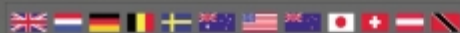


# Midascarsforum.com

magazine



**MIDAS**

**Forum group**

**issue 02**  
**July 2009**



## Stoneleigh 2009 report



**Interview with Alistair Courtney - Race Bronze**  
**Tech tips - Push button starter**

# In this issue



**3B** Sport Cars I

**alternative Midas Cortez**  
Motor: Power K-Series

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.	6.300 €
🇬🇧	Leistung:	95 kW / 130 PS
	Geschwindigkeit:	217 km/h
	0-100 km/h:	7,2 sec
	Gewicht:	715 kg

41 Punkte  
GTM  
MEV



The Midascarsforum magazine is produced for the Midas cars forum members and is only available in pdf format and free to download and distribute. Articles are taken from the forum or have been sent by members to the editor. Interesting stories or other contributions can be sent to the editor: Hans Efdé at [hans.efde@hccnet.nl](mailto:hans.efde@hccnet.nl) or at [hansefde@yahoo.com](mailto:hansefde@yahoo.com).

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## Cover

Artisticallyreworked picture by Frinks of the Midas display at Stoneleigh 2009. More reworked Stoneleigh 2009 pics by Frinks can be found on [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com).

## Back

Monday at Stoneleigh 2009, pics in tiltshift style.

# Editorial

## Targets

At last you have TMF mag 02 in your hands. I had hoped to have it ready within one month after Stoneleigh, but I failed. I think the return trip from Stoneleigh burned a few fuses in my head, because nothing came out of my hands when I got back. Well, I did some work in the garden and made an effort completing the 2008 administration of my shop.

It started much better in March. I had decided I would go to Stoneleigh and this time in my own Midas. 4 Years earlier I made my first attempt but stranded at Ed's home due to clutch problems. Also the 4500 rpm on the highway was deafening. We continued in his amazing almost flawless Gold coupé and had an uneventful trip.

January and February this year had been quite cold in Holland, but March blossomed and quickly plans were made to get the engine out for a new diff. Numerous jobs were undertaken in frantic stress and 1 week before the trip the car was ready. But untested. A testdrive of 15 miles was performed. No strange noises and no bits falling off, so all looked fine. Further on you'll find a more extensive story, but the bottom line is that without the decision to go to Stoneleigh my Midas wouldn't have been touched for another few months.

I envy the people in the club and on the forum who seem to have unlimited energy and improve their cars in a breathtaking pace. I am afraid I am in the league of people who have zillion plans with their Midas -tucked away in the garage under a sheet-, but nothing happens due to other commitments.

By setting targets every now and then something happens. I now have hung up a

white board in my garage with a todo list. Now I have to decide on the next meeting or show. Perhaps the next Mini Meeting in Utrecht. You'll read it in another issue.

That's all folks. See you in the Autumn. Use those magic summer days and evenings for some hot cruisin' and don't forget to tell me about it.

*Hans Efdé*

# Interview with Alistair Courtney

## The past, present and future of Midas cars

After having re-published the first interview with Harold Dermott in TGT61, it seemed a good idea to do an interview with the present owner of Midas cars, Alistair Courtney. There wasn't enough time at Stoneleigh to have a lengthy conversation with Alistair, but with having internet and email that didn't put us off. What a difference from the previous century where you actually had to visit someone, use a magnetic device to capture the discussion and then typ it out on a noisy machine conveniently called a "typewriter". Here goes:

*Why did you buy the Midas marque?*

Primarily to save it. Around the second half of 2003, I was looking for a hobby business that would satisfy my petrol-head tendencies. I had already spoken with Richard Oakes who was trying to sell his Blackjack Avion project at the time, when I came across an advert for "the assets of Midas Cars Ltd" in Kit Car magazine. I followed up the advert and it became apparent that the marque would disappear if nobody was prepared to rescue it. I had been involved with kit cars from the early 1980s, and became an admirer of the original Midas Cars company under Harold Dermott. Their products were so much better made than most of the other kits available at the time. I had wanted a Midas Gold Coupe, but at that time I couldn't afford one. Then I got involved with racing an MG Midget, followed quickly by marriage, mortgages and parenthood, so whilst I had followed the kit car scene through magazines, I was no longer actively involved in it when the opportunity to buy Midas came up.

*What did you expect of the marque and sales that time?*

I never had any great expectations and I

certainly never thought that I would make a fortune from Midas cars. My original business plan allowed for no sales of kits in the first year, just some spares, as I felt that the recent history of Midas would put customers off. I then planned on two kits the following year and then between four and six kits a year after that. At that level Midas cars would be sustainable as a part-time business.

*Is it a disappointment so far or -looking at the time we're in- are you happy with the results?*

The first two years went pretty much as planned and in the third year (2006), while I only made two sales, one sale was for a turn key car (i.e. fully built). Selling a complete car was equivalent financially to selling three to four kits, but it was also a big commitment of my time which meant that I had less time to pursue other developments. Fortunately, my customer (Steven Kennedy) wanted the best car possible and the result was a beautiful Gold convertible that he has kindly allowed me to use as a show car.

Towards the end of 2006 the kit car industry was already noticing a downturn and the following year's Stoneleigh was the poorest that I have ever attended. The second half of 2007 was a struggle so I took steps to find extra work, which is why we have been making parts for electric vans for the past year. I can't say I'm happy with the results, after all it was never my intention to spend my spare time making parts for electric vans just to subsidise the Midas company. But overall, my only real disappointment is that I have not been able to focus more on the Midas brand and developing the cars as I would like to.

*You also have a regular job. How do you*

*combine this with running a car business?*

My regular job takes up 4 1/2 days a week, leaving me free on Friday afternoons. So I have 2 1/2 days each week to devote to the Midas business. I usually spend a couple of evenings each week at my workshop as well. I would say that spending time with my family is a trickier balancing act. My wife has been very understanding and my two boys now take it in turns to come to the workshop with me at weekends. I'm not sure whether they think of it as a treat or a punishment!

*What do you consider the strong and the weak points of the Midas cars?*

In some ways the strengths of the Midas cars are also their weaknesses. The composite monocoque is very sophisticated and well thought out and still sets the Midas apart from other kit cars. On the other hand, the monocoque is not cheap to manufacture. So the Midas will always be more expensive than an equivalent spaceframe or ladder chassis based car. The fact that they are based on Metros is very good technically and makes them easy to build, but it is not so good from an image point of view. For example, the A-series engine, used in the Gold, still has a loyal following as it is very easy and relatively cheap to tune. However, it can also be viewed as something of a neolithic relic by those who have grown up with multi-valved hot hatches.

*What's your opinion on the trends and future of kitcars?*

Generally, I think that the kit car industry tends to be slightly ahead of economic trends and it can be seen historically, from the last two recessions, how the industry has had tended to shrink before the rest of the economy and also recover earlier. Certainly, kit cars enjoyed a boom in the early 1980s and the mid 1990s, so I can only hope we see another boom in a year or two.

The other factors that affect trends are

related to what is available from the mainstream car industry in terms of competition and supply of donor vehicles. I think that we are already seeing a growth in the number of mid-engined kit cars available and this is because the majority of donor vehicles are front-wheel drive which lend themselves to mid-engined kits. Furthermore, there is now limited competition for mid-engined cars from the mainstream industry with the MGTF now being available in very limited numbers, the Toyota MR2 is no longer made and the Lotus Elise is up around the £30k figure. I think that simple mid-engined cars such as the Riot and MEV will takeover from traditional Lotus Seven type cars at the bottom end of the market as supplies of RWD donors dry up.

*The majority of cars on display at Stoneleigh consisted of big engined sports cars and extreme track day cars (like your Deronda). How does the sensible Midas fit in?*

I think that the Midas has always had its own niche - small, lightweight, front wheel drive coupe or convertible. When the first Midas coupes came out there really wasn't any mainstream competition, but over the years we have seen the likes of the Honda CRX, Ford Puma and Vauxhall Tigra come and go. Similarly, there is now more competition from small convertibles, like the Peugeot 206cc. However, in the current economic climate the big car manufacturers will have to concentrate on the core products and won't be able to invest in niche market products, so hopefully there should be less competition for the Midas in the next five years or so.

*What are your ideas on the development of the Midas models concerning styling and technique for the coming 5 years?*

It is no secret that I have been working on restyling the front end of the 2+2 models (Cortez & Excelsior) to give them a more traditional Midas nose. This is very nearly

ready, I just need to find a couple of spare weeks to finish it off and then take the moulds from the styling buck. I hope that the restyling will give these models a new lease of life, in which case I would look at adapting them for alternative donor vehicles. I am also reworking the dashboard for the 2+2s to make the interior a bit more modern and this would also make it easier to use the instrument pod from another donor. Beyond that it is difficult to predict in the current economic climate. I hope that there will be the opportunity for a new Midas in the traditional small coupe and convertible style, when the economy picks up, but it depends on what else is available.

*Which tin box cars are on your list of future donors?*

For updating the 2+2 models, then the Ford Fiesta or Vauxhall Corsa are the most obvious candidates, but I wouldn't rule anything out at this stage.

*Are you doing your own design work or do you/will you contract professional designers like Richard Oakes for updates?*

For the 2+2 front end I have been fortunate that I have been working with a laminator, Ross, who has been involved with kit cars for over twenty years. He has developed a good eye for what works and what doesn't so I feel that we will end up with a finished product that looks right. I think if we were developing something totally new then I would look at hiring a professional designer, but for updating the existing range I am happy that we can get the detailing right.

*If a new Midas model would appear, what would it be? Family car, 2-seater, sports car, coupe, convertible, small engine, big engine, mid range, top range?*

I think that any new Midas will have to meet certain criterion: It must be lightweight, use advanced construction, be low slung and handle well. Beyond that I

cannot say what the next Midas model might be.

*Can we expect a mid engined Midas?*

Possibly, I had schemed up a mid engined track day car at the end of last year, as I felt that was the way to go for the current market. But then, in February, I got introduced to Andy Round, who had developed the Deronda, and it was obvious that taking on the Deronda made more sense than developing something new from scratch. I might still develop the car that I had planned as it would be smaller and cheaper than the Deronda, but that depends on how well the Deronda project goes and also how the kit car market develops.

*You showed a possible electric drive for the Midas at Stoneleigh. What were the reactions? Are you going to proceed with its development?*

The electric drive system certainly got a lot of attention and our electric vehicle guru, John Lilly, was inundated throughout the two days with questions about it. I first met John at the Exeter show last November, where he was exhibiting on the Battery Vehicle Society stand. John runs a small company, Dragon Electric Vehicles, that converts vehicles to battery power. We got talking and it transpired that he had already converted a couple of Rover Metros, so I suggested that he take a look at my Excelsior. He took a good look at it and concluded that the chassis and layout was perfect for a conversion. We would like to get it on the road and I can see that it would make a practical vehicle for my daily commute around the Oxford ring road.

*When do you expect to have a running prototype of the electric car?*

John hopes to arrange for a loan of a set of batteries from a supplier that he works with, which would allow us to get it on the road this year. If this plan doesn't come together

then we will have to see how the finances work out .

*Any idea of its price tag?*

To buy a new electric motor, conversion kit (i.e.gearbox and clutch adaptors), motor controllers, and batteries can be in the range of £5000 to £8000 depending on specification and that cost is with Lead acid batteries. Lithium ion batteries would treble that at least, but the range would also treble. Cost is very much dependent on specification. The motor that we had fitted to the show car would be able to reach 100mph and run steadily at 70mph. With a lead acid battery pack of about 200kg, the range would be about 50miles at 30mph or 30 miles at 50mph and the cost new would come to about £6500. Of course in true Midas fashion it is possible to pick up the motors and control gear second hand for a good deal less, as these are just industrial items used to drive machinery. So it would be possible to convert a Midas to this sort of level for less than £4000.

*What's the status with parts supply? Can you still supply all parts for the Gold Convertible and Cortez/Excelsior? I heard problems with acquiring rear shock absorber brackets, rear subframes and windscreens.*

I can supply all the parts for the Gold Convertible and 2+2 models to the current specification. The only parts for earlier Gold Convertible that I know that I cannot get hold of are the quarterlight door frames.

Unfortunately, the supplier scrapped the jigs for them during the Mark Bailey era. The quarterlight frames will fail the SVA/IVA test for external edges, so we now use the 2+2 style door frames which has a small triangle to support the door mirror and a single piece of glass. The coupe rear subframes and rear shock absorber brackets have become a problem as Charlie Dodd used to make them, but Alan Donohue has already made some shock absorber brackets and is talking about making subframes. I

also heard about problems with getting hold of good Metro subframes, but these comments mainly came from owners from the north. I have had no problem with the subframes that I have picked up locally, but then the winters are milder in the south of the country and less salt is used on the roads so perhaps we are luckier with respect to corrosion. Windscreens shouldn't be a problem. The Gold Convertible and the Coupes use the Fiat 126 front screen and these are still readily available from windscreen specialists. The windscreen on the 2+2 models is unique, but it has an Autowindscreens part number, so they can make a one off screen if necessary. The main thing is to make sure your insurance includes windscreen cover, then it is up to your insurance company to cover the cost of the replacement.

*Could a customer make use of the scrappage scheme to buy a new Midas?*

No, the scrappage scheme in the UK has been designed to encourage the sale of new cars at a minimal cost to the UK government. The manufacturer is expected to contribute half of the £2000 rebate, so the discounts that the dealers can offer have been reduced accordingly! When VAT is taken into account the government will only end up contributing on cars costing less than £6666.67!

*Many thanks Alistair for this interview. All the best with the further developments of the Midas marque.*

# Stoneleigh revisited

## Stoneleigh 2009 report by Hans Efdé

Last year I brought my car back on the road after being more than a year dormant, just in time for the IMM2008. Apart from a braking problem my Midas performed quite well. A few other trips were uneventful, but it came clear that the car was not suited for long trips. It just revved too hard on the motorway. I tucked it away for the winter under a blanket with the promise to fix it before the next summer. It was a long cold winter, my 6 and 10 year old kids were able to skate on ponds for the first time in their lives! When March came I was rudely awakened, just 2 months for Stoneleigh and nothing done yet! Stress surged through my body and a scheme was made to get the garage ready (still no insulation, inner walls and hoist) and remove the engine.

All went smooth, but the Mini specialist did not have time for a complete overhaul. We agreed that this time it would just be a 3.1 diff. and valve seals that hopefully would solve the huge oil consumption. If chunks of metal were found in the gearbox it would be end of story. I drained the fluids, all looked good, no metal in the oil. Also the oil filter was clean. During a previous check the Mini specialist noted the large axial play on the crankshaft. I knew this already because the engine would not turn over properly with the clutch depressed. Possibly the previous owner had installed a "grey" diaphragm, useful for racing to prevent the clutch slipping but the axial force of it is too much for the ancient A-series design in the long term.

I removed all accessories from the engine and with help from my brother the engine was hoisted through the top. Then after delivering it to the Mini specialist it took 2 nail biting weeks to get it back. My brother helped me again to get the engine in, piece

of cake really. Unfortunately I did not have a new exhaust gasket, nor did the specialist. Stress! In the mean time I installed all the previously removed parts, but it wasn't much work without the inlet and outlet casting. At last I got my new gasket and was able to finish the car just a week before Stoneleigh. Why does it always go this way? My 10 year old son was nervous as well, because he was going to join me and it would be his first trip abroad. My wife was quite negative about my attempt to get the car ready and make it to Stoneleigh, so that made me even more determined. If I needed to work in the garage every night to get the Midas ready I would do it.



To my excitement the car fired up straight away. Oops big leak near the water pump. It was a new one because corrosion had taken its toll. The hose wasn't that good anymore as well, but I could not find a new one on time. With a few extra turns on the jubilee clip the water leak was cured (or I thought it was, more about that later). Two test runs later the timing and CO was set. I had no idea how much CO my car was generating, but I'd prefer to have it rich to cool the turbo. The new diff. was disappointing. I had hoped to have a relaxed cruising speed, but with the low 175/50 R13 tyres the engine was still doing

3500 at about 110km/h. A waist of money and time, I should have had the 2.9. Obviously you loose torque at low revs, but this engine turned out to be so strong I did not notice a change in acceleration between the 3.44 and 3.1.

Friday morning May 1st we went on our way to the south of Holland, a first stint of 200 miles. Just before the Belgium border we would meet Ed in his coupe. Halfway near Utrecht the sun started coming through. We had a short break, removed the soft top and with the wind deflector up it was not bad driving. Actually there was less noise inside without the roof. At the Hazeldonk border crossing Ed was already waiting although we made it on time. To my surprise we didn't have any traffic jams on our way. A quick chat, refuelled (one of the many ) and continued in the direction of Belgium. Darn, immediately we ran into a huge traffic jam, due to road works. It took us more than an hour to cover the last 5 miles to the border. To my relief no overheating engine! In Belgium the traffic flow seemed better. We had anticipated problems near Antwerpen, but we just flew past it. At the next stop for a pee (young kids pee a lot) and a refuel (turbo engines use a lot of fuel) Ed discussed going via another route. He had satnav on board and had heard of serious traffic problems towards the Belgium coast. It seemed better to drive to France and then go westwards towards the coast. There we would pick up the highway to Dunkirk. So we did. Only to find out that the A25 in France should be named the worst road ever. Somehow the tarmac had rippled like desert sand, generating a "thump" every half second. It must have been close to the resonance frequency of the body shell, so I started getting afraid bits might shake off. But as we know Harold Dermott used to test his cars this way in Belgium and nothing happened. Of course there were more traffic jams on the way due to people trying

to repair it. Near Dunkirk Ed floored the throttle to fetch the 16.00 ferry. Else we would have to wait for another 2 hours! It was a good thing there wasn't much traffic near the harbour since our speed was highly illegal and possibly dangerous. We were through customs in an eye blink, but Ed was held up because his boarding reservation didn't seem right. It was a relief to see him popping up in my rear view mirror and the ferry door closed immediately behind him. We were on board! Phew, that was close. A bit silly, I had to laugh from the excitement.

The trip from Dunkirk to Dover lasted 2 hours, but it's much cheaper than from Calais. On board we had our first taste of the British cuisine. Anyone ever wondered why there are so many fat people in England? Dover was fogged up, so it seemed better to keep the soft top on. Another fuel stop an on our way to London. Just 20 miles further it was sunny again, always a good excuse to get rid of the soft top. In fact you can drive these cars topless comfortably most of the time as long as you keep moving, a pleasant draft during hot days and you'll stay dry during mild showers. It helps if the heater works (yes they do work when bled correctly and the hoses are not clogged up). We arrived in Leamington Spa at about 21.00 without further delays and checked in the Eaton Court hotel. According to the hotel website there were just 3 rooms left, but there was



only one other car on the parking lot. It seemed we were the only guests for most of the time during our stay. The first sign of the crisis. We heard they were mostly dependent on the now absent trainees of the local car factories. With this source of income gone and too much competition from other hotels the future is questionable. I wonder if it still will be there in 4 years time. Unfortunately the breakfast was rubbish, so I have no plans going back there again anyway.

Saturday was another day with excellent weather. The cars were checked for fluid levels. All okay, I just needed to refuel. The valve seals had cured the enormous oil consumption. Also I dialed the CO a bit back because it felt the car was losing power at full throttle. I proposed to make a tour through the area towards the RAF museum in Cosford. Ed put the route in his excellent satnav. It wanted to direct us through the Birmingham area, but by making waypoints we had it go underneath Birmingham through Redditch via the A4189, then through Bromsgrove and Kidderminster. And boy oh boy what splendid roads. Narrow, sometimes cut out through tree roots (yes really!), going up, down, left and right over hills while passing yellow coloured fields.



Passing a canal with canal boats

Midas cars are built for this. In the early afternoon we arrived at Cosford and did a tour through the RAF museum.

Highly recommended with lots of interesting aircraft. It was the first time I saw one of my favorite aircraft in the flesh, a Mosquito in the WW2 hangar. Another remarkable collection are the German WW2 missiles. Not just the V1 and massive V2, but also the very first guided missiles, by wire or remote. I had no idea the Germans were so technologically advanced those days. I suppose we are lucky they didn't have enough resources, else you would be reading German now.



Astonishing was the hangar with experimental aircraft with the TSR2 as the masterpiece. What a luck they hadn't scrapped this huge attack aircraft that had a take off weight not far from a Boeing 737. Talking about airliners they have a Comet! Not to mention the cold war hangar where



you can get face to face with the mighty Javelin or walk under a Vulcan. Another favorite of mine, the twin engined Electric Lightning was hung up vertically, as it was climbing its way through thousands of feet of thin air to intercept a dreaded Russian bomber and ready to fire its missiles. Almost stunned we left the museum and drove to Stoneleigh to see who was there from the club. Already quite a few Midasses were parked near the marquis. We talked too long and had another late evening meal where I had to puch my son Thomas every now and then to prevent him from falling in sleep behind his dinner.



I opened the curtains and the big day Sunday looked extremely bright. Good for turn out! Near the park we joined the prettiest traffic jam in the world and soon passed the gates. Absolutely wonderful to pass those huge fields filled with thousands of kit cars. A good show out at our Midas club with 22 or 23 cars. Foreigners being me, Ed and from Germany Matthias Blesser. The pics speak for themself. More can be found in my "midasracer" directory at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com). Monday looked grim, overcast and showers. This seems to be typical for Bank holiday. We went back to the Agricultural park, but only a few participants were there. No problem, yesterday we had walked passed the club displays, today was a good day to check out the manufacturer stands in the

halls. I won't bore you with details, the usual stuff. But I was impressed with a new French buggy revival, the F16 based on a Clio. Also the Italian exotic "replica's" are becoming more convincing every year. A manufacturer showed a video on which you could see how they used a genuine Murcielago to make body moulds. It would be interesting to see what happens if these guys get their hands on a Ferrari Enzo or a McLaren F1! Who said Chinese are good in copying stuff. The British easily beat that!



In the afternoon we went to Warwick castle, mighty expensive to get in but worth it. In contrast with my previous visit, they had now actors running around in costumes. The public could participate in many events, sword fighting for the kids, an impressive bird of prey demonstration and the cream on the cake, the firing of a real trebuchet with a fiery canon ball. I like this castle a lot



**continued on page 17**

# KIT CARS

**SUPER TRUMPF**

4 005556 204731

## 1A Super Speed

**Adrenaline Murtaya**  
Motor: Subaru Impreza Turbo

## 1B Super Speed

**AGM WLR**  
Motor: GM LS1 V8

## 3B Sport Cars I

**alternative Midas Cortez**  
Motor: Rover K-Series

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	6.300 €
⚡	Leistung:	95 kW / 130 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	217 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	7,2 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	715 kg

Plastbau  
 GTM  
 MEV

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	31.500 €
⚡	Leistung:	298 kW / 406 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	314 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	3,8 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	750 kg

## 2A Roadcar

**Aeon GT3 Spyder**  
Motor: ...

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	...
⚡	Leistung:	325 kW
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	...
🕒	0-100 km/h:	...
⚖️	Gewicht:	...

Fibertechnik  
 Ultimate  
 Streetcar

## Super Speed

**Ultima GTR**  
Motor: Chevrolet V8

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	44.100 €
⚡	Leistung:	537 kW / 730 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	372 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	2,6 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	980 kg

Fibertechnik  
 GTM  
 MEV

## 4B Sport Cars II

**MEV R2**  
Motor: Ford Jetec V4

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	8.800 €
⚡	Leistung:	131 kW / 177 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	285 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	4,5 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	498 kg

Carbon  
 Double  
 G40  
 Mev

## Sport Cars I

**GKD Evolution**  
Motor: BMW S54

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	21.400 €
⚡	Leistung:	245 kW / 333 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	250 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	3,5 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	750 kg

Carbon  
 Douglas  
 MEV  
 Mev

## Sport Cars I

**GTM Libra**  
Motor: ZR500 Honda Type R

**GB**

€	Selbstbau-Kit ca.:	31.500 €
⚡	Leistung:	164 kW / 223 PS
🏎️	Geschwindigkeit:	240 km/h
🕒	0-100 km/h:	4,0 sec
⚖️	Gewicht:	770 kg

Fibertechnik  
 Ultimate  
 MEV



Line up on Sunday



How to recognize the Midas club

**Previous page:** overview of the Trumpf Kit cars special. Performance looks a bit exaggerated to me. Read "the last bits" to find out how the Midas appeared in it.



**David Manifold's smart Coupé**



**Best looking Excelsior so far, owned by Neil Franklin**



**It's electrifying! Mike Perkins gives thumbs up.**



# The race Bronze

by Neil bond



There I was minding my own business, keeping my head below the parapet and avoiding having any active involvement with my Midas (it's not been on the road for about 25 years!).

Then this young blond female approaches me with a winning smile and engages me in conversation. Regrettably I am more than twice her age and her boyfriend lives next door but one, so the reason turns out not to be my animal magnetism but my long neglected Midas parked (or should that be abandoned) at the side of my house. "What sort of car is that?" she asks and when I inform her it is a Midas she said, "my Dads got one of those". Now bear in mind that up to this date not only have I never seen another Midas in the flesh, so to speak, but also to

discover a fellow owner in my own locality was to say the least – a bit of a surprise.

The owner of this car turned out to be my local pharmacist who had taken my occasional prescription over the last few years, passed the usual pleasantries but never indicated the slightest interest in anything to do with mechanical transport. Moreover he looked fairly normal. I'd always taken my wife's opinion that owners of kit cars were potentially nuts so it undermined confidence in the infallibility of the female opinion being always right to find a Midas owner without a psychiatric nurse in close attendance. At the earliest opportunity I sought out my fellow owner, Chris Gibson, and extracted the following information.

**Reg. Number** AUX 92L

**Model.** Mark 1/Bronze, but built to special order as rally car.  
Chris has remained the only owner since new.

**Date of purchase,** he could not remember but thinks 1979 or 1980.

**Chassis number,** again not known until he find registration documents or checks vehicle, which is currently stored with other cars he owns.

**Colour,** remains as original white gel coat.

**Engine,** A series 1293cc Cooper S full race with straight cut/drop gears.

**Suspension,** coil over adjustable Koni shocks.

**Fully built in fire extinguishers.**

**External battery cutout switch.**

**Sump guard.**

**Underside fully plated with checkerboard alloy.**

**All alloy roll cage,** built and fitted by John Aley with detachable door bars, all to full FIA regs.

**Special brackets fitted to enable 2 spare wheels to be carried in the back of the car.**

**Larger wheel arches,** constructed by Harold Dermott (apparently with design input from Richard Oakes) to permit larger 13-inch road wheels to be used.

**Fitted with intercom system and Halda speed pilot** (for our younger readers this is a mechanical device to record times,

distances and calculates average speed etc.), predates the clever electronic computer readouts now fitted to more modern vehicles.

**Body specially reinforced,** with heavier matting, particularly around A frame and windscreen.

**Top speed limited to circa 90 mph due to fitment of lower final drive ratio.**

This suggests the use of a rally cam which needs high revs to maintain useful and usable torque. As an old club rally man who used to compete with limited success in a Mini Cooper S complete with full race 1293cc engine I still remember fragments of this technical gobbledegook.

As I understand it the car was built to Chris Gibson's specification, as detailed above, for the specific purpose to compete in club rallying. Provided the photograph I borrowed from Chris and then had scanned (by a more computer literate friend) turns out to be reproducible by Hans you can see the car in action on the Bass Trophy Rally organised by the Blackrod Motor Club. As the car has not been used for about 20 years this must have been in the mid 1980's. Chris told me he had been one of the founder members of this club, which I suppose still exists, in the West Horton/Burnley/Chorley area of east Lancashire.

The car at some stage in it's rallying career developed the strange habit of occasionally skipping sideways when on the road and needing engine rebuilds every 2 or 3 events due to metal particles in the oil. The cause of these two apparently unrelated problems finally came to light when the gearbox was stripped to find wear in the bearings where the drive shafts exit through the casing. Subsequent movement allowed the planet wheel arrangement to nicely skim the internal surface of the casing and occasionally allow one of the shaft gearing

systems to momentarily jam – hence the disconcerting sideways skip! To the fully skilled mechanical engineers reading this I apologise, I am an unskilled and vaguely ignorant amateur spanner man, so my descriptions may lack accuracy. At some stage following the discovery and rectification of this mechanical malady it would appear that Chris's involvement in rallying was curtailed and the car was effectively mothballed (this is a euphemism for stored and ignored) for the last 20 years. He does reckon that recommissioning should not be too difficult but one suspects this is not planned for the near future.

Finally, as a typical MOC member who has never made any useful contribution (other than my annual subscription) over the last

nine years may I state how much I enjoy the arrival of any newsletters and the copy of TGT. Perhaps other readers will assist our valiant editor Hans with the odd article of interest – he cannot operate effectively without submissions from us the readers and if you are a reader and not club member, **WHY NOT!**

Regards,  
Neil Bond (club membership no: 728)  
Cark in Cartmel  
Cumbria

*Thanks Neil for your splendid contribution,  
ed.*

I was very intrigued by Alan Donowho's 'Necessity' article in TGT 61. I'm not a bit surprised that his car did kangaroo jumps sideways across the road. I would suggest that no way should the hydrogas spheres be connected side to side at the back, or at the front. If you think about it, then if cross-connected it will give quite the opposite effect to an anti-roll bar!

Regarding spring rates, when I got my first Mk1 Midas on the road in 1980, it was patently obvious that the supplied springs were far too hard. Establishing the partly-loaded rear corner weights, I ordered a pair of 90lb/in springs from a Sheffield company. I requested them somewhat longer than the original so that they never came loose at shocker full extension. I also fitted extra rubbers between the top of the springs/shockers, and the bodyshell. With the shockers on the softest setting this gave quite an acceptable ride.

Alan's new stub axles look smart. I'm sure that they won't bend Alan. I turned up a pair of replacement axles from some old live-, rear-axle half-shafts. I made them one inch longer than original and made up two, inch-thick triangular spacers to go between the brake back-plates and the swing arm. This, together with super Mini-fins gave a much better rear track.

Cheers,  
Mike Perkins

## continued from page 10

and was happy to be able to show it to my son. Wandering through it you get the feel and touch how those people lived their lives. Even the dungeon will make you shiver. For our last evening meal we chose an excellent Italian restaurant in Leamington Spa. I had the feeling the quality of the restaurants was improved since my last visit 4 years ago. What really made me smile was that it is now possible to get a good cup of coffee in England. On the park and in restaurants I saw Italian espresso machines or automatic fresh grinding coffee machines. Even on the ferry the coffee was excellent. Wow!



Tuesday morning it was time to pack, we checked out and went on our way to get the 14.00 ferry. Alas less than half an hour from the hotel Ed - driving in front of me - suddenly pulled off the road. I had smelled something and said to Thomas that apparently something was wrong with his car. He stepped out and said I was trailing a big cloud of white smoke. Oops. Quickly I switched off the engine and opened the bonnet. Everything was covered in oil. What a mess. It was sucked through the left front wheel and had smeared the left side of the car as well. Not mentioning the underside and a large trail of oil on the highway. It even came underneath the front light as if my Midas was crying black tears. Since I hadn't noticed anything, no oil press light,

strange noises or even the oil pressure dropping on my gauge I assumed it must be a loose hose to the oil cooler. But it was too dangerous to repair near the road, nor did I carry 4 litres of spare oil it had spilled! I called for road assistance and three hours (!) later they showed up and dragged me to a service station. There we did a rough clean of the car and found the disconnected hose. It was quickly repaired and after a short lunch we were on our way again. The trip to the boat was uneventful, although braking turned out to be quite a challenge. The left brake disc had been covered in oil and although Ed sprayed it clean with a can of brake cleaner (what doesn't he carry in his Midas, it's a sort of Pandora box), the remains caused the car to twist wildly during braking. Yiehaa, my untamed mule. Unfortunately because of the lunch earlier, we missed the 18.00 boat (my mistake, sorry). We had to take the next ferry at 20.00. Checking in again was time consuming, so the 2 hours waiting were



gone in an eye blink. We drove on board, I parked and got out. And stepped in a pool of coolant. Oh f\*\*k! I opened the bonnet and saw that the old and already suspected hose on the waterpump had a small split near the jubilee clip. Ed quickly got his toolkit out (I could not get to mine because my trunk would only open 1 inch. The hinges got damaged when a passing truck sucked it open during the break down on the highway), pressed the hose further on

the water pump and retightened the jubilee clip. I almost got the feeling my Midas did not want to leave England!

At Dunkirk straight off the boat we made a temporary repair to get me through Belgium. At another fuel stop I bought loads of cans with coolant, but it looked like the car didn't leak anymore. We arrived without further incident at the Dutch border and said goodbye. Unfortunately coolant was coming out again. It was now half past 1 and I had enough of it. I called the very efficient Dutch AA who arrived half an hour later. The mechanic cut the bad piece from the hose and reconnected it. The coolant system was refilled and we were on our way again. My brave Thomas tried to get some sleep, not easy in a non reclining bucket seat. I wondered if he ever wanted to travel with me again in my Midas.

The last stint home was difficult in bad weather, rain and strong winds. The soft top was fighting to stay on. Remains of oil splattered on the windscreen, mixed with the rain and smeared out to a fine layer. Somehow I did not need to fight against sleep (possibly thanks to the coffee on the ferry) and was able to see the sun coming up again when I parked in front of our house at around 06.00. I opened the trunk in an effort to get our toilet bags out. It made a sick crunchy noise while damaging the edge. Well, nothing that can't be repaired. I made breakfast for Thomas and me and went to bed, just when my wife and daughter got out. Goodnight!

In the evening at dinner we were more or less alive again, especially when I did not take notice of the zombie feeling in my head. My wife started making negative comments at the Midas. "You see I said it, it's a terrible unreliable car. You should get rid of it". But Thomas defended. No mum, it was adventure! And that is what it was. With a Midas you can expect the unexpected. It's almost never just driving from A to B. See you at a next occasion.

# Tech tips from Mike Perkins

## winner of the Overall Technical Achievement Award!

### **Avoiding Hard Work. (Not now, later)**

I started my first Midas in 1979. I am now driving my third. Over these years I have learnt some lessons, made some improvements and yes, made quite a few mistakes. As most of you have made up your cars, perhaps it is a little late to pass on some of the lessons I have learnt. But here goes.....

There are some items which should merit more than a casual clean and fit during assembly. Due to the difficulty of getting at them later will probably mean that they will never get looked at again. OK, perhaps this seems a bit obvious, but I think our desire to get the car on the road makes us a bit forgetful.

**1.** The wiper linkage. This is the classic never seen again item. Remove the main spindle thro to the outside world, (if possible) and pack it with lubricant. Make sure that all the pivots are well lubricated, and that all the circlips etc., are secure. Incidentally regarding the 2 plus 2/Cortez, I suggest that you will never get half of the Metro linkage mechanism to work properly, or for long. I suggest that you get hold of a mechanism from a car which had a designed-in single wiper blade set up. (I forget which I used, it was either Renault or Citroen-early 90s.) Again do the pre-service. When fitting the wiper linkage make sure that none of it is going to get tangled with any of the wiring.

**2.** Brake/Clutch pedal assembly. The pivot spindle should be removed and thoroughly lubricated. The stop-lamp switch should be dismantled and the contacts checked for pitting. The clean contacts can now be protected with silicone, (or other) grease. Yes, I know that grease is an insulator. But

so is tarnish. I've never had trouble with greased contacts or connectors! The switch can now be fitted on the pedal assembly and adjusted for EXACTLY the correct operating position and the locknut tightened. If fitted, the 'throttle-closed' switch should also be checked for correct operation at this stage.

**3.** Take the heater blower unit apart. Check that the brushes are good. Check that the vanes on the fan are not caked with crud. Oil the motor bearings. Make sure that the sponge gasket, between blower and bulkhead, is in good condition and fits well.

**4.** Of course, it is preferable to get your hands on the newest, latest heater assembly. Make sure that the matrix is quite clear of crud, and that it has no leaks. Make sure that the internal flaps work exactly as designed. That they cut off, or open, air-flow to the various functions when the control levers are in each position. Even a small gap will pass unwanted hot, or cold air. Make sure that the flaps move freely without jamming anywhere, (due to perhaps dents in the casing.) Oil all the pivots, (they wont get any more.)

**5.** Fit one, or two short lengths of 5 or 8mm studding, with flat washers and nuts through the bulkhead behind the dash area to be available each side of the engine bay. These will serve at getting sound earth sources for all the instruments, and importantly, the radio. I have a bee in my bonnet about not enough attention being paid to provision of sound earth points throughout the bodyshell.

That should do for now,  
Cheers, Mike.

# Down Under report

A letter from John Maclaren

Thank you Alan Donowho for an interesting article (and Hans for putting together another superb edition of TGT). I'm in full agreement with Alan that the Midas monocque has potential to be used far into the future with mechanicals being progressively modernised. He alludes to changes in the engine department, mentioning fuel injection and a 5 speed box but kept his cards close to his chest as to the engine itself. The most interesting article I encountered when in UK last summer was MiniWorld for Summer 2008. The article on page 98 is headed thus:

**“Eight Port Power from a 5 port? The Canems approach is the latest fuel injection concept for 998s, and soon for 1275 and above. It works where other systems have failed.”**

The article goes on to describe how the Canems system (patent pending) overcomes the normal problem of the siamesed inlet ports with the two inner cylinders getting more fuel than the two outer cylinders. See: <http://www.canems.co.uk/siameseports.php>

In their road test they report: **“Top gear and very smooth – at 13mph. The system is very flexible and low speed driving around town is every bit as good as high speed stuff. ....”**

Now, if I can achieve that kind of result for my engine (when their 1275cc and above version is available) I could be happy with my existing engine for some while, subject to the possibility of including it as part of a hybrid set-up with electric motors in each rear wheel. So far all I have done is add an electric motor to my bicycle front wheel and that humble vehicle is now a superb thing to have in crowded town roads and for hill cycling (see: <http://www.electricbikes.co.nz/content/view/22/65/> ) maybe a similarly huge enhancement would result from adding electric power to the presently undriven rear wheels of my Midas. That is my hope!

I too would like to have coil spring suspension available for when my Hydrogas units give up (replacements are even rarer in NZ), so I wait with huge interest Alan's further work on this.

John Maclaren  
153 Taylor Street  
Cambridge 3434  
New Zealand

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email: [jmaclaren@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jmaclaren@xtra.co.nz)

# Sealing fuel tank sender

## forum tech tip

Jon:

My fuel tank sender is weeping around the flange, and I need to reseal it. It is the standard Mini van tank arrangement with six screws and a cork gasket.

I have read conflicting advice re assembling dry or with a 'petrol proof' sealant.

Can anyone recommend a petrol proof sealant because, despite extensive googling, I can't find anything that claims to be OK in constant contact with petrol? I can find petrol proof adhesives, but I want to be able to get it apart again if it ever needs a new sender.

Alan D:

Hi Jon,

Sorry but I'm a bit of an old f--t engineer. What's wrong with just a gasket, after all that's what gaskets were invented to do, to take up the uneven surfaces and seal whatever needed sealing. We didn't have all of these sticky things, back in the day. It was just surfaces as clean as possible and a gasket. Made it easier to strip too. The only sticky thing we had was that red Stagg jointing compound for pipe threads. I've just rescued an Alfa engine in a Davrien, which was misfiring because somebody had added some blue stuff to the head gasket! Everybody had diagnosed an electrical fault, but it was some sort of glue on the head gasket, expanding and causing separation.

Just my two pennies worth, no offense meant.

Regards Alan

Rocketron:

My two fave sealants are;

1. Loctite high modulus silicon sealant, the words have rubbed off the tube so can't be more specific. It has good adhesive and filling properties and is bombproof.
2. Mercury/Mercruiser "Perfect Seal", available from your local (?) Mercury outboard dealer. This is semi-hardening and I've used it to seal fuel tank senders on powerboats which are very similar to those used on minis. To be honest, I "lard" it onto everything, cylinder head bolts on V6/V8 blocks which break through into the waterjacket where, would you believe it, the cooling water is saline and HOT. Corrosive or what! I takes it no prob. Seriously, this stuff so good it's worth having a tin in your toolbox.

I'll admit, I used bathroom sealant in desperation once and was ok for about 5 years!

Regards, Ron

Geoff:

Silicone is not resistant to hydrocarbons, as I once proved by using it on a carburettor gasket. Little lumps of it soon found their way into the jets...

If you must use a compound I don't think you can beat Hylomar.

Stuart:

Mine was weeping too, just tightening the screws up solved mine, petrol seeps out under the screw heads.

# Push button starter

forum tip by David Manifold

Anyone wanting to do a cheap conversion to do a push button start. Not for everyone, but for those that want to.... it's dead easy.

1. Find a live feed when ignition is switched on (second position).

On mine I hard wired into the fuel pump live feed which is connected via a relay. So I used a piggy back spade on that.

2. Find the spade connector position on the started solenoid which is live once you turn the key to starter position on key. Use a piggy back connector spade connector. Piggy back connectors are handy as you don't have to mess all your wiring up if you want to remove it later.

Wire the two together (1. to 2.) Run the cable up to somewhere on your dash and fit a push to connect (momentary) button between it. I bought a 19.2mm stainless anti vandal push to connect button from Maplins. Remember the connection is only momentary until the engine starts, so you don't have a closed circuit.



<http://www.maplin.co.uk/Module.aspx?ModuleNo=19096>

**Sealed Vandal  
Resistant Switch  
only £5.99  
Order Code: MG75S**

or use this one:

<http://www.maplin.co.uk/Module.aspx?ModuleNo=19093>

Job done.  
Cheers,  
David



**Vandal Resistant Switch  
only £4.99  
Order Code: MG74R**

# Derust your bits with vinegar

another forum tip, but does it work?

Stuart:

<http://www.cookhaus.co.uk/vinegar/index.htm>

Geoff:

They must make their vinegar with hydrochloric acid. I'm off to find something rusty now to prove this doesn't work. Obviously you need balsamic...

graemedench:

Hi folks

I can confirm it does work quite well. I've been soaking bits in it for a bit b4 sticking them into the ultrasonic cleaner, Its a lot cheaper than the stuff for the ultrasonic, so i find a day or two in there first works well, I guess if you leave it in there long enough.... Could always try coke too you know what happens if you stick a coin in so why not other metals? Just remember to clean off parts after with WD40 or similar to stop rust reforming

Rich:

I've used a bath of diluted sulphuric acid for the bits from my Midas, an overnight soak will shift virtually all rust as long as the part has been degreased and is without paint. The parts are rinsed in water and then dipped in caustic soda to neutralise before being rinsed and dried. Alloy parts just need a fairly short time in the caustic to clean them up.

I haven't used vinegar, but I've heard of it being done and can't see why any acidic solution wouldn't work if given enough time. It's got to be the safer option if you've got kids about too.

Rich

Geoff:

Well, I only had balsamic and that had zero effect. Probably serves me right for buying the cheap stuff...

# The last bits

## odds and ends

### **New imports**

Recently the second Gold coupe was imported to Sweden by forum member Ola. Also last winter Mouvinen imported a Bronze to Finland. As we speak an attempt is made to get a Midas to Denmark. Andrew Arnold is the ~~victim~~ prospective owner. This would then be the 4th Midas driving in the Baltic Sea area.

### **New websites**

A few new websites have appeared that may be interesting for you:

[www.midascarsforum.com](http://www.midascarsforum.com).

This is the new name of the messageboard mentioned in TGT61. Check it out for the latest gossip, tech. advise or stuff for sale.

<http://midas.orba-design.com>

This webspace is hosted by Colin Spencer and contains vital information for any Midas enthusiast. Here you can find the complete Midas archive CD, the build manuals and many tech tips in doc. or pdf format.

[http://yakopu.fc2web.com/YKP/M\\_page3.html](http://yakopu.fc2web.com/YKP/M_page3.html)

This Japanese page is impossible to understand, but Yuichi Ueda included many pictures in it, so still an interesting page to visit. There is a button for English translation that clarifies a few items, but also will generate bursts of laughter.

### **Tiltshift**

Ever heard of tiltshift pictures and videos? I didn't, but the effect is so amazing I could not resist playing with a few pics on [www.tiltshiftmaker.com](http://www.tiltshiftmaker.com). The results are on the back page of this mag. By playing with the focus and highlighting the colors you get pics that seem to be taken from a diorama. The Midas cars now really look like toy cars. It works best with scenic photographs. Give it a try with pics of your Midas and email them to me. I'll publish the best ones in a next issue of TGT.

### **Trumpf playing cards**

I was contacted by Ravensburger last year and I sent them photos and data for the Cortez and Gold convertible. I didn't hear anything from them until last week when a small package arrived from Germany and inside was two packs of "Super Trumpf Kit Cars". It appears that only the Cortez was selected for inclusion, but it was nice to see a Midas included along with other well known kit car brands such as GTM, Ultima, Westfield etc. Naturally, my two sons have claimed the two packs, but they were kind enough to let me borrow a pack to show them around at the MOC committee meeting last weekend and also to scan some of the cards for the pictures.

Cheers, Alistair Courtney

### **Rich's rebuild**

Richard Cockin bought a seriously neglected red Gold Convertible a while ago and set himself restoring it to almost new condition. He is reporting about it on a regular basis on the forum with lots of pics. It's worth checking out, if only to get in the mood to start working on your own neglected Midas!

# Advertisements

All advertisements are an issue between buyer and seller. The editor takes no responsibility for the condition of the cars and/or parts advertised.

## **Who wants a heated front screen?**

Alan Donowho has distributed the heated front screens, but has five spares for sale. Asking price is £200 per screen. Contact Alan at: [alandonowho@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:alandonowho@blueyonder.co.uk) if you are interested

## **For sale: Midas Bronze**

First registered 1982 – original colour red. Factory built. The first owner fitted a Mini Cooper S engine and gearbox  
Engine and box changed in late 80s to MG Metro – engine bored out to 1380cc and tuned by Avonbar. Brakes changed to Metro. All work carried out by Yorkshire Kit Cars.  
Resprayed blue and interior retrimmed in 2000  
MOT'd and taxed till end May 2009. Open to offers around £1750.  
Contact Moira and Iain Paxton 01904 738396 or 07885 298400 or [paxtons@btinternet.com](mailto:paxtons@btinternet.com).

## Next issue

**TMF03 is scheduled for printing in October 2009.  
Please send your contributions to the editor.**

