

SPRIDGET NEWS

THE WORLDS ONLY RACING MIDGET & SPRITE NEWSPAPER

Est. 2023

Saturday, October 28th, 2023

Price 6d

Season Showdown at Snetterton

Martin Morris – back in his maroon Class A Midget due to damage to his blue-liveried version – was dominant out front in the Midget & Sprite Challenge at Snetterton and won both races of the double header.

The fight for the championship in this season-closing meeting was chiefly between Class D Midget pair Hugh Simpson and Barny Collinson who was just behind on points. Simpson's Norfolk weekend didn't start well as his gearbox broke on his qualifying out-lap. Amazingly, he was able to take part in the races having had a gearbox loaned to him...by his title rival, Collinson.

Simpson managed to jump from the back of the grid to head the Class D runners on lap one of race one, but then – running at race speed for the first time that weekend – he locked up and ran off track. It left Collinson with a clear on-track class lead ahead of Simpson and that's how they finished, the result shrinking the points gap between them.

Pippa Cow and Richard Bridge, running in P2 and P3 behind Morris, once again had a thrilling place-swapping battle for the Class E win. Cow pipped Bridge by a tenth at the flag for the class



triumph and second place overall.

Morris once again dominated race two while Cow and Bridge once again had a close battle for second overall and the Class E win. Cow again prevailed and received the championship's Driver of the Meeting award.

The championship battle however was resolved almost immediately in that second race as Collinson slowed because a distributor lead detached, and he was only able to rejoin the action three laps down. This left Simpson set fair for the title and, having jumped to second in class from the back of the grid on lap one, he passed Andrew Caldwell for the class lead on lap two and won the class comfortably in fourth place overall. The championship was his!

Snetterton Report Continued



Simpson said: "It's a bit surreal really, it's been a really tough season, Barney's pushed hard all season and obviously helped us out yesterday with the gearbox, so we thank for him for that. Gutted that he had the problem today so we didn't have the fight to the end. But absolutely thrilled to take it."

"We've [this season] had the engine apart twice, we had a head gasket at Combe, we had piston rings all get cooked at Silverstone, had the gearbox issue yesterday, so it's not been an easy season. But it's been brilliant fun."

Collinson said: "A lead came off on the dizzy and it died, that was it. It's [the car] been mega all year apart from that one first mechanical failure all year on the championship-deciding race."

New Racer Drivers



At Cadwell Park Stephen Cooper joined us with his beautiful 1959 Austin Healey mk1 1430cc down from Glasgow for the weekend which I believe was 9 hours each way!!

Also joining us at Cadwell Park was classic car model entrepreneur Pete Shepherd in his very nice Austin Healey Sebring Sprite.

At Castle Combe Jack Wotton joined the happy throng in the ex-James Fettiplace car now belonging to Gill Duffy and as well as young Will Humphries in a Midget and Gary Bickerton in an Ashley.



Parkers Corner



Thanks for all your support it was good to get home after final meeting I must had more problems to deal with than all the years I have been doing this job. I would like to Thanks to Equipe for all there help with getting all entries in, some very close to the deadline. When you think back, we did not know who was running motorsport for the car club until the middle of January.

So we move to 2024 season and we have made the decision to move to the Classic Sports Car Club for the next two seasons, they approached me on my way to Cadwell Park.

I have met there two Directors David Smitheram and Richard Wos along with John Collinson on Zoom and the car club manager Andy Knott.

With the season over I would like to thank you all the drivers for your support for the Lackford Midget & Sprite Challenge had the largest grids this season apart from Snetterton were we had the second largest. Our largest grid was Castle Combe so well done all!

Thanks must go John Collinson for all his support, he won't miss my phone calls but there will be more, and also for his support for many years, Robin Lackford let's hope will see you back in the paddock next season.

I would like to congratulate Hugh Simpson for winning the overall Champion and your amazing fan club who followed to every round, they worked very hard to get into the Race no more than the last round when they fitted a gear box borrowed from championship rival Barney Collinson.

I look forward to seeing you all at the drivers meeting which is to be held at Kimber House Abingdon on 3rd December, meet at 10.30am.

Mike

Amusing Pictures



Final 2023 Season Championship Points

Class A

Position	Driver	Points
1	Martin Morris	23
2	Steve Watkins	13
3	David Weston	4
4	Mike Chalke	3

Class D

Position	Driver	Points
1	Hugh Simpson (Overall Champion)	39
2	Barney Collinson	35
3	Dean Stanton	25
4	Nick Rose	5
=	Andy Caldwell	5
=	Amelia Storer	5
7	Ed Easton	4
=	Ian Wright	4
=	Peter Collinson	4
10	Bruce Burrowes	1
=	Connor Kay	1

Class E

Position	Driver	Points
1	Pippa Cow	33
2	Richard Bridge	32
3	James Hughes	14
4	Jason Meredith	5
=	Paul Campfield	
=	Jake Wotton	
7	Tom Walker	3
8	John Hughes	2

Class H

Position	Driver	Points
1	Mark Turner	31
2	Kim Dear	15
3	John Collinson	10
4	Ian Hodginson	7
5	Jason Meredith	6
6	Gary Bickerton	4
7	Andy Booth	2
=	Nicola Burnside	2
9	Pete Shepherd	1

Minimum Weights

As all cars were weighed at Snetterton it got me thinking about the weights of other comparable race cars. Here's what I found:



Formula 1 – 798 kgs



Formula 2 – 755 kgs



WEC Hypercar – 1030 kgs



NASCAR – 1542 kgs



SPRIDGET CLASS E – 650 kgs

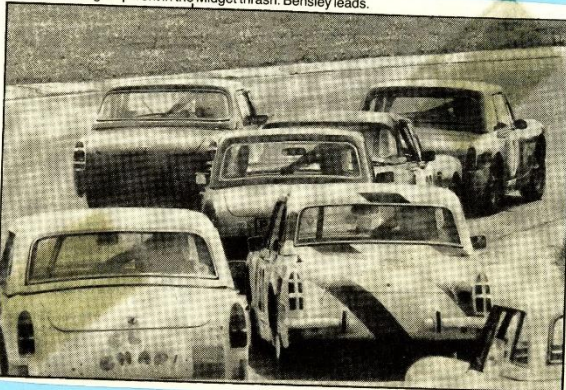
Midget Racing in 1986

We have been sent some fantastic interesting news cutting from the 1986 which appeared in Autosport and Motoring News. Many thanks to Alex Jeffrey for sending us these

You will recognise a few names that are still involved today.

OULTON PARK

It's all a bit fraught up front in the Midget thrash. Bensley leads.



A round in the MGCC roadgoing Midget Championship attracted a good entry. John Bensley qualified at the head of the table with Robert Nettleton some way behind. Bensley duly made the best getaway with Alan Meadows third, but Nettleton soon came through to lead. A spin at Island Bend on lap 2 dropped Meadows off the leaderboard and allowed Andrew Hiley and Peter Coates to come into contention. By half distance, Nettleton still led but was soon to go straight on at Island, this elevating Bensley back into a lead he maintained to the flag. Hiley continued in second place to the finish, well down on the leader while Jeremy Lindley fought past Graham Myers to take third with a recovered Meadows in fourth and Gil Duffy sneaking past Myers on the last lap to claim fifth.

Robert Nettleton (Midget) looked to have matters nicely under control in the 10 lap MGCC Road Going Midget Race until at half distance he shot up the escape road at the hairpin into instant retirement. Nettleton's woes allowed John Bensley to inherit a comfortable cushion at the head of the field while Andrew Hiley (Midget) was elevated to an equally dominant second place. Jeremy Lindley, despite acquiring a severely modified front end performing a last lap spin at Cascades took third. While Alan Meadows, after spinning to the back of the field at the hairpin on the second lap produced a spectacular drive which eventually saw him able to claim a remarkable fourth place.

MOTERING NEWS, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1986

SNETTERTON

The Midget race was a two car affair, with John Hensley holding off the race long attacks of Peter Hiley, to win by half a second. Peter Coates was third, while Marcus and Myers had a tussle for fourth until the former suffered a misfire near the end letting Bob Murrells and Andy Hall by.

MGCC Sprite-Midget — 10 laps: 1, J. Bensley (MG Midget) 17m 12.8s (66.82 mph); 2, P. Hiley (MG Midget / Triumph) 3. P. Coates (MG Midget); 4, G. Myers (MG Midget). Fastest lap: Hiley, 1m 39.9s (69.08 mph).

Peter Coates appears to have a style of his own, as MJ Lovelace *et al* pour into Quarry.



CASTLE COMBE

Roadgoing MG Sprite/Midget race (10 laps): 1, Peter Hiley, 13m54.8s, 79.34mph; 2, John Bensley, 13m58.1s; 3, John Brookes, 14m00.3s; 4, Graham Myers, 14m26.9s; 5, Andy Hall, 14m27.9s; 6, Nick Rose, 14m28.3s. Fastest lap: Hiley, 1m21.9s, 77.20mph.

BRSCC

Peter Hiley had a relatively untroubled time en route to victory in the roadgoing Sprite/Midget dash. John Bensley and Brookes similarly comfortable in second and third respectively. Fourth was where the interest lay, with an entertaining dice between Graham Myers, Andy Hall and Nick Rose. At the back of the group for the opening laps, Myers eventually fought his way to the front.

The Castle Combe Sprint, BRSCC

AUTOSPORT, MAY 8, 1986

The Roadgoing MG Midget opened the afternoon and John Bensley set the early pace, but by three he had been demoted by Peter Hiley. John Brookes made a start from the third row and quickly latched himself onto the leading three soon left the others in his way in arrears. While Hiley won his winning way, despite the putting out a fair amount of smoke was the scrap for fourth that became the focus of attention. The contenders all had their turn at the head of the queue, with Graham Myers leading the Frogeye Sprint. Andy Hall and Nick Rose who mattered most.

Roadgoing MG Midgets — 10 laps: 1, P. Hiley, 13m 54.8s (79.34 mph); 2, J. Bensley; 3, John Brookes; 4, G. Myers. Fastest lap: Hiley (81.87 mph).

Austin Healey Le Mans Sprite

Soon after the Sprite was introduced, Austin Healey embarked on a competition program aimed specifically at the American market. The primary objective was to excel at Sebring where Austin Healey had recorded impressive results in the past. Accordingly, the competition cars are today commonly referred to as 'Sebring Sprites'. During the 1960s, the 24 Hours of Le Mans also became an objective and Austin Healey went to great lengths to create suitable racers based on the Sprite platform.

For 1965 an all-new aluminium body was introduced that was the result of extensive wind-tunnel testing. Sporting a sharp nose, slippery lines and a cut-off 'Kamm' tail, this was the shape found to be most suitable for the long straights at Le Mans

Four sizeable circular headlights were mounted under plexiglass covers fitted flush with the nose. Two large, adjustable flaps were fitted on the top and bottom of the nose to control the flow of fresh air to the radiator.

Underneath the slippery body, the latest Austin Healey racers did show more similarities with the Sprite road car. Suspension was by double wishbones at the front and a live rear axle. Equipped with a single Weber carburettor, the simple 1,293 cc BMC engine produced just over 100 bhp. This was fed through the rear wheels through an MG B gearbox, originally with four forward gears and later with five. The tiny car tipped the scales at just 610 kg.

Although designed with Le Mans in mind, the 'Le Mans Sprite' debuted at the 1965 season-opening Sebring 12 Hours. Piloted by Rauno Aaltonen and Clive Baker, it was finished in a striking orange livery, which ensured no one could overlook the diminutive machine. Starting a lowly 37th, the experience pairing finished 15th overall and 2nd in the 2-litre prototype class behind an eight-cylinder engined Porsche 904/8.

Two new cars were built for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, both finished in a more traditional British Racing Green livery. Aaltonen and Baker were behind the wheel of one, while the other was entrusted Paul Hawkins and John Rhodes. A gearbox issue derailed the efforts of the first car but the Le Mans Sprite of Hawkins and Rhodes performed flawlessly and finished 12th overall and first in class after



starting well down the order in 44th.

Austin Healey continued to race these slippery Sprites and in 1968 Baker and Mike Garton won their class at Sebring. Following the 1968 Le Mans, BMC suspended the racing career of the Le Mans Sprites. Two more cars were actually built in 1969 but never raced by the works team. In total ten examples were built between 1965 and 1969, all of which still exist today.

Lackford Challengeers Race at Spa

A collection of our regular drivers raced at the Ardennes Challenge at the famous Spa Frangchamps circuit in Belgium. The divers included James & John Hughes, Nick Rose, Connah Kay, Richard Perry, James Atkinson and Ian Witt.

It was a memorable weekend with Richard Perry falling foul of French Customs for being British and got a 300 Euro fine whilst Connor Kay fractured a rear brake line ended up in the gravel at the chicane. Nick Rose had a dice with a Ford Mustang at La Source with the Mustang taking the worst of the damage.

James Hughes finished 3rd overall in Race 1 and 4th overall in Race 2. He was flat through Eau Rouge holding the car on 7000rpm on Kemmel & Blanchemant after an engine rebuild a few weeks before.

I am sure at the Drivers Meeting we will be regaled with other claims of taking Eau Rouge flat !!!!!



YOUR MOTHER WOULDN'T LIKE IT.

A vintage MG Midget advertisement featuring a red car parked at a street cafe. The background shows a cityscape with a tall chimney.

1275 cc. 94mph. 0-50 in 9.6 seconds.* £987.89†
(Including on road C.V.E. Reverse gear, 12 months/10,000 miles warranty, 3 year/50,000 miles warranty, 3 year/50,000 miles warranty, 3 year/50,000 miles warranty)

MG MIDGET

© 2011 MG Motor Limited. MG Motor Limited is a subsidiary of MG Motor Corporation. MG Motor Corporation is a subsidiary of SAIC Motor Corporation Limited. SAIC Motor Corporation Limited is a subsidiary of SAIC Motor Group Corporation. SAIC Motor Group Corporation is a subsidiary of SAIC Motor Group Corporation. SAIC Motor Group Corporation is a subsidiary of SAIC Motor Group Corporation.

Jake Wotton Podcast



Jake is one of our newest drivers and he has set up and produced his own podcast. Over to Jake

I have been obsessed with anything with wheels or an engine since an early age and have always been fascinated by the behind-the-scenes side of motor racing and what makes people tick.

After not doing very well at school I suddenly I found myself travelling around Europe helping look after cars owned by some real motorsport greats.

I had a bright idea one night while sharing a bunk bed on a ferry to Zandvoort with ex F1 Designer Steve Nicholls, that I should document some of the amazing stories that he and others had told me. I thought about writing a book but had no idea how to go about doing it however a podcast felt more natural to me as my mom always used to say don't get him talking, he won't stop!

So began 'The Racing Years' hopefully people enjoy hearing the stories as much as I do and the bigger audience it reaches the bigger the guests will get.

You can find Jake's amazing interviews on you Tube under the The Racing Years.

Spridget Racing in the USA

Spridget racing the US is as popular as it is here in the UK the only difference is it a 2000 mile round trek to each circuit. Even further than Steve Cooper has to come !

There ethos is very much the same as ours which is to By hook or by crook get every Spridget out on the Track.

The picture below is taken at Turn 14 of Road America during their 60 year celebration of the sprite.



Snippets

MG Midget stars in Car Henge.



I knew Midgets where lights at the back but ?



Really ???
Is this a standard BL colour of the 70s?



ROBIN LACKFORD MOTOR ENGINEERS



ENGINE MODIFICATIONS

FULL WORKSHOP FACILITIES FOR ALL AGES OF MG

CLASSIC AND SPORTS CAR SPECIALISTS

We cover all MGs and Classic Sports Cars
& Historic Race Cars

SERVICING • REPAIRS

FULL IN-HOUSE RESTORATION
AND FABRICATION INCLUDING:

PAINTBOOTH WITH LOWBAKE OVEN

IN-HOUSE TRIM SHOP

RACE DAY & TRACK DAY PREPARATION

& CIRCUIT SUPPORT

FULL MECHANICAL WORKSHOPS

Sponsors for
Lackford Engineering
Midget and Sprite
Challenge 2022
Lackford Engineering
Historic Formula Ford
2000 Championship
2022



We are the only MG O/C 5 Spanner/Star restorers in East and West Sussex



UNITS 1-7, FOWLERS BUSINESS CENTRE,
HENFIELD ROAD COWFOLD, SUSSEX. RH13 8BS
Telephone **01403 864600** Mobile: **07836 720507**

www.robinlackford.co.uk

MG Midget. The people's Ferrari.

