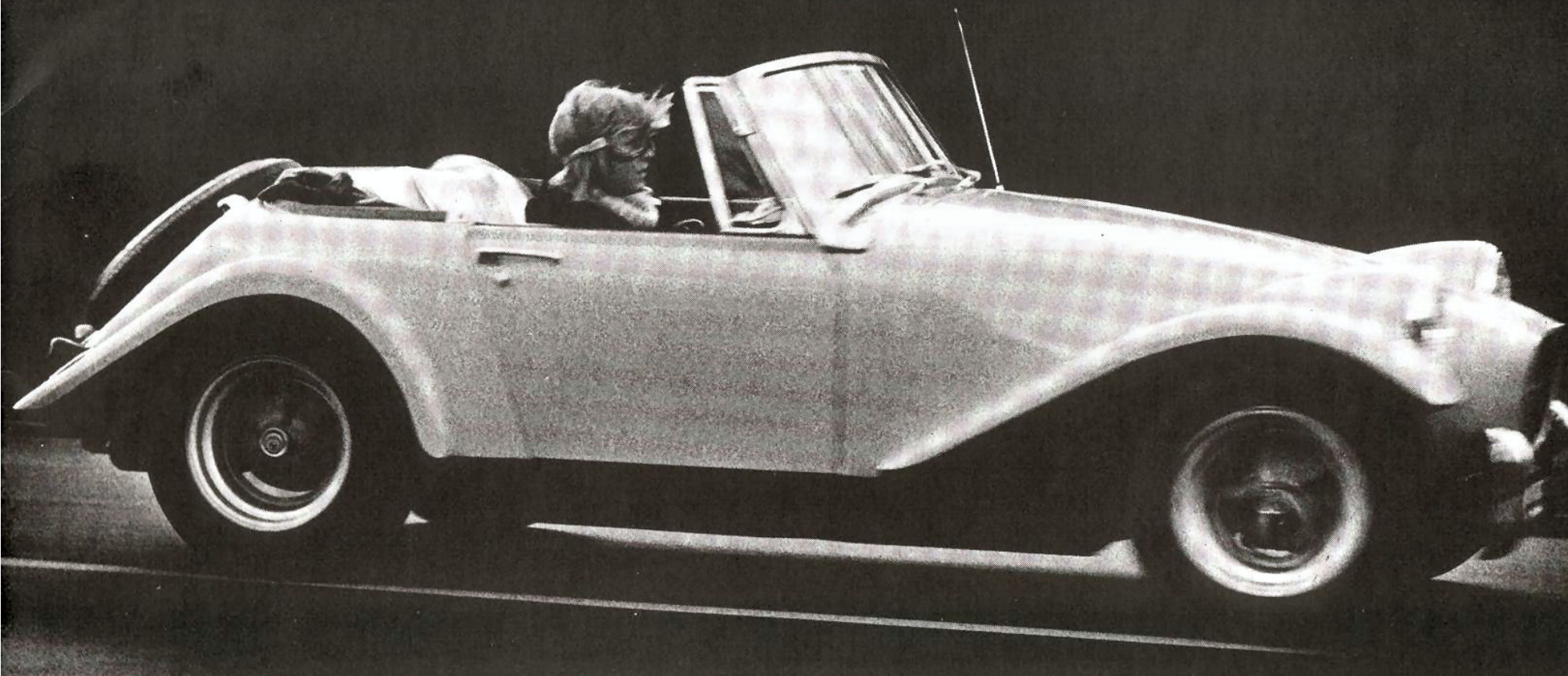


ARKLEY SS

THE TYPICALLY ENGLISH SPORTS CAR



the Arkley SS



It's impossible to look at the Arkley SS without realising at once that it's packed full of wheels, tyres and machinery. There is no wasted space, no useless overhang, but the chunky styling conceals a deceptively generous amount of leg-room. The outside spare wheel makes an admirable rear bumper, and leaves room for luggage in the tail. Main body panels are laminated glassfibre of great strength and rigidity, so your body-rot problems are gone for ever.

The truth of the matter is that somewhere along the line we traded the old-fashioned sports car pedigree our fathers worshipped for heavily chromed bumpers, slab sides, projecting luggage boot, and suchlike effete modern trappings. The Arkley SS marks a return to sports-car sanity and open-air freedom; to each wheel snugly sheathed in its own wing; to an exhaust pipe of not insignificant diameter designed to be heard as well as seen, to a power/weight ratio fit for a car of twice its capacity; to a bonnet that opens up on the whole power unit instead of a measly hatch; to a view from the driving seat that takes in tapered bonnet, cowed headlamps and flowing wings.

Wheels are the widest ever on a production car this size, and the fat, soft Torinos will claw their way round dicey corners where any other car would end up in the ditch.



building your own Arkley - step by step

WHAT YOU NEED TO START WITH

The Arkley SS is based on the BMC Sprite/Midget range. One can go out and buy the engine, chassis, trim etc etc separately to go with the kit, but it's much easier if you start off with a complete Spridget. And unless you are an expert, don't be tempted to rebuild a crashed write-off into an Arkley; the wise thing is to spend a little more on an undamaged car, or one with superficial damage only. Any undamaged parts you don't use, such as wings, bonnet etc, are easy to sell and fetch good prices.

Any year of Spridget can be made into an Arkley, and kits are available covering 1958 to 1973 models. Make sure the car is free from structural damage, and that the floor is not badly rusted. The important area to check is around the rear spring mountings. The sills should preferably not be rusted either, but if they are it is not too difficult to fit new ones. The sills contribute to the rigidity of the monocoque floor pan, and while replacement fibreglass sills are on the market, we advise keeping to steel ones, and having the replacements welded into place.

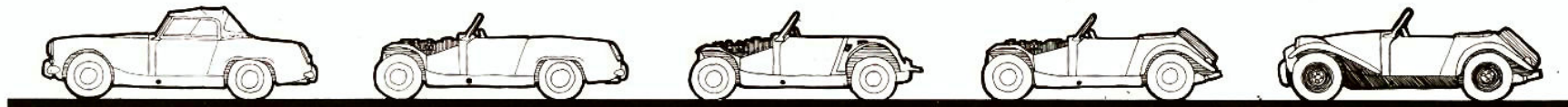
The only differences from year to year that affect the fitting of the kit are to do with the weather equipment. Since 1958 there have been four different front and rear hood-fixing arrangements, as well as the change from sidescreens to wind-up windows. The rear cockpit edge of the Arkley body has the same shape and position as post-1967 Spridgets, i.e. 1275cc models.

For the earlier models, the original hood cannot be used, but the front rail and the hood frame are retained.

GETTING DOWN TO BARE FACTS

Let's assume you are not a two-car plutocrat, and that you want to have your car laid up for as short a time as possible. We suggest you proceed as follows:

1. Unbolt front wings, bonnet lid, bumper and front valance.
2. Trim off inner front wings. Move horn and (late models only) wiper motor.
3. Bolt Arkley front end into position, using existing holes. Fit straps.
4. Change over headlamps and front number plate. Fit side and flasher lamps. (Car can now be driven again).
5. Cut away unwanted rear bodywork (detailed instructions included with kit).
6. Fit Arkley rear end. Bond firmly into position using strips of fibreglass applied from the inside.
7. Change over rear lamps and rear number plate lamp. Modify rear exhaust mounting. (Car can now be driven again).
8. Fit the wide wheels and tyres. Bolt the new spare wheel into its recess.





That "Can't-wait-to-get-it-home" feeling



Rear bodywork removed (car still driveable)



Fitting the new rear section



Offering up the front section



Changing over the headlamps



Bolting on the new wide wheels

**this was an
8 year old Midget**



9. Lower the suspension as described in the fitting instructions. (Parts not included in kit, but total cost under £6).
10. Fit the hood frame and hood.
11. Have your new Arkley sprayed in your choice of colour.

This should give you a very good idea of what is involved, but a fully detailed set of instructions come with the kit, and these are packed with practical information and advice.

The cutting off of the original bodywork, and the fitting of the new rear section, can both be done by us or by our approved fitting agents if you think it is beyond you, and fixed prices will be quoted in advance. The average handyman should be able to manage perfectly well, however. Please don't be afraid to consult us if you hit any snags.

The one job we do recommend you to have done professionally is the painting of the finished car. As the bodywork is new and unblemished, and the area of paintwork is small, the cost will not be very much compared with a normal respray. We do not supply the Arkley bodywork already pigmented with colour as this has practical disadvantages – the outside surface has a smooth, opaque grey finish.

your questions answered

Q. Can I get HP on the Arkley?

A. On a ready-built car, yes, no problem. You could have HP on the kit as well, but probably better to buy the kit in stages as you proceed. That way you avoid interest charges.

Q. Will I have problems insuring the Arkley?

A. You ought not to, although we can't speak for all of the hundreds of insurance companies. If anyone tries to quote you a high premium, please contact us. Consider third party, fire and theft insurance to keep the cost down – the Arkley is just about the easiest car made to repair after an accident.

Q. How much boot space does the Arkley have?

A. There is plenty of room behind the seats. More luggage can be put right in the tail of the car; this compartment is normally closed off by a bulkhead (which you could temporarily remove when preparing for your summer holidays). Overall, there is probably as much space as a Spridget with a fat spare wheel in the boot.

Q. I have an MG Midget which I am thinking of converting to an Arkley SS. How much of the original car is used?

A. Complete floor pan, front and rear suspension, power unit, drive train, scuttle, steering box and column, hydraulics, wiring harness. These items are left assembled as a single unit, cutting down assembly time drastically compared with other kits.

Q. Can I build a Ford 1600 or MGB-powered Arkley?

A. These engines can be fitted to the Arkley, and there is enough room under the bonnet. However, it's a tough and expensive do-it-yourself job, and we don't know of anyone that supplies an installation kit. Suggest you wait to see how much more performance the immense weight-saving gives you before doing an engine-swap.

Q. Will the Arkley kit suit any year of Sprite or Midget?

A. Yes, right from 1958 to the present day.

Q. Will the Arkley bodywork fit my Morris 1000/A35/Spitfire/Singer Gazelle?

A. If you're a mechanical genius, yes. Otherwise, no!

Q. When I remove the outside bodywork of my Sprite, won't it take away some of the strength of the car?

A. The rather heavy metal bodywork has nothing to support but itself, and in fact the Arkley, with its lightweight glass fibre bodywork bonded to the strong and well-braced steel platform chassis, makes an exceptionally strong and rigid combination. In the critical centre-section the torsional stiffness/weight ratio is actually improved.

Q. Do you make a hardtop for the Arkley?

A. No, because several makes of hardtops for 1967 and on Spridgets fit the Arkley very well.

Q. I'd like to build my own Arkley SS, but have not got a Midget to use as a basis.

Can you supply the whole car in kit form?

A. No, because if you add up the cost of all the new British Leyland parts needed, it works out dearer this way than stripping down a brand new car for conversion.

Q. How will VAT affect the Arkley?

A. Practically every time you spend money on something, a little bit goes to VAT, and the Arkley is no exception. However, the kit is exempt from the 10% car surcharge.

Q. My Midget has wire wheels. Will these be OK to keep?

A. The ordinary sort of wire wheels will look lost in the capacious Arkley wheel arches. Either get your existing wires widened (Weller Wheels of Edenbridge, Kent, can do this) or arrange a hub and wheel swap with someone who has disc wheels.

Q. What is the delivery wait for an Arkley kit?

A. Normally we have them ex-stock; occasionally there is a few days delay. If coming from afar, please phone up first.

Q. Do you make other types of bodywork?

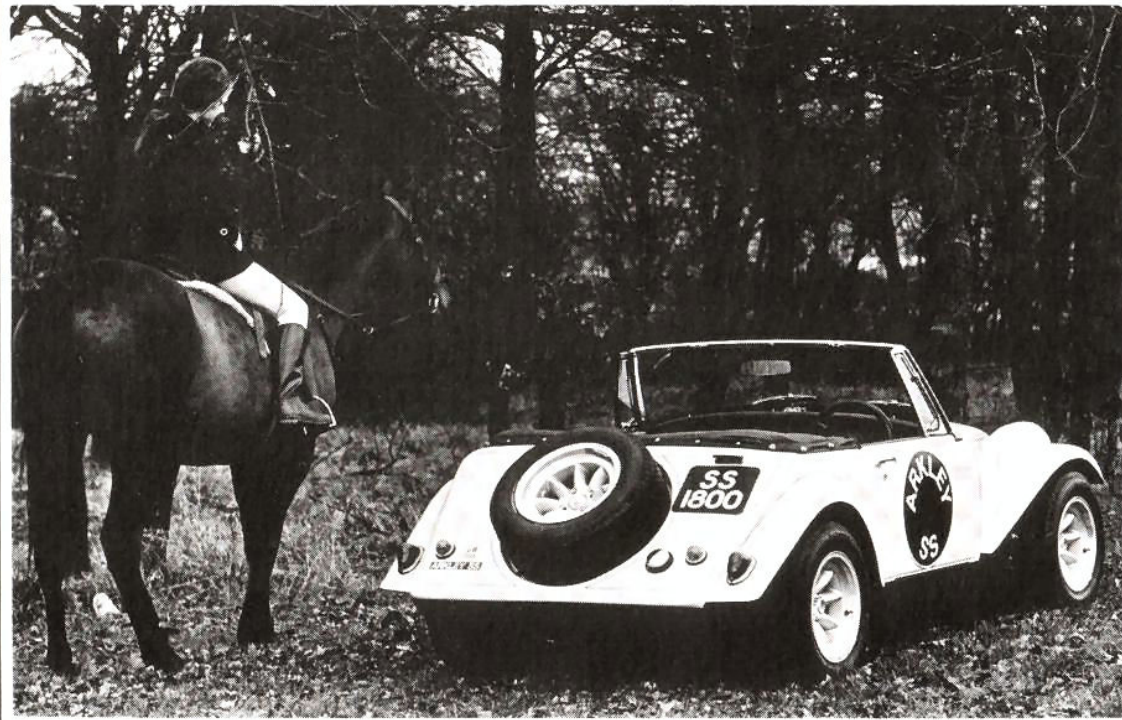
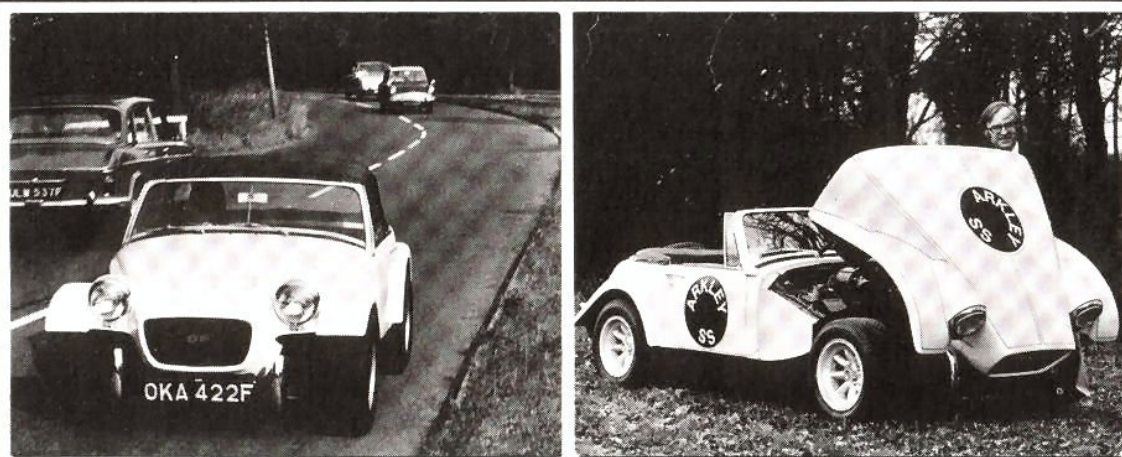
A. No, just the Arkley.

Q. Can I buy the Arkley bodywork as separate items?

A. Yes, we sell a full range of spare parts.

Q. Will my old tonneau cover fit?

A. On 1275 cars your tonneau and hood envelope both transfer straight over. If you have an earlier car you might possibly adapt the tonneau to fit.



Q. I've just put a new hood on my Midget. Will it fit the Arkley?

A. On 1275 cars, yes. If your car is an earlier model with the detachable hood, no. Used hoods are easy to sell (try the 'Mart'), but you must keep the front rail and the hood frame.

Q. What should I look for when buying a Spridget for conversion?

A. Try and find a sound, straight car but with horrible paintwork (this will put other buyers off it and help you to get the price down). If you think you've found a suitable car, we will inspect it for you free.

Q. Do I need much skill and experience to build the Arkley?

A. Not too much, just care and patience. If you meet with any snags, we're always there to help.

Q. Is there any reason why I shouldn't race my new Arkley?

A. No, none at all. In fact the Arkley has been accepted as a modified sports car for British club racing from 1973, so you should be in good company on the circuits.

Q. Does the old bodywork off my Midget have any value?

A. Yes, it's easy to get good prices (*Exchange and Mart* again), and by the time you've sold front and rear bumpers, front wings, centre valance, bonnet lid, boot lid, narrow tyres, etc., you should get £40/£50 back.

Q. Is it true that the Arkley is really a Japanese Morgan?

A. No.

specification

ENGINE: Four cylinders, overhead valves; bore 70·61mm; stroke 81·28mm; cubic capacity 1275cc; bhp 65 at 6000 rpm; maximum torque 72 lb/ft. at 3000 rpm; compression ratio 8·8:1. Straight-through exhaust system.

LUBRICATION: Concentric pump, driven by camshaft; sump capacity 6 pints plus 1 pint for full-flow oil filter.

COOLING: Sealed cooling system; pressurised radiator; remote overflow reservoir; centrifugal water pump; moulded multi-blade cooling fan; thermostat.

FUEL SYSTEM: Twin SU semi-downdraught type HS2 carburettors, fitted with paper element type air cleaners; SU electric fuel pump; fuel tank capacity 6 gallons.

IGNITION: Coil, and distributor with centrifugal and vacuum control.

CLUTCH: Diaphragm spring type; 6·5" diameter; hydraulically operated.

GEARBOX: Four-speed, with baulk-ring synchromesh on 2nd, 3rd, and top gears; ratios: first 3·20, second 1·916, third 1·357, top 1·00, reverse 4·114:1; central remote control gearshift; oil capacity 2·33 pints.

PROPELLER SHAFT: Open, with needle roller bearing universal joints; sliding splines in gearbox.

REAR AXLE: Three-quarter floating with hypoid bevel crown wheel and pinion; ratio 3·9:1, oil capacity 1·75 pints. Overall gear ratios: first 12·5, second 7·5, third 5·3, top 3·9:1.

SPEEDS IN GEARS: Mph/1000 rpm in top gear, 18·3. Speeds at 6000 rpm: first 34 mph, second 57 mph, third 81 mph, top 110 mph.

STEERING: Rack and pinion. Turning circle 31 ft. Turns lock to lock, 2·2.

SUSPENSION: Front – independent with coil springs and wishbones; rear – semi-elliptic leaf springs. Hydraulic shock absorbers front and rear.

BRAKES: Lockheed hydraulic; front discs 8·25" diameter; rear drums 7" diameter. Lever pattern handbrake.

WHEELS AND TYRES: Pressed steel with four-stud fixing, 7J-13 rims, chromium plated wheel nuts, 195/70-13 ultra low profile radial ply tyres.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT: 12-volt generator and starter motor; lightweight easy-fill battery, 43 ampere-hours; double dipping headlamps with built-in sidelamps; front amber flashers; twin stop/tail lamps with built-in reflectors; rear amber

flashers; rear number plate lamp; warning lamps for flashing indicators, generator not charging, headlamp high beam; twin windscreen wipers; twin horns; combined ignition and starting switch; combination lever on steering column controls horns, headlamp flasher, dipswitch and self-cancelling flashers.

INSTRUMENTS: Speedometer with tenths trip and total mileage recorder; fuel gauge; oil pressure and water temperature gauge; electronic tachometer.

BODYWORK: Two-door, two-seater sports car built on all-steel monocoque platform chassis with deep box-section side members and fully boxed central tunnel. One-piece glassfibre front body section, hinged at front, matt black mesh grille. Steel scuttle structure. Curved, zone-toughened glass windscreen in aluminium frame; wind-down door windows with chrome-framed hinged quarter-lights. Rake-adjusting seats upholstered with foam rubber and rubberised hair, wearing surfaces covered in knit-back expanded vinyl.

In-built fittings for seat belts. Carpeted floor. Each door is fitted with a recessed internal release lever and external push-button handles with locks. One-piece glassfibre rear body section, spare wheel mounted externally in moulded recess.

DIMENSIONS: Overall length 10 ft. 3 in., width 5 ft. 0 in., height 3 ft. 11½ in. Wheelbase 6 ft. 8 in. Front track 4 ft. 2 in., rear track 4 ft. 1 in. Ground clearance 4½ in. Approximate kerb weight 11½ cwt.

PERFORMANCE: Maximum speed 96 mph. 0–60 mph 14·7 sec. Average fuel consumption, fast touring, 39 mpg.

This specification describes the Arkley SS in complete, ready-assembled, new car form, with chassis, mechanical parts and trim from a new Sprite or Midget. You can also buy a kit of parts to convert your own Spridget into an Arkley.

The specification is given as a general guide. We reserve the right to make changes at any time without notice, and we shall not be liable for any inaccuracy in any circumstances whatsoever. This publication shall not constitute in any circumstances whatsoever an offer by the Company to any person. All sales are made subject to our standard conditions of business. In spite of the foregoing, we shall do our best to ensure that you receive an honest deal and every satisfaction.

