has gone on to entertain us with some fabulous drives and great results. Do I miss competing? No, not at present, I've enjoyed a good run myself and left my name on the records, albeit back in 1984 and more recently had my share of good results – I don't want to go out in the car and not feel competitive or that I'm not doing the car justice.

It has given me, and indeed, the family lots of excitement watching Hugh compete. It is fantastic to see the car that Hugh, Charlie and I prepared together and the engine we built run so regularly at the pointy end and be driven so competitively.

# Racing Replicas



In each newsletter we are going to give some space to a business connected to Spridget Racing. This time we are looking at Racing Replicas a business started by Pete Shepherd who races a beautiful Sebring Sprite in the Equipe Series.

There are not many of us that manage to turn a hobby into a fulltime business however Pete Sheperd has done that and become a professional slot car builder! Pete went fulltime into making replica models of racing cars in 2021 having been an adult carer before that.

He specialises in pre 66' cars, mainly sports and GT but has done plenty of single seaters as well. The models are generally made from existing kits mainly in 1/32 scale however the eye is in the detail which has resulted in Pete having a full order book for the next 6 months. Each kit takes upwards of 6 hours with some taking 20 hours!

A perfect gift !!

Pete has just released a model based on his own Sebring Sprite which a replica of the original John Sprinzel car.

Pete can be contacted through his website at <https://www.racingreplicas.co.uk/>



# Social Media



There will be regular updates on Facebook and Instagram of the thrills and exploits of the Lackford Challenge. If you do not follow us on social then make sure you do now from the links below and make sure you share.

The more news and video we can share on social the more interest we will garner for Spridget Racing.

## Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/MidgetChallenge>

## Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/midgetandspritechallenge/>

Finally, Oshin Shahiean is working on a You Tube channel for the Lackford Challenge that we can all upload our own race videos and clips.

This will then be marketed as a whole and please note will be monitored so no smut !!

# Happy Families

There can be few championships, that can rival the Lackford Midget and Sprite Challenge for family connections though.

One of the longest running one model championships (the Midgets and Sprites are identical apart from the badges) ever since it was established in 1977 it has always had more than its fair share of family members. At the seasons opener at Brands we saw the return of John Collinson alongside son Barney on the grid and regular racers John Hughes with son James. We have seen championship sponsor Robin Lackford race with his son Nigel, John Bridge with son Richard, Dave Weston and son Edward, championship stalwart Gil Duffy handing over the reigns to daughter (and last years overall champion) Pippa, and Jon Simpson doing likewise with son Hugh. We asked championship coordinator Mike Parker what it is about this championship that constantly sees these family ties.

“I think first and foremost these are simple cars than anybody can work on “ said Mike, “and those skills of repairing and modifying can be easily passed on without the need for a degree in engineering. These are cars that are full of character and put a smile on your face. They have a charm that is lacking in some modern cars and they tend to stay in the family. The paddock is very friendly and welcoming and is an environment where all ages are made to feel very welcome.” Although many of the cars on our grid are now well over 60 years old, they will more than hold their own; there was only one other car, a V8 MGB that was faster than our race winner Steve Watkins at the first meeting of the year including Porsches, E-types and Elans. This is a relatively inexpensive way to go fast and that also has an appeal to the next generation drivers.”

The championship continues next month at Oulton Park on 13<sup>th</sup> May and we have it on good authority that past class champion Peter Collinson, Barneys uncle, will be making a welcome return, making it 3 Collinsons on the grid. We are not sure another championship can match that!



James and father John racing their E Class Sprites



# WANTED MOD SPORT RACERS

## “Save our Mod Sports”



It is believed there are about 15 to 18 Class A cars in existence however we have seen the number of Modsports entering the Lackford Challenge. So, if these cars are not on the track they must be tucked away in garages up and down the country.

Midget Modsports have been racing with our championship since the series inception 46 years ago. There are many racers with cars however I believe Mike Chalke is the only driver to have competed in every season, a magnificent dedication to the race series.

Therefore this is a call to all those of drivers with Class A cars tucked away to bring them out for MG Triumph Live at Silverstone in June to contest the Ted Reeves Memorial Trophy. The meeting is on the full GP circuit which will suit your Modsport, so get entering !



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# Thankyous and Acknowledgements for Brands Hatch

Thanks to John Baggot for getting all his old racing buddies along for a meet up at Brands

Thanks to Dickon Siddall and Yaroslav Dunka for the photographs taken

Finally a big thankyou for our Sponsors Lackford Engineering for all their support



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