



The Dashpot

Has Spring Arrived? Edition - May 2017

[British Car Week](#) is an annual awareness week intended for owners of Classic British Cars to get their cars out of the garage.... and drive them!!!! The celebrations run from May 27th through June 4th. This is your opportunity to drive your MG (or other British car) as often as you can. Call a neighbour club member; take a spin together; take some photos of your jaunt; send them to Newsletter Editor, Len Fortin, for the club Photo Album! Get out there; get ready to wave at folks you pass on the road.

April Meeting News:

At the Verona Pizza House on Cyrville Road (the old Louis' Restaurant) we were treated to a wonderful slide show and 'chit chat' by Lorne Keyes from the MG Car Club of Montreal. Lorne's collection of old photos from the 1960's, combined with his grand knowledge of the racing scene in that area, was wonderfully entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable. A grand note of thanks to Lorne!! We were so glad you could join us!!

[Click here to view the slides in Lorne's presentation.](#)

[if you want larger images, send a note to Len Fortin]

A couple of [British Car Council Long Distance Awards](#) for 2016 were presented. There are 2 more BCCI LDAs to be presented at the May meeting.

Ottawa MG Club Membership Renewal: \$35 [get your full colour calendar]

Login at the [Ottawa MG Club web site](#) to renew your membership via PayPal.

OR send an email to 'status@omgc.info' and you'll receive an automated reply with a link to pay via PayPal. Memberships can be renewed at the April club meeting.

Those not able to attend the meeting should please mail their cheque to:

OMGC Memberships, 29 Rideaucrest Drive, Ottawa, ON, K2G 6A4

Notes & Pictures From The Engine Dismantling Technical Session at the Brian Miller garage in Navan, Ontario on Saturday, May 22nd.

[Click here to see the pictures and notes.](#)

OMGC Silver Jubilee Grille Badges Available [send a note to [Trish Adams](#)]

- * with mounting holes at top and bottom
(suitable for mounting on a grille)
- * with two mounting holes at the bottom
(suitable for mounting on a badge bar)

Some News About The OMGC - Canada 150 Emblem

An Update To The Emblem Due To Some Federal Government Regulations

[Click here to read about the REVISED OMGC—Canada 150 Emblem](#)

OMGC Driving-Season Kick-Off Get-Together at the Rideau Lounge Restaurant

[Click here to see the pictures.](#)

OMGC Spring Tune-Up

at the Andrew McCue garage in Chelsea

[Click here to see the pictures.](#)

The [OMGC Drive Your MG-eh! Day](#)

[Ottawa MG Club version of NAMGARs Drive Your MGA Day]

The event was rained out on the original run date, May 6th & again rained out on the alternate run date May 13th. Special arrangements to remember the double weather disaster event will be announced at the May meeting!

Looking Forward:

May 18:

[Regular Monthly Meeting](#)
at the Heart & Crown Pub

May 26-28:

[Cheapo-Cheapo Event](#)
at Isaiah Tubbs Resort
in Prince Edward County

June 15-18:

[VARAC](#)
[Grand Prix at Mosport](#)
[Drive The Track Day](#)

June 19-23:

[NAMGAR GT-42](#)

June 25-28:

[NAMGBR MG2017](#)

June 27-July 2:

[NEMGTR GOF 101](#)

The next Regular Monthly Meeting of the Ottawa MG Club
is [May 18th](#) at the [Heart & Crown Pub \(Barrhaven\)](#)



The Austin-Healey Sprite MK. II and MG Midget MK. I models were more refined, comfortable and user friendly.

TRUTH OR DARE!

by NORM MORT

Spridget - the rise and fall of a British sports car! . . .

There's something happening in the marketplace that British car enthusiasts should be aware of before they buy or sell.

First of all, there are a number of great British sports cars out there that are going to steadily increase in value while others that will be slowly washed away in interest and value, by newer, more alluring and easier to maintain sports cars from around the world.

Twenty some odd years ago the Mazda Miata was not a vintage sports car, but 27-years later it is and its pleasing looks, reliability and comfort make it a great second car or vintage car for retirees to use to tour on the weekend.

Then there are the newer millennium era, fast and fancy cars such as the BMW Z3, the Nissan 300Z, the NSX, Subaru's SVX, 4th generation Corvettes, Dodge Vipers and Plymouth Prowlers, Jaguar XK8s, Porsche Boxsters, Mazda RX7s and Toyota Celicas and MR2s, etc.

And, perhaps not competing in the collector car market yet, you have very affordable and thoroughly modern sports cars such as the Audi TT, BMW Z4, Mercedes SLK, Chrysler Crossfire, Scion FR-S, etc.

These over 10-24-year old collectibles now compete with the traditional British sports cars, that back in 1990 were plentiful, had great club support, plenty of spares and once repaired/restored were very reliable.

As well, thirty years ago fewer enthusiasts were interested in collecting any other old sports cars other than some Fiats, Alfas, Datsun Z-cars and upmarket Mercedes Benz SLs. (High-end Ferrari, Maserati, Lamborghini, Acura NSX, Aston-Martin, etc. are in a different collectability market altogether.)

As a result of these new pressures on the traditional British collectible sports car market, some will fall in demand while the number on the market will increase due to the aging owners.

Although I'm no economic genius, the one thing I did learn in my university course was that market prices are ruled by supply and demand.

And, before you write me a nasty email or letter, let me make it clear this has nothing to do with the history, performance, styling, reliability of any of these British sports cars.

The first collector casualties will be the Triumph Spitfire and MG Midget and Austin-Healey, post-first generation Bug-Eye Sprites.

These entry level British sports cars are terrific small, four-cylinder two-seaters. Over the years I have owned and enjoyed both.

I loved my Triumph Spitfire in particular with its easily accessible engine. By simply undoing the

two side fender latches and tilting the hood and fenders forward you have complete access to not only the motor, but the entire front end.

The Triumph Spitfires Italian Michelotti styling was and still is, both distinctive and pleasing. It handled well, had wind-up windows from the time of its introduction, and a usable trunk space with some additional room behind the bucket seats.

It was the Mazda Miata of the 1960s and seventies which is the crux of the problem today. Despite the decent competition record of the Triumph Spitfire - repeatedly SCCA class champion, this 18-year production run sports car is be-

coming a slow mover in the collector marketplace.

The Triumph Spitfire's main rival from 1961 onward was the more subdued MG Midget and Austin-Healey Sprite.

Bug-Eyed Sprite production had approached 49,000 units by 1961. Appearing in mid-1961 was the new Austin-Healey Sprite MK. II and an MG-badged version known as the Midget.

These rather conventionally styled sports cars were powered by the same 948cc, four-cylinder engine as found in the original Bug-Eye, but with numerous changes.

The 948cc A-series engine was completely overhauled and included a strengthened crankshaft, a new camshaft, the fitting of two 1-1/4 inch HS2 SU carbs, a re-designed cylinder head, and an increased compression. As a result, there was an increase in power from 42.5 bhp @ 5,000 rpm to 46.4 bhp @ 5,500 rpm and as a result top speed increased from 83 to 86 mph. As expected, the fuel economy suffered slightly and dropped from an average 43 mpg to 40 mpg.

These cleaner, more conventionally styled Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget models were considered quite handsome models in their day.

The Midget had appeared due to the clamouring of MG and Morris dealers wanting a similar model in their showroom as the Austin outlets. These cars collectively became known as "Spridgets."

The Austin-Healey Sprite MK. I and MG Midget MK. I models were more refined, comfortable and user friendly. The new Spridget models sold well and by 1962 the engine was enlarged to 1,098cc with the horsepower increased to 56 bhp and Lockheed disc brakes were added up front.

From 1961 until 1969 the Sprite and Midget differed only slightly in looks. As well as the badges, the most distinguishing features between the Sprite and the Midget were the chrome strips added to the MG along the flanks and on the hood. As well, Midget's grille featured vertical rather than hori-

zontal bars and a slightly nicer interior.

An even more sophisticated Sprite MK. III/Midget MK. II was unveiled in March, 1964. The standard four-cylinder 1,098cc engine was given larger main bearings, a strengthened crankshaft, an improved head design, larger inlet valves and better porting. The improvements resulted in a smoother and much more flexible engine for tuning. The new Spridgets entered the modern era with discarding of the ancient side curtains in favour of wind-up windows and side vents. Other niceties included a new folding top, improved windscreen, a re-designed dash and a parcel shelf on the passenger side. Ride comfort and handling was improved through the switch from quarter elliptic to half elliptic springs.

In 1966 the MK IV Sprite and Midget MK III were introduced and power and performance were increased by the fitting of the 65 bhp, 1,275cc version of the A-series unit and an Austin gearbox.

A very basic sports car, BMC, then BMH - British Motor Holdings - and then BLMC, always provided a variety of options including wire wheels, a hardtop, a tonneau cover, an anti-rollbar, laminated windscreen, and an oil cooler.

In 1968 the Spridgets received the first substantial appearance changes. Matte black rockers, windscreen surround, grille, and wheels. Suggested by US distributors, some of those changes lasted less than a year.

Following the merger of Ley-



Restoration - unless you are a do-it-yourselfer, is not financially feasible and even then not to Concours level, walk away.



Over 73,000 of these rubber bumper Midgets were built because it was faster and fitted with an all-synchromesh gearbox.

"Cruisin' the Drag"

FRI. JULY 14/17

Bothwell Area Sports Centre

Come hang out with the Old Autos gang any time after 4 pm then join us to cruise Old Autos hometown streets at 7pm!

Celebrate Collector Car Appreciation Day

- DJ Music by 'Sound Sensations'
- Swag Bags to the 1st 50 registered
- Door prizes • Food booth • Fun!

Hosted by:

Old Autos

A CANADIAN NEWSPAPER FOR THE ENTHUSIAST

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land and BMH to form BLMC in 1968, the Healey ties ended and in 1969 the Sprite was dropped in favour of the MG Midget. It was purely a financial move as BMC had been paying Healey a consultants' fee on each and every Sprite built, but there was no agreement for the production of Midgets alone.

The next major revision was in 1974. It was now powered by a Triumph 1,500cc engine and fitted with bulky black safety bumpers.

Still, over 73,000 of these rubber bumper Midgets were built because it was faster and fitted with an all-synchromesh gearbox.

When MG Midget production came to an end in 1979 there were no tears shed by MG enthusiasts or many journalists.

In the British sports car collector car world MG and Triumph dominate out of the sheer numbers produced. The MGB and TR6 are the most popular models today because these sports cars can travel amongst the modern day traffic with few worries when it comes to performance, handling

and braking.

With the large number of restored/refurbished MGB models on the market its value has started to decrease. For about the same money as an MG Midget you could have a more powerful and comfortable MGB. This too has affected Spridget prices.

Today, the earlier cars have more character and less plastic, while the newer models are less sporty, but more comfortable. Restoration - unless you are a do-it-yourselfer, is not financially feasible and even then not to Concours level, walk away. Still, for those looking to get into vintage racing an MG Midget or Austin-Healey Sprite would be a good place to start.

All this means as an investment the MG Midget is not going to be money in the bank. Still, it will be a fun sports car and not raid the piggy bank so as to stop you from going on that annual vacation or indulging in other interests. And, when it's time to sell, the loss you probably will take, won't upset the bank manager.



From 1961 until 1969 the Sprite and Midget differed only slightly in looks. As well as the badges, the most distinguishing features between the Sprite and the Midget, the Sprite was cleaner and simpler with no chrome strips along the flanks and on the hood. As well, the Sprite's grille featured horizontal bars.



For those looking to get into vintage racing an MG Midget or Austin-Healey Sprite would be a good place to start.



Today, the earlier cars have more character and less plastic. The two-tone paint looks good on this 1961 Midget, but is not original.



The newer Spridgets entered the modern era with discarding of the ancient side curtains in favour of wind-up windows and side vents. Other niceties included a new folding top, improved windscreen, and a re-designed dash.