

SPRIDGET NEWS

THE WORLDS ONLY RACING MIDGET & SPRITE NEWSPAPER

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Silverstone MG Triumph Live Race Report

Stephen Watkins entered this Silverstone meeting with a 100% record in the 2023 Midget & Sprite Challenge but this round proved a tough one for him as he missed the opening race after damaging his MG Midget early in qualifying.

Martin Morris started that race from pole though, as expected, reigning champion Pippa Cow leapt into the lead in her nimble Sprite. However, the Midget of David Weston – racing for the first time in two years – took the lead from Pippa on the inside of Copse at the start of the second lap and stayed in front to win. It was a most significant win for Weston because with his victory he won the Ted Reeve Memorial Trophy: he was Reeve's mechanic for 17 years and also made the trophy!

Pippa was second home and Class E winner not far ahead of Richard Bridge while Barnaby Collinson beat fellow MG Midget runner Hugh Simpson in Class D, which also earned Collinson Driver of the Race. Mark Turner in his Austin-Healey Sprite won the new Historic class which is growing in popularity. Watkins, complete with some new fibreglass, was back for race two the following day and charged through from the back of the grid to challenge Weston for the lead.



However, on the final lap Watkins pulled out to pass Weston on the pit straight and collected James Wheeler from the BCV8 championship (which was sharing the track with the Midgets and Sprites) who was attempting an overtaking manoeuvre. The clash, for which Watkins held up his hands, accounted for Wheeler, Watkins and Weston as well as Jason Meredith's Class E Midget. It all let the close-at-hand Morris through to win. Morris also got the Driver of the Race award.

Pippa pipped Bridge to double up in Class E, while Collinson and Turner also took their second wins of the weekend in their classes.

Watkins said: "Both times, stupid mistakes from me. I took the wrong line in practice into the Loop. I spent all day yesterday

Silverstone Report Continued



fixing [the car], lots of fibreglassing. We were working on it until about 23.00hrs. And race two was going great until we had a coming together.”

“I was lining up behind Dave to overtake him. As I pulled out to go past Dave, I caught Wheeler. The BCV8s are just so much quicker in a straight line but I should have seen him. These things happen and the car’s not too bad. I’ve got a spare bonnet and the rest of it isn’t too difficult to fix.”

Diver of the meeting went to Barney Collinson who was in a class of his own breaking the lap record by 3 seconds.

New Racer Bruce Burrowes



I decided to go racing as I have done lots of track days however I have no racing experience

So bought an old banger, which I stripped, and it got sent to be dipped, welded and painted. In the meantime, I acquired a lock up I started to rebuild the car.

However, it took a lot longer as I have no experience in rebuilding cars.

As Mike knows it has taken me three years to get to the grid but I built the car myself which I am extremely proud of.



Oulton Park Race Report



Stephen Watkins continued his 100% start to the 2023 Midget & Sprite campaign with two more comfortable wins at Oulton Park, wherein he led home the 23-strong pack and was largely unchallenged in the frontrunning Class A.

In a similar pattern to in the previous month's Brands Hatch season opener, Watkins' Class E pursuers got ahead of his Midget at the start while he got temperature into his slicks. In Oulton's race one reigning champion Pippa Cow plus fellow Austin-Healey Sprite runner Richard Bridge both got ahead of Watkins at the off and the front trio had an exciting battle for the opening three laps. But from there Watkins stretched clear in first and won eventually by five seconds.

Cow, Bridge and Frogeye Sprite runner James Hughes had though a close scrap for Class E honours and second place overall. Cow pulled out when her brake pedal went long, and Bridge just won the class battle after proceedings were ended early as Andrew Caldwell's Midget was stuck in the gravel and the race was stopped.



There was a four-car battle for Class D victory, which was won by Dean Stanton's Sprite after he fought past Hugh Simpson's Midget, and Stanton got driver of the race with it. Ian Hodgkinson's Austin-Healey Sebring Sprite won Class H.

Cow – her brakes now bled – again jumped Watkins at the off to lead race two, though Watkins was back ahead on the second lap for a lead he kept.

Watkins said: "It was again just once the tyres warmed up it was a matter of getting away from the Class E people, which are very quick.

"The first race I had a little bit more of a battle trying to get past them as the tyres warmed up, but especially in this sort of weather they come in a bit quicker.

"Apart from that it was fine, a perfect weekend really. Apart from that I had a cracked brake pipe that we just happened to notice as we went out for the second race. Luckily we managed to replace the pipe so that got me out for the second one – it nearly didn't happen!"

Cow, Bridge and Hughes again had a frantic Class E fight behind Watkins in race two, and it pivoted at three-quarters' distance when Cow and Hughes came into contact when Hughes put in a passing attempt. Hughes went no further, and Bridge nipped into the class lead. Cow however got the lead back on the start-finish straight with a lap left to get Class E victory.

And the Class D contest once again featured a close multi-car fight for the win. Long-time leader Stanton had a late off, and Simpson pipped fellow Midget runner Barnaby Collinson by just 0.038s in a thrilling finish, and Simpson also got driver of the meeting. Hodgkinson made it a double win in Class H.

Watkins' Class A rival Martin Morris missed the opening race as he pulled off on the warm-up lap with an oil pressure drop, though he returned for race two and finished fourth overall.

Parkers Corner

Championship Points



Breaking news for 2024 is that the Lackford Engineering Midget and Sprite Challenge will be joining the Equipe series of meetings. The permit will still be through MGCC and membership of the club will still be necessary requirement

The plan is to have 6 meetings with 2 races at each meeting

We have several new drivers to welcome to our Historic class Ian Hodkinson, Andy Booth and Nicola Burnside. Welcome to the Challenge.

Next meeting is at Cadwell on 30th July and we are looking forward to a big grid for this one !

Please get your entries in early.

Class A

Position	Racer	Points
1	Steve Watkins	12
2	Martin Morris	8
3	Dave Weston	4
4	Mike Chalke	2

Class E

Position	Racer	Points
1	Richard Bridge	20
2	Pippa Cow	20
3	James Hughes	10
4	Jason Meredith	5

Class D

Position	Racer	Points
1	Barney Collinson	22
2	Dean Stanton	19
3	Hugh Simpson	16
4	Ed Easton	4

Class H

Position	Racer	Points
1	Mark Turner	10
2	John Collinson/ Ian Hodkinson	7
4	Kim Dear	6
5	Nicola Burnside	2

2023 Calendar

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

Know Your Classes

Our Spridget Challenge is garnering more and more interest from racers from other series so we have put together a quick checklist to see potentially which class your car would sit. Obviously, it is best to check series regulations but if you are still unsure please get in touch and join growing band of Spridget Racers in our competitive race series.

Fully modified (referred to as Class A) – based on classic Modsport rules

Race modified (referred to as class E)

- LSD allowed.
- 5 speed box.
- Larger brakes.
- Uprated suspension
- Top Links allowed
- 6" rims
- Twin 45 dcoe Webers allowed.
- Race engines upto 1380cc A series block. Steel cranks allowed



Road modified (referred to as class D)

- No LSD
- Standard 4 speed gearbox however can have straight cut gears.
- Standard brakes
- Limited suspension modifications
- Top Links not allowed
- 5.1/2 rims
- Single 45 dcoe Weber
- A series block upto 1380cc



Historic (referred to as class H) – for cars which meet the FIA historic regulations

- LSD Allowed
- Standard 4 speed gearbox with straight cut gears
- Virtually standard suspension
- Single 45 dcoe Weber
- Crossply tyres
- 1293 cc maximum capacity
- However no roller rockers



This Racing Life - a Family Affair Gil Duffy

I raced Karts in my late teens but then College, Job, marriage , mortgage, kids !

Then approaching my 40th Birthday a friend died sudden (and a 'mid life crisis ?') I decided there was more to life than work.



I wanted to race a rear wheel drive, traditional sports car I could run myself. MGB or Midget were the obvious choices. A chance meeting with Carl Chadwick driving a Midget with 'dots' on the doors in the car park at work produced a ticket for Mallory. I wondered if after SuperKarts a Midget might be a bit tame? But after hanging over the fence at the Devil's Elbow watching the cars flying past I bought a car in the paddock

From '85 to 1990 I raced the blue Class C Midget. My first win was a heat at Mallory when The C entry was large enough for two heats and a final - all for £50 entry!

For 1990 I bought a Class B car and had some great races with Richard Perry and Peter Tipper in particular. Meanwhile my elder daughter Krissy took over the Class C car. One memorable weekend was at Anglesey when I won Class B and Krissy won Class C. She continued with the Class C car until 2001.

Also in the 90's my brother Gren entered an Ex John Bensley Class C car finished in a fetching shade of pink, before he moved to Jersey. He still treasures a Brands Hatch winners cap. On his return to the UK he raced a Class A car for several years. In 1999 I retired from work and built a Class A Frogeye from a collection of boxes. Then later bought the red ex Paul Sibley car, and had a few wins and lots of seconds.



I then decided to try my hand at single seaters so bought a 1970 March 708 Historic Formula Ford. Although it was a fun car to drive. I discovered that although the engines were extremely tight some were very much more equal than others, and the car was not really competitive.

Then in 2012 I had the opportunity to drive a Formula Junior Bond. I competed in the FIA Lurani Trophy racing at circuits all over Europe. I was lucky enough to win the 1000cc Front engine class, attending the FIA Historic Prizegiving Dinner in Paris.



In 2014 I bought a rear engine, drum brake Kieft Formula Junior. It is a rare car, only a few were ever produced. The car was never competitive in period against Lotus and Coopers so I was pleased to score a few race wins and second in the Class Championship.

Then in 2019 the Brabham 21b F3 'screamer' arrived. Along the way I also raced in the 2CV 24hr race with Richard Wildman as a team-mate, and a race at Spa in a TVR Grantura with Richard Perry, who immediately sold the car at a profit!



Meanwhile Pippa, who although introduced to cars at an early age had been competing successfully in Horse trials

In 2004 she entered the original Formula Women competition along with 10,000 other hopefuls after passing a whole range of testing rounds she succeeded in winning a season racing a Mazda RX8, all expenses paid plus the use of a Mazda MX5 road car.

That was it. She was hooked!

We then started looking for a Midget for the following year, but decided that transporting two cars to the same race was too complicated, so we build a Locost (Lotus 7 look alike) for her to race.

This car was great fun and very reliable but we never really got it to handle properly.

Next came a sabbatical from racing as two sons arrived.

She was due to co-drive the Class A Midget at Silverstone in a two-driver race with me, soon after Freddie was born.

Unfortunately, I crashed the car at Bridge on the in lap so she never 'got a go'. In my defense it was damp and I was on slicks!



So fast forward to 2010. We acquired a Frogeye from Charles Marriott and raced in the Swinging Sixties. A highlight was a win at Spa.



A move to the Midget Challenge in 2012 for Pippa resulted in an accident at Donington and a wrecked car. A replacement rolling shell from 'Midgets-R-us' (Mr. Perry) and a transfer of the powertrain and all the bits from the Frogeye.

The Silver Bullet was born !

As a result, Pippa won the class E championship in 2013. 2014 was a year off from racing undergoing successful Cancer treatment .

This counts as the biggest ever win for her.

Back for 2015 with a second in Class E, followed by another Class E win in 2016. Then in 2021 and 2022 the highlight of winning the Championship overall, against intense competition

So as a family we have had some fantastic times, and met so many terrific people over a long and varied time racing. I must use this opportunity to thank the very many people who have offered advice and assistance along the way.

Mystery Race Car

Skoda 1100OHC (1959)

I visited the Essen Classic Car show back in April with the primary objective of discovering cars I did not know even existed. Well, I found a few especially this one which was my favourite. This car could have easily competed with Spridgets however only 5 were ever built, only 3 spiders and 2 coupes.

It is hard to believe that this beauty was manufactured and designed behind the Iron Curtain in the former Czechoslovakia. Coupled with its stunning lines the engine was no slouch. It had a water cooled four stroke with double overhead camshafts which could propel the aluminium monocoque to a top speed of 120 mph.

Would be interesting to see how it would fair against our historics.

Technical Data

Capacity 1089 cc

Car weight 550kgs

BHP 92hp

Transmission 4 speed

Top speed 120 mph

Manufactured 1957 – 1960



Social Media



Oshin is doing a great job posting regular updates on Facebook and Instagram of the thrills and spills 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/>

Breaking News Sprite to become Hollywood Star

Breaking news: Pixar, the world-renowned animation studio, is reportedly considering a follow-up to its hit movie "Cars." The studio is said to be exploring the idea of making a movie centered around the iconic Austin Healey Sprite, also known as the "frogeye" or "bugeye" in the United States

According to sources close to Pixar, the proposed film would follow the adventures of a plucky little Sprite as he navigates the twists and turns of the open road. The character is said to be modelled after the classic sports car, with his trademark "bug-eyed" headlights and quirky, lovable personality.

Fans of "Cars" are already buzzing with excitement at the prospect of a new movie from Pixar, and many are eagerly anticipating the studio's take on the beloved Austin Healey Sprite.

While nothing has been confirmed yet, rumors are already swirling about potential plotlines, characters, and settings for the new film. Some are even speculating that the Sprite may encounter Lightning McQueen and the other characters from the original "Cars" movie, creating a crossover event that would be sure to delight fans of both franchises.

So, what do you think? Is this news true or false?



Smoother clutch.

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When the Austin Healey Sprite keeps on winning more fame and glory than anything else in its class, you know it has to be good. But there's no law that says you can't go and make it even better. Take the Sprite's new 1275cc. engine. It's the same basic engine that powered prototype Sprites to victory in their class at Sebring and Le Mans. It runs more quietly and smoothly, wears longer with no babbling, and raises the horsepower 10%—from 59 to 65. With more torque at lower revs and more power at higher revs, the flexibility of the engine is markedly improved along with acceleration and maximum speed. Even so, you can still get 30 thrifty miles to the gallon. Other new touches: New easy folding top with 3.3-square foot rear window. New 6½-inch diaphragm clutch that works smoothly with minimum pedal pressure. Plus, of course, race-bred rack-and-pinion steering and low-slung, road-gripping suspension for masterful cornering and road handling. Self-adjusting disc brakes up front for positive stops. And the comfort of wind-up windows and foam bucket seats. One thing is still the same. The Sprite is still the lowest-priced true sports car in America. Stop in at your MG/Austin Healey dealer and see how much more sports car you can now get for under \$2,000.

Sprite: another action car from the sign of the Octagon.

Snippets

We have a new feature in this edition, were we just post anything interesting about Spridgets

Original green, or Holden Orchard with head fairing and no screen. Mark 2 Sprite with shortened bug eye rear end grafted on. 15inch replica wheels. What's your favourite?



This beautiful WSM was for sale at Bonhams during the Goodwood Members Meeting. I was watching the racing so I did not see what it made!

Spot the mistake?



Oshin finds a replacement for his Midget race Car !



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Thankyous and Acknowledgements for Oulton Park and Silverstone

Many thanks Ted Reeves wife and daughter for presenting the Ted Reeves Trophy
Thanks to Dickon Siddall for the photographs taken.

Thanks to father and son team Andy and Rob McGee for jump starting most of our field before the first race as the Assembly Area had to be cleared due to a serious accident

Finally, a big thankyou for our loyal Sponsors Lackford Engineering for all their support and the fantastic Hog Roast on Saturday night at Silverstone



A personnel thankyou from yself to the boys at MCR namely rob, David and Aled as I discovered just as we were being called to the assembly area that my throttle cable had snapped.

Like an F1 Pit Crew the boys snapped into action and changed my cable within 5 minutes !



MG Midget. The people's Ferrari.

