

## **MGCC May Meetings on the old 1.608 mile Silverstone club circuit**

### **Results: Midget/Sprite scratch races 1967 to 78**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Fastest lap</b>
1967	David Crooke	1minute 17.4 seconds 74.79mph
1968	Richard Budd	not known but I estimate around 1m 13 or 14 seconds
1969	Brian Hancock	1m 14seconds 78.23mph
1970	J. Butler	1m 13.8
1971	Reg Cole	1m 11.6
1972	Malcolm Beer	1m 18 [wet]
1973	Bill Wood	1m 12
1974	Ed Reeve	1m 7.4
1975	Graeme Dodd	1m 8.8
1976	Keith Ashby	1m 7.6
1977	Martin Wilson	1m 9.6 [now changed from 5 lap to 8 lap race]
1978	Keith Ashby	1m 3.3 91.45mph

### **Notes**

It is interesting to see how the racing Midget/Sprites developed rapidly from the late 60's in various ways to reduce the lap times significantly in the next ten years or so. Richard Budd's car was on, I believe, 5" [or possibly 5 1/2"] wheels and narrow high-profile racing tyres. For the next few years, the lap times only reduced marginally with cars having slightly lower ride heights and mostly up to 7" wide wheels and a bit lower profile CR65 pattern treaded race tyres of a slightly softer compound.

Slicks came in to club racing from about late 1972; it was wet for the race that year and the 1973 lap time was about the same as the previous ones as not everyone had changed to these new tyres in club racing.

As well as having a bit more bhp and torque from larger capacity engines the cars began to run with stiffer springs, more rose joints on the suspension, larger brakes and rear spoilers etc.

A big leap forward came in 1974 when Ed Reeve with his supercharged 1293cc car on slicks did a 1m 7.4 and then Graeme Dodd in a normally aspirated 1293cc Midget was almost as fast in 1975. At about this time, I think the Modsports classes which previously had been up to 1150 cc and 1151 to 2.000 cc [where the few Midgets in the class had to compete with Lotus Elans etc] now included a 1150 to 1300cc and in some cases 1151cc to 1500cc class so a new fresh influx of 1275 cc race Midgets and Sprites were seen on the circuits. Before this, most Modsports Midgets and Sprites owners generally chose to run with the smaller engine size [1098cc block bored out ] to be competitive in the up to 1150 cc Modsports class.

Talking of which TZA 238 won the up to 1150cc class in the race four years in a row [72 to 75] and the closest to an overall win in the Scratch race was two second places behind Bill Wood in 1973 and Martin Wilson in 1275s in 1977. TZA lap times over this period started from 1m 12.6 in 1971 reducing to 1m 9.8 in 1977.

Keith Ashby then took times a huge step forward in 1978 with an amazing fastest lap of 1m 3.3 and I do not think that was beaten before the old club circuit was altered in about 1990 so no direct comparisons can be made after this date. The only circuits that have not changed since the late 1960's that I know of are Mallory Park and Cadwell Park and Thruxton. Keith had a long stroke 1476cc engine in 1978 and was at the very top of his game with a very well-developed car with pretty low suspension and I guess about 8" wide wheels and it goes without saying that he drove extremely well. His car was evenly matched with that of the two BL employees Mike Donovan/Peter Richings racing the Heatherbourne Plastics 1460cc Midget [with rear radiator]. The two cars completed against each other in several Modsports races that year.

### **MGCC Road Going Class**

Before the MGCC Midget series was started in 1977 there was always a class for absolutely standard road cars in the MGCC Silverstone meetings. Typically, a very well driven completely standard 1275 with Ernie Foster or Miles Robinson driving would win with a best lap be in the 1m 23 seconds bracket.

The MGCC Midget series Road going class allowed 731 cams and initially 1 ½" carbs and raised C/R and LCB and the lap times were naturally far quicker than with a completely standard car.

With fierce competition in this class it did not take long for the lap times to reduce to 1m 15.8 [Robert Nettleton and Peter Felix shared fastest lap in 1982 and a one two in the race with their distinctive multi coloured cars. In 1985 David Gibson won with fastest lap of 1m 14.6. It just demonstrates how competitive Midget racing had become as these road going cars were on standard 4 ½" road wheels and 145 radial SP4 road tyres. The times were only a shade slower than the full race and lighter 1150cc and 1275cc cars with fibreglass fronts and backs running on racing tyres in the late 1960's