

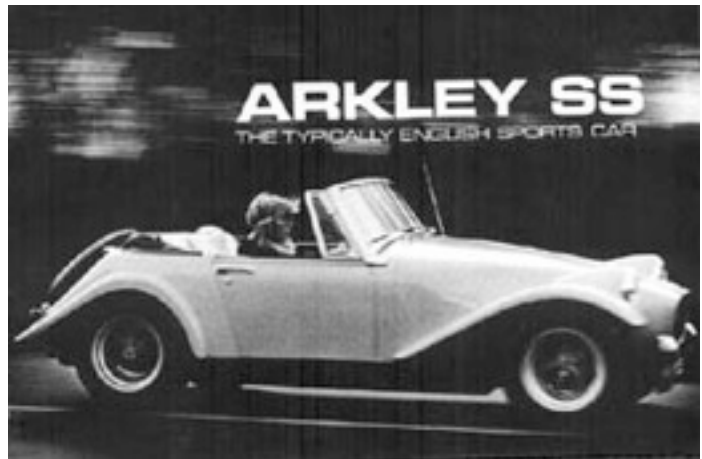


The Arkley was a way of recycling your rusty/damaged Spridget, as long as the damage/rust did not affect the main structural members, and was designed by John Britten in 1970 and produced at his works at Arkley in Barnet, hence the name. Basically the front wings, nosecone and bonnet, are removed and discarded (!), the "cycle" wings are reduced in size and the Arkley fibre

glass front end is fitted. The rear end is a little more complicated and quite stressful, as the use of a hammer and chisel is involved!! The boot lid is discarded as are the rear wings, rear panel, rear decking panel and a section of the boot floor, this is where the hammer and chisel are used. The Arkley rear end is then glued and bonded on.

All that remains is to buy a set of very wide wheels and there you have it! Not really as simple as it sounds, we know, we have been there, done it, all without the aid of a T-shirt.

Peter May Engineering in Halesowen still sell the Arkley Kit and their phone no is 01384 422424. The Arkley we built was great fun and caused much comment wherever we went with it.



David Smith via [Trevor W Scantlebury](#)

An Arkley (right), owned by Peter Collier of Denbighyshire (!). It is one of six in the club register and this one is based on a 1970 Sprite MkIV. The picture shows the car in lovely English country surroundings and the bit you will like, it has Rosie the Jack Russel on guard duty.



Photographs reproduced from the club magazine 'MASCOT'.

## Letter from Andrew French 1st Feb 2000



I have read with interest the articles on the 'Arkley' Midget. Just recently we have become the proud owners of a 1973 Midget based version.

Back in the late '70's I had entered the MCC Classic trials (Exeter, Lands End and Edinburgh) on a series of motorcycles, culminating in a win of the 'Lands End' in 1979 on a Triumph 500 Trophy Trail. My wife Linden decided that she didn't want to remain following along behind with the trailer in case I fell off, broke down or just gave up and wanted to have a go herself in the sports car class.

Our first purchase was a Singer Chamois which proved highly unreliable and was of questionable parentage! Just as we were about to give up with the Singer, I chatted to a chap who asked me if I might want to buy a converted Midget. When he said the magic word 'Arkley', I knew exactly what he was talking about, having seen many advertised by John Brittain in the magazines of the period. A deal was immediately done and we took possession of mid metallic blue AKX 896K. Large bright Alloy wheels, badge bar, spot and fog lights all made it look stunning.

During the autumn and early winter we fitted a sump guard made of sheet steel which covered the underside of the engine, gearbox and propshaft. The car was ready to do battle with my wife as driver and Joan Goodey as navigator. All three events MCC were entered with reasonable success. Great fun, tremendous friendship from the other competitors, many of which gave unstinting help to make sure the 'girls' got there pretty little car through to the end. Finally we decided to stop competing and the Arkley was reluctantly sold. Just memories of a wonderful little car, that is, until now. Just a few weeks ago, a friend phoned up to let us know that an Arkley in mid restoration was being sold, 'just down the road', in fact it was less than half a mile away from our house! A quick phone call, an offer and the car was bought unseen over the phone!

No, it was not our original car but one very similar. It is in paint at the moment and we hope to have it ready for the summer. Our old car had such a hard life being forced up 'Beggars Roost', 'Taxal', 'Bamford Clough' and all the other sections that are so well known

to Long Distance Classic Triallists but this one will be snuggled up in a nice warm garage and used on hi-days and holidays, just for fun.

Here is a picture of 'AKX 896K' during the Exeter Trial in 1979. I will hopefully have a picture of it's successor in the spring.

Andrew French

## Letter from Gerard Chateauvieux

"Hi,

I saw your Arkley page, so per your request, here is my Arkley story. About three years ago, I was looking for a Bugeye Sprite, because the one I had was pretty ruted out and retoring the body panels would have been too big of a job. The car that I ultimately decided to purchase came with an Arley as a parts car. This was mostly due to the fact that the car had been sitting in a private parking lot, unmoved, for about eight years and the this would be a good way to get rid of it. Well, I didn't really have anyplace to store it and didn't know what I would do with it other than remove some salvageable parts. Shortly thereafter I saw an ad on the Internet for someone who was looking for what he termed a "sh\*tbox" of a car wanted for parts. I sent him an email letting him know I had just the item to end his search. Since he lived in Oregon, and the car was in the Salinas/Monterey California area, it took a couple months for the transaction to take place, but he finally showed up one day to pick it up. I thought surely this car would never see the light of day again, but much to my amazement, a few month ago I saw the car on his web site, repainted and running... and looking pretty good too.



[pixelsmith@gerardsgarage.com](mailto:pixelsmith@gerardsgarage.com)

<http://www.gerardsgarage.com>



## Letter and pics from Barrie Harbott



A few years ago, I purchased the Midget-based Arkley SS, registration number NCF 481G, from Garry Tiller, a marine engineer who used to live locally. He had largely refurbished the car over the last few years, having bought it in a sad state from its previous owner, who was a friend of his.

Like a lot of other enthusiasts, in my youth my pals and I had read and enjoyed John Britten's advertisements in "Motorsport". After some time spent with Triumphs, I had owned a MkII Sprite then a MKIII Midget, so I was keen to see the car, after learning that it was for sale.

One look and a quick spin, were enough to convince me that my age, and financial pressure from my bank were insufficient handicaps to dissuade me from closing the deal. Garry's understandable grief at letting it go was eased a little because I was obviously enthusiastic, and reasonably knowledgeable about the model. He has been very helpful, providing information on its history and refurbishment.

My efforts so far have been limited to various bits of electrics, re-routing cables, sorting bodywork and tidying, and restoring as many smaller items to original, as necessary. There are a few, more major, non-urgent jobs. These include improving gear selection in the 5-speed Celica 'box. I have another which I will fit with a more up to date "Frontline" bellhousing and

clutch release mechanism. I also need to raise the suspension, just a tad. These are planned for this winter.

It has a fine, snappy engine, with proper gas-flowed head and manifolds, K&Ns etc etc, uprated brakes and suspension, and handles better and is much quicker than several other Spridgets of the same time.



The aim is to restore it to an "as new, and original as possible" state. Thereafter, if possible, I may even consider some, minor, competitions such as a Sprint or Hillclimb or two; but that depends on a number of considerations.

Barrie Harbott

## Letter and pictures from Paul Tyzack

Ah!..... So there really are other people out their with the Arkley, or is that only in the USA?. I really did think I was the only one, here in the UK!

I've had a hankering for a kit car of sorts for years, so I was pleased to find an advert for a "cheap" MG Arkley. But having absolutely no idea what one was, it was with some apprehension that I went along to see it. However after a quick spin, with the roof down, makes all the difference!, I new I just had to have it.

I've now had my Arkley based on a 1972 Midget MkIII, for just over one year, bought ready built, but in need of some TLC. I've made a few engine modifications, changed the Dynamo to an Alternator, added of K&N's, made improvements to electric's and wiring, overhauled the cooling system and improved the airflow with the addition of a tuned exhaust system. Replaced all wheel bearings and added low profile tyres on the front, and replaced the soft-top.

The car isn't blisteringly fast, well you wouldn't expect so from a 1275cc, but it is great fun to drive. Typically it is now winter and I have to drive with the roof up, still only a few months to go and spring will be here again, and I just can't wait!

I use the car on a daily basis and find it to be very reliable, cold starting is sometimes a little difficult, though once it's going everything's just fine, and I must say the heating is better than most "modern" cars!

I've attached a few photos with this short note, I hope you can use this little piece, and I look forward to seeing other stories and pictures. Just click on the images below for a larger view!



Regards

Paul Tyzack Northants.