

# SPROUTING FORTH



MAGAZINE OF THE  
SPRITE CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



CHRISTMAS 2023



Front Cover: Spridgets at home rolling through the Adelaide hills on a cracking South Australian summer's day.  
Photo Credit: Margy Donaldson

## A Quick Word from the Editor

Founded in 1972, the Sprite Club of South Australia has been providing support to owners and enthusiasts of Austin Healey Sprites and MG Midgets for some 51 years. Also started in 1972 was the Club's own newsletter, Sprouting Forth, which, with the rise of the internet and more rapid forms of communication available for the Club, sadly petered out in the late 2000s and finally went into hibernation in around about 2012.

Well, its back! This, hopefully, is just the first of what will become an annual Club magazine looking back over the past 12 months as well as a nod to the past. We are ALWAYS looking for content for the website and future editions of Sprouting Forth so please don't be bashful about putting pen to paper (or fingers to the key board).

I'd like to acknowledge the contributors to this edition, including:

- Reinhard, not only for his written and pictorial contributions but his assistance to proof read and critique this edition (sorry Reinhard!);
- Gordon, Grant and Sean for their photos, articles (that I 'borrowed'!), friendship and contributions that have made this edition possible;
- Daryl for his articles and his tireless efforts chasing and bringing sponsors onboard to help out the Club and our members;
- And Chris, for his years of keeping the website alive, without which much of the recent club history would be lost.

A big thank you must go to Nick Phillips of the MG Car Club for his technical article. If you don't know Nick, you are missing out on knowing not only a font of all knowledge on MGs, but a person who is very generous with his precious spare time!

And of course to you, the members who's stories ARE the Sprite Club and the reason behind this magazine.

I hope you enjoy ... and apologies for the remaining grammar and spelling mistakes .... they are all mine!



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## 2024 Committee

Your 2024 Club Committee:

**President** Robin Dunk  
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[secretary@spriteclub.com.au](mailto:secretary@spriteclub.com.au)

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Don Cardone

**Motorsport Secretary** Pat Miller

**Social Secretary** Grant Stephenson

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# Your Club Needs You!



Running a club, large or small, is not easy feat. What looks like a swan gliding gracefully across the surface of a mill-pond is, in reality, more like a duckling taking its first swim without Mumma Duck. And no, we don't always know what we are doing, despite what it might look like!

If you think you would like to assist with the running of the club please let a committee member know! We have vacant spots including:

- Runs and Events Coordinator
- Magazine Editor

We can always use help organising events and functions or just the mechanics behind operating an Incorporate Club. If you'd like to help but are unsure let us know privately!

So, if you feel like you'd like to help or you have a great idea for an event or function that is keeping you awake at night , please shout out!!



Club Meetings are held from February through to December (inclusive) on the 1st Monday of the Month (with the exception of October when it is held on the 2nd Monday) at the clubrooms at the Fullarton Community Centre on Fullarton Road  
Come along and say hello!



# A Few Words From the President



2023 has been an interesting year for the Club. The first full year post Covid, it was going to be interesting to see if all members came back to fully support runs and events, indeed if events would actually be held, after a string of cancellations over the last few years. But what a year it turned out to be!

All British Day was a sell out in March, the McLaren Vale Vintage and Classic was a fabulous event and the Bay To Birdwood broke attendance numbers! Historic motorsport featured well throughout the year with the return of the Motorsport Festival, All Historic Mallala and the Collingrove Vintage Hillclimb all featuring throughout 2023.

Very pleasingly, we attracted new members, some with some very interesting 'non-Sprite' Associate ve-

hicles coming into the club and must encouragingly, new Spridget owners! Some known ex Club Cars returning to the club and others appearing out of sheds for the first time in many years, 40 years in one case! And very pleasingly, some 'Eastern State' cars now reside on our register!

The classic car movement appears to be healthy and our humble Sprites and Midgets are now in increasing demand. No longer the poor mans sports car, new-to-classic car owners are seeing a Spridget as an easy-to-work-on classic and a whole load of fun!

And the members of the Sprite Club of SA (and Sprite Clubs around Australia for that matter) should pat themselves on the back for being open and welcoming for people of all ages and backgrounds!

2023 was not without its losses however, and the Sprite Club was not immune, with the loss of two club stalwarts, Don Williams early in the year and very recently, his sister Julie Williams also passing away, both after their own battles with poor health. We also have several members currently locked in battle with their health and we wish them and their families well.

And what is in stall for 2024 I hear you ask? Well, the calendar is being worked on as I type this message and will hopefully have something for everyone, with the highlight for many being the return of the Sprite and Midget Nationals for the first time in a few years. Hosted by the AHSDC of Victoria, the event will bring together Sprite and Midgets from all across the county and surely be the highlight of the year. I Hope to see you there!

Enough from me, I hope to see you out on the road!

Robin Dunk, President, Sprite Club of South Australia

## Annual Award Winners

Successful clubs are created by people who pitch in and have a go. They don't seek personal attention but their actions bring positive attention to the car club and to the classic car movement in general. Their quiet achievements represent what a successful car club is all about and without them a club simply doesn't exist.

And outstanding effort should, I believe, be rewarded with recognition, as, even though the recipient may shy away from the attention and the limelight, their efforts mean something to the community that is our club and it inspires people.

The recipients of the Sprite Club of South Australia's annual awards are (*drumroll please....*)

### Clubperson of the Year

Elaine Cardone

### Sprite of the Year

Dean King's MkIIIa Sprite

### Associate Vehicle of the Year

Paul Doube's MG TC

### Sprite Driver of the Year

Peter Stanley (MkII Sprite)

### Associate Driver of the Year

Lee Kernich (Tiger R10 Clubbie)

### Tony Bennetto Memorial Trophy

Micheal McLaren and Pat Lescius



## 2024 Calendar (so far!)

Draft calendar for 2024. Watch the website, Facebook and the Bugeye Burble for the latest information

- 1 Jan**—Breaky Run to Uraidla
- 26 Jan**—Club Picnic and Thong Throwing @ The Chabrels
- 25 Feb**—MSCA 50th Birthday Celebrations
- 3 Mar**—All British Day
- 3 Mar**—MSCA Super Sprint Round 1 (@Mallala, incl Come & Try Day)
- 22-26 Mar**—Sprite and Midget Nationals
- 14 Apr**—McLaren Vale Vintage and Classic
- 26-28 Apr**—All Historic Mallala
- 5 May**—Peter Hall 6Hr Regularity (@Mallala)
- 23 Jun**—MSCA S-S Rd 2 (@The Bend West)
- 11 Aug**—MSCA S-S Rd 3 (@Mallala)
- 8 Sept**—MSCA S-S Rd4 (@Mallala)
- TBA Sept**—Annual Club Dinner
- 5/6 Oct**—Vintage Collingrove
- 29 Oct**—MSCA S-S Rd5 (@The Bend East)
- TBA**—Display Day
- 20 Oct** —Bay to Birdwood
- 1 Nov (TBC)** - Climb to the Eagle

**1st Sunday of every month**—ClubbiesSA gathering at Perfect Note Café in Blackwood. All Sprite and Midgets welcome and the coffee is great!

**3rd Sunday of every month**—Clubbies SA gather at the Rezz Hotel for breakfast and a chin wag. All Sprite Club members warmly welcomed

**Other Events**—watch out for the Jan Bugeye Burble for all the latest events and dates!







## SPRITE CLUB REGALIA

Daryl, the hardest working Regalia Officer that ever lived, has been hard at work restocking and updating the Club's Regalia offerings!

Caps—\$28

Wide Brimmed Hats—\$35

Beanies—\$35

Scarves—\$35

Beanie and Scarf Set—\$50

Polo Shirt—\$45

Stickers -\$5

Pens—\$5

Grill Badge—\$35 (price TBC)

Log Book Covers—\$25

50th Anniversary Badges—\$30

You can purchase your Club Kit from the club or you can go straight to Corporate Image and chose your own style and colour and have the club logo embroidered on!

If you go the direct path, the approximate cost is \$7.50 per logo plus postage (and the garment cost of course!)



corporate image

corporate image  
unit 2/72 everard ave.  
keewick s.a. 5035  
ph: (08) 8293 1120

**Club Regalia Enquiries:**

[regalia@spriteclub.com.au](mailto:regalia@spriteclub.com.au)

or

[spriteclubsa@gmail.com](mailto:spriteclubsa@gmail.com) (attention Regalia)



Our cultured butter is made on a small scale so that flavour, texture and ingredients are quality. Big on taste thanks to ripening cream from grass-fed cows, once you try cultured butter you won't go back to ordinary butter. Our butter is made from single batch churned cream after ripening with a starter long enough to bring out flavour, then hand kneaded and hand wrapped.

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Sprite Club of SA Members should call Adela on 0423 677 979 and don't forget to tell her you are from the Sprite Cub to get a **10% discount!**

# Suns Out, Display D

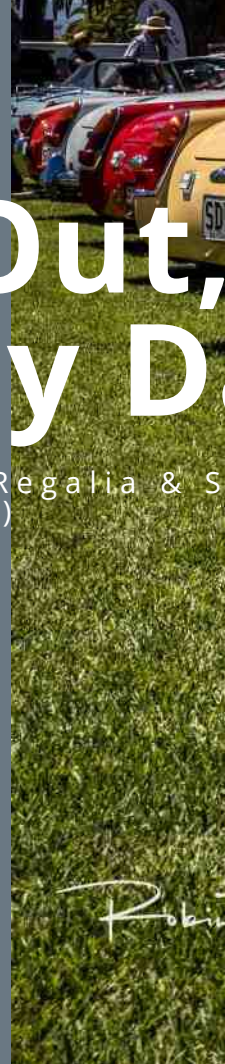
By Daryl Otterwil, Regalia & S Magazine Co-Editor)

The relaunch edition of Sprouting Forth and its nearly Summer. What a great time of the year to get your classic car out for some fun in the sun and what a cracking day the weather Gods for our Display Day!!

It was the Sprite Club of SA's Annual Display Day on Sunday November 5. The first to arrive at 7:30am found Wigley Reserve in Glenelg to be looking very nice for a classic car display. The sun was shining brightly and it was to be a glorious day. In rolled Sprites, Midgets, Clubbies, an Austin 1800 (crab), Big Healey's, a Cobra, a Humpy, Triumph, a racing Esky, an Alfa and even a VW Beetle! What an eclectic collection of classic cars.

President Robin's stunning (*if I edit this to say so myself .. Ed*) Stella Blue Midget was fashionably late (*Oi—I was there at 0800 setting up thank you!!*) and was misbehaving on the run down Anzac Highway marking its path along the way! If you don't want a Sprite or Midget to leak oil, don't put any in it! (*ok, there is an ounce of truth in this...!!*)

Social media videographer and Influencer [Ride, Walk, Repeat](#) was there to catch the action live and posting to YouTube—very cool this modern technology! If you haven't checked it out yet, take a look. The video goes for about 40 minutes.



# Cars Out Day 2023

Sponsorship Secretary (and 2023

Drink

People appeared on their way to or from the local coffee houses and wandered to take in the Sprite and Midgets and the array of members Associate Cars and visiting Car Clubs and reminisced of fond memories. Younger people fell in love with some very cute and gorgeous cars!

There were 53 cars on display and 35 were Sprites and Midgets. One of the best turnouts for our Annual Display Day.

Members of the Club and the public were asked to vote for their favorite Sprite or Midget and Associate Vehicle.

In the Associate Division, four cars were clear standouts in terms of spectator votes, including the actual Austin 1800 Evan Green and 'Gelignite' Jack Murray drove around Australia to prove the efficiency of Castrol Oils, one of the most beautiful Triumph TR4As you will find anywhere (last year's winner), and an Alfa GTV (106) that would probably win a Concourse at any Alfa show around Australia, but it was the Australian Classic FJ 'Humpy' Holden "Gracie" that took home the win—She's a Beauty (and .... she's mine!!!).

I should also mention the Peoples Choice for Sprite or Midget (mine is in pieces, hence our bringing down the FJ)! That went to Don Cardone's stunning Mk1 Bugeye Sprite. His Alfa may have been pipped in the votes by the FJ, but there is no arguing with the quality of the restoration that he and his son, as with their Alfa, largely completed d by themselves. The car is stunning!

A big thank you must also go to RAA for their support and providing show bags for

Sprite and Midget Owners (*hmm, the President didn't seem to get one.....??? An oversight by the I'm sure!*).



More photos overleaf!



Photo Credits:  
Daryl Otterwil and Robin Dunk







Extracts from Sprouting Forth from years  
gone past

# 1972/3

## Flairs, Paisley Pantsuits .... and an XU-1?

Sprouting Forth, Page 1, Para 1, 1972

Dear Sprite Owner

This is your very first newsletter—so don't knock it, cherish it.

First off, a fast apology to those of you who wanted to be addressed as SPRITE CLUB MEMBERS (to boost your ego). Your humble (and poor) mystery newsletterwriter couldn't be bothered writing 2 sets of letters. So there.

As is now recorded in the annals of motoring history (touching, that), the Sprite Club of SA was officially formed on Wed. 13th September 1972.

The club was started by two dashing young Sprite maniacs, Kevin Warren and Joe Walker. These two guys couldn't believe there wasn't a club in Adelaide and decided to do something about it.

And here we are. Thanks fellas. At present the Sprite Club has 20 members attending meetings and has a mailing list of 30 other Sprite owners who are for various reasons (tch, tch) haven't come along yet. And there will be still lots who haven't heard about us yet (We'll GET YOU).

This being a news letter, I guess you want some news. (Perceptive little devil aren't I.)







*Dear Sprite Owner,  
Hear about the guy who was leading the rest of the Sprites down South Road on the Aldinga Run? Decided to peel off South Road on the Reynella turnoff and of course every other Sprite followed faithfully, winding up at the house which the above mentioned misleading leader just wanted to have a look at. Oh well, nothing like a diversion.*

*Ten Sprites idling along Aldinga Beach side by side is O.K. but who was the wise guy who dropped his hand and yelled "Go"!!! Deadly.*

*And dear Kevin. Next time you lead a team of Sprites along South Road and suddenly decide to veer off into an "oh-my-gosh-it's-sharper-than-I-thought" type corner, think of the other poor Sprites behind you. You know we almost lost 6 Sprites that way. Never before in my entire life have I seen so many Sprites in so small an area, all flying sideways and backwards and goodness knows which way. Tch Tch.*

*Bye for now and Merry Christmas to you all. See you at the next Meeting on Tuesday the 9th of January.*

*Yours in fourth, \*SPROUTING\**



Photo Credits:  
Aldinga Beach, Reinhard Walker



## Sprouting Forth, '73

### LOST WEEKEND

On Saturday March 17th, 2 Sprites lined up ready for the weekend, with a Cortina in their shadow. Unfortunately, RWR-609 was in hospital, so the Cortina was used instead of 2 more Sprites.

At 9.00am the drivers were handed a piece of paper with clues which were supposed to direct us to Basket Range, where we were to collect yet another page of cryptic clues.

The first stop after Basket Range, (excluding 6 emergencies for our sick passenger) was Sedan. At this small township, our worthy organiser Kent produced some delicious tarts on a silver tray. This was referred to as "Morning Tea". It was also at his town that upon the request for some chops, a member was told "I'm sorry we haven't got a butcher here."

From Sedan to Waikerie was the final hop, and we arrived at a little clearing by the river and had the inevitable barbecue and brownie for lunch. After scouting around the riverbanks, and a trip into Waikerie to the shop, we decided on a camp site and a night at the Drive-In theatre.

It was at this time, that 2 brave punters got off their gear and went for a swim. With three cameras trained, you can imagine some of the photos that were taken. (Come along to the slide and photo evening and see what you missed out on!). Chops again for tea, then a rushed trip to the Drive-In where we saw John Wayne get killed. (He went the hard way.)

Bed time, and out came the flash camera (Sorry John!) Because we forgot the Aeroguard, the mosquitos were louder and more deadly than 100 Spitfires. David tried smoking them out, but gave up after half a packet of cigarettes. Morning came and we saw David, Kevin and Marilyn in their cars, and the remaining 5 covered in mosquito bites.

After breakfast we upped camp and hit the road to head for a welcome cup of coffee at the roadhouse. We headed home via Cadell and Morgan, and we struck rain at Angaston. Lunch was deferred till we got to Richard and Mandy's, where we made short work of fish and chips and John's barbecued chicken. Then out came the port and the cards to finish off a beaut weekend.

Thanks Kent for organising it.

Attended by Kent Wilson, Richard and Mandy, Kevin and Marilyn, David and Kathy, John Clarke

# Looking Back—1983

1983 was clearly a tumultuous year for the club, with cancelled events, a search for new clubrooms, and possibly only one magazine ... but the Club did find time to bottle a run of Port—now there's an idea for us in 2023!!

## Presidents Report (Aug 1983)

As you read these pearls of wisdom, your committee is combing the length and breadth of Adelaide in search of new clubrooms!  
Yes, dear reader, we have been given our marching orders!

The Church wishes to retain the building to the pursuit of Higher Things and is no longer in a position to accept tenants.

We have a few options at the moment, but will need to make a final decision in time for the August General meeting (July will be our last at the 'old place') Whilst I'm sitting where with a pen in my hand, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that our June 26 Motorkhana has been cancelled, due to the apparent lack of members. (If this is being read after that date and you wanted to attend, please accept my apologies, but we are not going to set up an event for four people!). It makes a man wonder what we are doing here, really! What do people want from us, anyway!

Oh, Oh, I'm getting a severe attack of déjà vu so I'd better shut up! Merry Christmas and see you at the July "Farewell to Clubrooms" meeting.

Don



*Top of Taps run, early 1980's  
Photo Credit: Grant Stephenson*

# It was 30 years ago today, Sergeant Pepper taught the band to play

Ok, it was really 20 years ago today that the psychedelic sergeant taught the band, but I bet I know what tune is running through your head now!

Excerpts from 1993 (and my apologies to John, Paul, George and Ringo ...)

## President's Report (March 1993)

I hope that you all had a great Christmas and New Year.

This year's first few events have been very well supported and I hope that this trend will continue as we have planned a great range of events for this, our birthday year. The Founding Members are scheduled to have a meeting soon to discuss our 21st Birthday celebrations and I will give you a progress report in due course (*I only vaguely remember my 21st ... hopefully this was as big a celebration as mine was... Ed!!*)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Grant Stephenson for his fantastic hand-made trophies for the Display Day and Julie Williams for the use of her house at Goolwa.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions on how we can improve our club

Regards

Dean

## To the Editor (March 1993)

Dear Sir ....

.... And what happened to Sprite Club dress standards? A founder member (and him a man of the cloth) reported driving topless up Mt Barker Road...

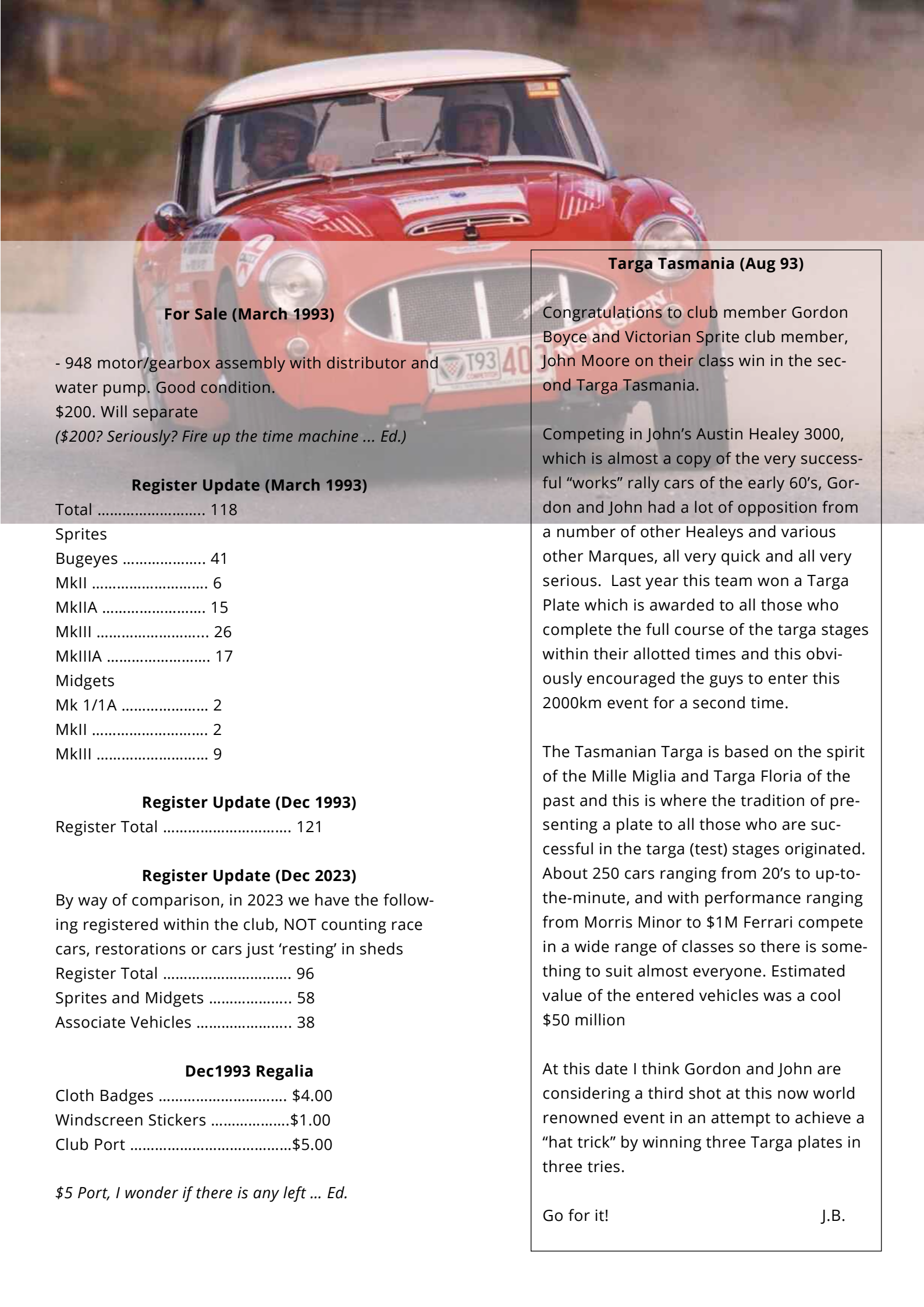
.... Finally, I see that the club has been confused

by Paul Keating's Republicanism rhetoric and elected a \*!?!\* King as President. That's enough to make a man go and buy an MGB....

Yours etc, Mumble Mumble

## "Ode to Mumble Mumble" (May 1993)

Grumble, Grumble to Mumble, Mumble  
Who art thou to not be so humble  
Annoyance just came to mind  
Reading your article that's not so refined  
Dis-agreeance with your line  
Then I wonder who  
Would write this ... (poo)  
What's wrong with driving topless Whoever you are  
Bit below the belt your comments are  
Journalistic standards I hear you say  
I enjoy the magazine, but not today  
For your article made me see red  
I'm not impressed with what you said  
My suggestio to you that I say  
Is— please go out and buy an M.G.B



**For Sale (March 1993)**

- 948 motor/gearbox assembly with distributor and water pump. Good condition.  
\$200. Will separate  
*(\$200? Seriously? Fire up the time machine ... Ed.)*

**Register Update (March 1993)**

Total .....	118
Sprites	
Bugeyes .....	41
MkII .....	6
MkIIA .....	15
MkIII .....	26
MkIIIA .....	17
Midgets	
Mk 1/1A .....	2
MkII .....	2
MkIII .....	9

**Register Update (Dec 1993)**

Register Total ..... 121

**Register Update (Dec 2023)**

By way of comparison, in 2023 we have the following registered within the club, NOT counting race cars, restorations or cars just 'resting' in sheds

Register Total .....	96
Sprites and Midgets .....	58
Associate Vehicles .....	38

**Dec1993 Regalia**

Cloth Badges .....	\$4.00
Windscreen Stickers .....	\$1.00
Club Port .....	\$5.00

*\$5 Port, I wonder if there is any left ... Ed.*

**Targa Tasmania (Aug 93)**

Congratulations to club member Gordon Boyce and Victorian Sprite club member, John Moore on their class win in the second Targa Tasmania.

Competing in John's Austin Healey 3000, which is almost a copy of the very successful "works" rally cars of the early 60's, Gordon and John had a lot of opposition from a number of other Healeys and various other Marques, all very quick and all very serious. Last year this team won a Targa Plate which is awarded to all those who complete the full course of the targa stages within their allotted times and this obviously encouraged the guys to enter this 2000km event for a second time.

The Tasmanian Targa is based on the spirit of the Mille Miglia and Targa Floria of the past and this is where the tradition of presenting a plate to all those who are successful in the targa (test) stages originated. About 250 cars ranging from 20's to up-to-the-minute, and with performance ranging from Morris Minor to \$1M Ferrari compete in a wide range of classes so there is something to suit almost everyone. Estimated value of the entered vehicles was a cool \$50 million

At this date I think Gordon and John are considering a third shot at this now world renowned event in an attempt to achieve a "hat trick" by winning three Targa plates in three tries.

Go for it!

J.B.



# Scaled Racing

A cold July day saw the Club head to Scalex World for what we hope to become an annual interclub slot-car Challenge!



What a fabulous day of interclub (slot car) racing at Clive Spreadbury's Scalex World Raceway.

A good turn out of club members as well as members from Clubbies SA, Rover Car Club of South Australia and the Topless Cars of South Australia!

The cars where, of course, Sprites!

I'd like to say that my team won .. but we didn't, beaten (dare I say, cheated!) by Team Sprite (1), Team Clubbies and Team Sprite (2), although we did take out the last round, so I'll claim that one.

Thank you to everyone who came out and made it a great day and a huge shout out to Clive for opening up the track and putting on the day!

Sadly all things must come to an end and Scalex World as a venue goes under the hammer in a few days time as Clive looks forward to retirement, but there is a glimmer of hope of 2024 edition as he considers setting up one race track at his new home near Goolwa.





## A dedicated team

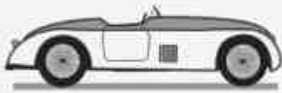
### Finish is a reflection of effort.

That is our philosophy. Whether repairing accident damage, restoring vintage vehicles from any condition to concours-winning standard, or designing and building entire custom car bodies from scratch, we put in whatever efforts required to achieve the desired results. We work on all cars from all over the world.

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Marque Restoration has had the privilege of restoring many shining examples of motoring history. Many Concourse de elegance and Concourse de Originalite winners have passed through our skilled hands. Our aim is to exceed our customers' expectations of quality workmanship and attention to detail while delivering a fair price.

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#### Resprays

First Impressions count, if your paint finish isn't up to scratch, it won't matter how good the bodywork is. Getting the paint right is as equally important as the body repair process itself. We take pride in our craft, and using only premium quality products, with end results worthy of a concours winner.



#### Panel Repair

Marque Restoration also provides general panel repair services, from fixing minor dents and scratches to custom fabrication to replace damaged bodywork, whether collision damage or corrosion. It doesn't matter if your vehicle is steel, aluminium, composite or a combination thereof, we can repair it.





# Peter Hall Six Hour

**Sean Power, Clubbies SA Representative, scribed a wrap up of the 2023 Peter Hall Memorial in June**

Sunday's 6 Hour event at Mallala was quite a day. The weather Gods did smile on us in some ways – it did not rain and although the morning was freezing, there was bright sun for the main part of the day. It was cold if you did not prepare well, and I was grateful for lots of walking around and winter woollies underneath the jeans.

What a day – 2 composite teams entered for the first time in 10 or 12 years for a team of 5 (Red Heiffer) and 4 (We're in it for the Beer) cars respectively. Red Heiffer originally had 6 cars but we gave Rob van Wageningen in his Nissan 370Z to a Victorian Sprite Car Club Team to help bring them over for the event. This kind act would rebound on us later!

Red Heiffer Driver Gerard Miller had problems from the start of the day with his beautiful old Buick race car. Usually

faultless, it played up from the start and ended with a cannibalised battery from Dean King's car and another devious electrical capacitor to keep it running, but only for short times. Eventual withdrawal in the final moments of the day. The rest of Red Heiffer just kept circulating. Dean's car would be further cannibalised to keep one of the Victorian Spridgets racing. Hopefully he can piece it all back together again!

Most of the drama was with the "Beer" team. One of Dave Tye's Lotus was not entered, blown engine from the Historics a few weeks ago. This left a starting pool of 4 cars. Things started well, then late in the day, Pat Mullins in the Tye's Lotus Cortina, lost 2nd gear and had to retire. The gear is yet to be found!

Shortly after, the Clubbie of John Coker lost a fan belt somewhere out on the track and he had to retire. Bugger! Rod Hammond (Puma) and Davin Umlauf, (Kestrel Twin Charge), were left to continue and finish off the day. Lots of laps and close calls for this small team but we made it in the end.

I wish to thank the great volunteer group from both Clubbies and Sprite clubs, their partners and their friends and some other people I had press-ganged into helping on the day. It was a huge, long, tiring day but we managed to complete the day safely.

On behalf of all the drivers, I thank all those who helped make the day such a success. Our club members really stepped in and ran the teams so well, from the Hill, timing, to managing the pit wall and form-up. With two teams entered, there is a lot of work managing the day.

Next year, I will buy more two way radios, as the lack of comms equipment this year really showed.



### ***Now to Rob!***

The Victorian Sprite team (Team Goblin) he was given to had, with him included, 4 cars in total. Rob had replaced both discs and front brake pads of the 370Z two weeks before yesterday. A warmup up stint and then an extended drive and he was back in the pits having had a total loss of brakes. Examination revealed complete wear of pads but no serious damage to rotors. Car withdrawn.

Today, a call to Rob found that his Victorian Sprite team (Team Goblin) had come third and he had been given a trophy. He was so proud. That hurt. In all the 20 years we have entered, our teams have never won anything, in fact we have always figured down towards the bottom end of each table. Even when we had entered 4 teams many years ago, we got nowhere. We have had fun with most drivers content with having fun and not always sticking to their stated times.





## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE AFFECTED BY CANCER?

The **Cancer Care Centre** offers a range of complementary support services for people affected by cancer including patients; their family members, carers and friends.

**Services include:**

- One-on-one counselling sessions
- Oncology and relaxation massage
- Lymphoedema and lymphatic drainage massage
- Support groups
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- Educational seminars and webinars
- Meditation and yoga classes
- Art and therapeutic garden workshops
- Large collection of library resources for loan; and a
- Biography service to capture your life story.

All our services are delivered by a fantastic team of highly qualified volunteer therapists, counsellors and expert practitioners in a warm, friendly, respectful and non-clinical environment. We truly do offer an open door to a very safe haven!

We invite anyone affected by cancer to reach out to us by ringing the Cancer Care Centre on **(08) 8272 2411**.

The Cancer Care Centre is a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation.

 195 Glen Osmond Road, Frewville SA 5063  [www.cancercarecentre.org.au](http://www.cancercarecentre.org.au)



# MSCA—50 YEARS YOUNG!

Words borrowed from an article penned by Gordon Boyce and 'edited' for the birthday meeting!

**Come and celebrate with the Marque Sports Car Association as it turns 50 on the 25th of February next year (2024).**

Formed in 1973, the MSCA gave the smaller Sports Car Clubs of South Australia the opportunity to compete in organised motorsport events, be they racing at Mallala or 'The Bend', Motorkhanas or Hillclimbs. With only a low number of members competing from each club, the individual members joined the M.S.C.A., allowing those drivers to compete in their cars. This organisation was the association of clubs such as Bolwell, Alfa Romeo, Fiat-Lancia, MG, Austin Healey and our own Sprite Club of South Australia.



The MSCA circuit sprints have grown from events of approx 20 vehicles during the 1980's, when we parked on the side of the circuit where the pit lane is and lapped with only three vehicles on the circuit at any time. The MSCA was instrumental in developing the Supersprint format where up to 18 vehicles can be on the track at any given time.

So, pencil in the 25th of Feb 2024 as a date, watch the website and Socials for more details, polish up the car and come along to the celebration of 50 years of the MSCA!

More details at: [www.msca.com](http://www.msca.com) or [Facebook](#).

MSCA conducts Driver Training sessions and Come'n'Try days each season, these sessions forming an integral part of not only the calendar but the training ground for new drivers or just old drivers trying to go a little quicker! Sprite Club of SA members have been actively involved with the MSCA as both competitors, members, delegates and particularly on the organisation committee almost from its inception, and with club Life Member Sue Stephenson the Association Secretary for over 20 years, our club members have had more than a passing involvement.



# Meandering Magic

**Be it a Midweek Mystery or a Sunday Run, there is a certain magic to a meander through the picturesque Adelaide hills like no other!**

Embarking on a Midweek Mystery Meander or a Sunday run through the glorious countryside mere minutes from the CBD in the company of other cars from the Sprite Club turns a solo adventure into a communal celebration of motoring camaraderie and shared discovery.

The landscape, the road, and our classic cars merge into a collective experience that amplifies the joy of driving and the thrill of exploration. Even just the thrill of expectation as we assemble at the starting point, not knowing where or what Russell or Pat have planned for today's adventure is part of the allure of these motoring adventures!

A convoy of classic British sports cars lines up, each with its own unique character and charm. The collective burble of the engines harmonizes, signalling the beginning of a journey that promises not just a scenic drive but a shared odyssey through one of South Australia's, if not Australia's picturesque regions.

With the roof down, our little cars foster an immediate connection to the landscape. With the wind in your hair and the camaraderie of our fellow enthusiasts, these convoys embark on the mystery meander and dance in unison through the winding roads, creating a visual spectacle for

young children and the young at heart alike that echoes the golden era of motoring and rekindle fond memories from a long distant past.

Navigating the undulating roads becomes a collective symphony of agility and precision. With their nimble handling, our cars weave through curves and hills in perfect harmony. The meander is not just about the destination but the shared experience of driving these iconic roadsters through the undulating terrain, where each curve becomes a shared adventure.

The mystery of the run is often the roads less travelled. The Hills and Valleys reveal their secrets through the windscreen of the car; a hidden waterfall, a roadside cafe, or a panoramic viewpoint offering sweeping vistas. The convoy of classics become a magnet for smiles and waves from onlookers enchanted by the unexpected parade.

Stopping in historic townships adds another layer to the collective experience. The cars parked in formation become a living exhibit of motoring history against the backdrop of heritage architecture. Exploring the town on foot, the enthusiasts share tales of their beloved Sprite and Midgets, creating a tapestry of stories that intertwines with the cultural richness of the region.

A Club run isn't just about the road; it's about shared detours and spontaneous discoveries. Perhaps a local artisan invites the members to explore their workshop, or a hidden trail leads to a field of wildflowers. Impromptu stops and shared moments of awe and appreciation are at the heart of any adventure.

Rolling vineyards and historic wineries. The viticultural splendour of our region, become a collective statement amid the grapevines. The choice of roads becomes a shared decision, leading the convoy to boutique wineries, hidden cellar doors, and panoramic lookouts.

The region's rich wine culture and cuisine intertwines seamlessly with the joy of driving, creating an experience that engages both the palate and the senses. The journey through the Hills or the Valleys quickly evolves into a collective celebration of heritage, motoring passion, and the region's viticultural excellence.

With a lunch stop drawing close, the tight-knit group of enthusiasts will descend on a picturesque café or pub and share a meal and swap stories of the drive or similar drives past. It's what Sprite Club runs are all about. The simple pleasures of driving, the shared thrill of exploration, and the timelessness of the classic British roadsters come together to create an experience that transcends the ordinary. In a Sprite or a Midget a run becomes not just a drive but a symphony of shared discovery, a celebration of motoring camaraderie, and a journey etched in the memory as a testament to the enduring allure of classic cars and the bonds they create among enthusiasts.



# Electric Dreams

Clubbies SA are an important part of the fabric of the Sprite Club, their involvement with the club dating back to the first MSCA events, so an edition of Sprouting Forth wouldn't have been complete without a Clubbies article!

When asked if he could contribute, Clubbies SA representative Sean Power didn't hesitate to offer this article from earlier this year...

**Earlier this year, Clubbies SA stalwart and a friend to many in the South Australian Sports Car community, Richard Kelly passed away suddenly following a cardiac episode. Richard had a lovely orange Birkin Clubbie that he converted to EV power. This is his story**

**Sean Power, Clubbies SA Rep**

As many of you have heard from Sean I took a perfectly good 2 litre (modified) Duratec engine in a perfectly good Birkin clubman and put in an electric motor.

Since I suspect it will be a while before we meet again for our Sunday get together, I thought I might document what I have done and save repeating myself heaps of times at the first post Covid-19 clubby meeting I attend.

I am an electric engineer, so of course this will be biased that way. I have always believed that traction vehicles (cars, trucks, trains etc.) should be driven

by electric motors, and of course some are such as trains and big mining trucks. I am not a "Greeny".

The problem is not the motors or the electronics to control them, it is the storage of the energy, which I believe still has a long way to go.

Whilst on a business trip in the USA in May 2015, before I flew out of LAX I took a short drive down to EV West in Santiago. There I meet Michael Bream who converts cars to electric.





were currently converting a Ferrari 308GTE (they mainly do BMW's). He took me for a drive in a converted VW Beetle. It was FAST, but original. I asked "why didn't they do things to make it look less original and improve the handling". He just said he likes to drive alongside fancy cars on the freeway and "blow them into the dust". Check out some of their performance in the Californian Pikes Peak Hill Climb. It was there I decided to use the HPEVS three phase electric motors (twin motors on the one shaft) for my vehicle.

First, I did a comprehensive analysis in Excel. This included the mass of all the proposed components and how this would change the overall mass and the front to back mass distribution. That looked OK. Also included was looking at the performance comparison where I had to estimate such things as the drag coefficients etc. This also looked OK. The aim is to match my 1 minute 20 seconds around Mallala with the converted Birkin.

I ordered the motor, batteries and controllers. I procured these from EV Works in WA, but I think in hindsight I probably should have purchased direct from the USA.

The vehicle was then taken to The Old Farts Garage where Alan Austin did an engine-ectomy on it (and kept the engine). However not without drama. I told Alan that the only way to get an engine out (or into) a Birkin was from underneath. Alan, of course, being an expert (which he still is) looked at

the situation and against my advice, attempted to take the engine out from above. Anyway, some hours later the engine was out (from underneath). Also removed was the gearbox and fuel tank and a few other things ICE related.

The electric motor was installed by Solid Engineering at Lonsdale. This was first tested with 3D printed parts, and then when OK, solid aluminium plates were machined to hold the motor in place with some extra bracing to the main chassis. They also made up and installed the tail

shaft from the motor direct onto the diff (the original Subaru 160 with a 1:4.11 ratio).

To my knowledge, there has been only one other conversion like this and that was done by Conrad at Jindabyne NSW on a "Sonic" exoskeleton clubman. He used a cush coupling between the motor and the diff and destroyed two M3 BMW diffs and in the end had to put in a racing M3 diff. I believe the release of the stored energy (electric motors have full torque at zero revs) in the cush coupling did the damage, so that is why I have done direct drive.

I then had some foam cut to the size of the 46 Winston 160Ahr LiFePO4 batteries to work out the installation arrangements. It was a very tight squeeze, but I have managed to fit them in, but lost boot space.

A lot of aluminium fabrication work needed to be done to secure the batteries in place. This was done in my shed by Ryan Penley. At this stage I got Stuart Croser from Tonkin Consulting Engineers to checkout the construction so far. All was OK.

Then the big job of finding a place and installing all the little bits and doing all the wiring. This took about one year. The high current cables (some needed to be good for 1,100 Amps) I had hydraulically crimped by Rawsons, who did a great job.

I needed to cover the batteries at the back, because they protruded a few cm above where the original boot cover was. I decided on a dual "tail" type design, and obtained some technical advice from Norm Clements. Later after I had fashioned the shape in general, I took this to Norm's place and he made the cover from fibreglass (what else from Norm) with carbon fibre section behind the headrests. This was finished off and painted orange by Edwardstown Custom Body Repairs who did the original paint job on the car (and Andrew Lord's Birkin).

I also got a small piece of flat carbon fibre from Norm and cut it round to cover the original fuel tank hole. Norm asked me if I was covering this hole how will I get the fuel in. A few seconds later he realised. Water

and electricity don't mix very well, so a lot of filling in holes has been done, including all the vents and throttle body holes in the bonnet, gaps in the chassis underneath (should be a ground effect car now), exhaust hole and some others.

The two controllers for the motors are best water cooled (they automatically de-rate over 85 degrees C), but I could not find the space to do this, so I have tried to maximise air flow to them and maybe water cooling is something I will do later. Upon first power up, all I got was error messages. It seemed to me that the primary and secondary motor controllers (programmed differently and connected by CAN bus) were labelled wrongly. I contacted HPEVS in the USA, and they assured me this would not be the case. Eventually, I found the

error. I had connected up the six pin main contactor plug mirror image, so the primary controller was turning on the secondary contactor, so the millisecond pre-charge timing was in error. I fixed that and whilst the car was up on its axle stands the wheels turned, but only in idle. The accelerator pedal did not work.

I was led to believe the accelerator box was a potentiometer style system and I had wired it up as such to the 12-volt system. After I pulled it apart, I discovered it was a Hall Effect sensor system. This

is a 5-volt chip and I had destroyed it. A new accelerator box is hundreds of dollars, so I found out the supplier of the Hall Effect device (only made in Singapore) and ordered some. They are \$0.68 each, so I got ten. Soldered in the new chip and re-



-assembled the box.

On December 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am, I drove the car down the street for a test run. It accelerated very smoothly and seemed about as quick as with the ICE, but this was just a short run up the street.

I had checked out all the legal requirements (lights flashers etc.), but the brake lights from the motor regen signal did not appear to work (probably because the regen is not programmed in very hard at present), so I have put a switch on the brake pedal, so now all three things can operate the brake lights: Hydraulic pressure, regen



I drove me was that I did not want to be the someone who started down this path and did not finish it.

I now have Stuart's tick of approval (and his invoice) and next it's off to Regency (again!!).

Now it is mobile, I will invest in a programmer for the motor controllers. This will enable me to control the initial acceleration rate, and allow a small (milliseconds) delay to take up any backlash in the diff gears before full torque is applied.

I have also been told by the supplier in Perth that the code in the battery management system for changing the 150-volt, 20 Kwh battery pack (this is a separate system to the motor drive system) has been updated, so this is also a future task.

So, now it is back to a normal "work in progress" like any other clubman.

Cheers, Richard

signal and brake pedal movement had checked out all the legal requirements (lights flashers etc.), but the brake lights from the motor re- gen signal did not appear to work (probably because the regen is not programmed in very hard at present), so I have put a switch on the brake pedal, so now all three things can operate the brake lights: Hydraulic pressure, re-gen signal and brake pedal movement.

Sally (my wife) says she will not go with me unless it makes some noise for safety reasons. So, I have put in a sound system which emulates as standard a V10, V12, V8 or a Harley Davidson. I don't like Harley's, so I am going to replace that with Ducati sound when I have time. This system also has the sound speed up with the car, but I haven't put the Hall Effect sensor in place to do that yet.

People often ask how far it will go on a charge. I think it should go about 100Km. The very shape and size of a clubman limits the volume of batteries If I had of known it would take so long, I don't think I would have started it. But at the moment I am pleased with how it has turned out. What



# What a Grand Day Out

Four Sprites and a Midget burbled up though the Adelaide Hills and the Barossa Valley enroute to Collingrove on a beautiful crisp clear Spring morning on the club's annual 'Picnic Run'.

Setting out from The Gully Hotel for a straight run up through Birdwood and then on to Collingrove, of course someone (the President ... err, me) was late to the starting point but luckily Don was patient and waited along with new Sprite owner, Don Cameron (he hasn't yet decided on joining a club but he and his lovely Mk3 are welcome to join our runs when ever he wishes!). Eventually Margy and I got there (only 20 minutes late ... despite having no traffic on North East Road I still managed to get every red light!) and the three of us headed up to Birdwood where the Lows and Dean were waiting, then onwards with the run out to Collingrove.

With Dean leading, it really is nice when the 80kph limit ends and we can run up to 100 (or there abouts)! 5x 1275 A Series, all in good song!

Despite my car really not having a decent run in nearly five months it seemed in fine fettle for the run out with a muted rasp and a crackle and pop on the overrun coming down the hills. Most thought I was slightly crazy wearing a polo shirt and shorts (and Margy in a short sleeve linen top) on a 5 degree morning but as usual the heater was in fine form heating our feet and





the escaping warmth keeping our ears and noses from freezing as we headed through the hills with the roof down and picnic hamper strapped firmly in place. A perfect way to start the month of October!

And what was it all about? The Sunday of the Labour Day long weekend sees the running of the Sporting Car Club of South Australia's annual Barossa Vintage Collingrove Hillclimb and, thanks to the efforts of Sprite Club and Sporting Car Club Member Gary Dodd, we had pole position inside the pit paddock for the day, including a run up the course for those who desired to partake!

The Sutherlands joined us with their lovely Mk2 Midget (its still for sale, goodness know how as it's a beautiful example) and, including Peter Stanley's hill climb Sprite, we had seven Sprites and Midgets, as well as Gerard Miller's Plymouth (with brother Pat and Andrew Wald sharing the driving duties) and other members in more 'normal' cars. A great turn out really, consider it was the middle of the Long Weekend after all. Thank you to everyone who made the effort!

And what a fabulous day it was, with an amazing collection of historic South Australian and interstate cars and bikes taking on the twists and incline of the Collingrove climb. From cars built for

the Australian GP in the 1950s (and in one case, driven by the 15 year old Great Grandson of the car's creator), to a hauntingly beautiful SS100, classic Speedway Sprint Cars and all manner and marques of cars and bikes in-between, there was something for everyone.

Thank you to the SCC-SA for the opportunity and thank you to all the owners and drivers of these fabulous cars who were only too happy to stop and talk and recount the history of their vehicles. All in all, it really was a Grand Day Out!

*(The day was such a great success we are already planning a return trip in 2024 and a similar run out to Classic Mallala, again, thanks to the efforts of Gary—stay tuned for details!!)*





# MINISPORT



Proudly supporting the Sprite Club of South Australia, is one of Australia's Premier Classic Mini and Moke specialists. We keep the largest stock of A Series Engine and electrical parts for Sprite and Midgets (and of course classic Mini and Mokes!) in the southern hemisphere. Most of our stock is imported from the UK, but many hard to find parts for Australian production cars are sourced locally. Our huge range of parts is complimented by our extremely knowledgeable support staff and our specialist workshop offering a range of services to keep your pride and joy running like a dream.



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# The Garage Rat

**As many of you will know, Paul Doube, club member and ex President of the Sprite Club, and stalwart of the Clubbies SA movement is having a running battle with his health at the moment. In July I asked Paul if he'd mind writing down some memories from his youth, a time when you could find him happily sweeping the floors at Garrie Cooper's workshop, just soaking in the early days of Elfin Cars.**

## **Robin**

I did indeed 'haunt' the Elfin factory on Conmurra Avenue, Edwardstown when I was a kid. I had developed a bit of an interest in racing and race cars, as my older brother used to bring home magazines about cars and racing, though these were usually English magazines, such as Auto Sport. In one of the Australian magazines, was an advertisement for Elfin Sports Cars, and I realised that the workshop/factory was not far away from my home at Clarence Gardens.

After school one afternoon, I hopped on my trusty treadley, and cycled down to Conmurra Avenue, where I found an unlikely looking Besserblock workshop set back a little from the street, and which was next to a firm called Cooper Motor Bodies, run by Cliff Cooper (Garrie's father), and where Garry and Elfin Sports Cars started out.

I saw the sliding door at the front of the workshop was slightly open, and so I peered in, trying all the while to remain out of sight of the occupants of

the workshop in case I was seen to be doing something wrong. It was an amazing sight to see a couple of racing cars under construction as well as one or two being either repaired, serviced or prepared for racing, and though it was a fantastic sight, I was desperate to find a way to get inside and have a really good look.

I can't recall for sure but this must have happened a few times over the ensuing weeks, and on a few occasions I was sure I had been sprung, but there was a big bush growing in the carpark next to the office door and workshop entrance, and I figured if anybody saw me, I could hide in the bush. I only had to do that once when a car pulled in to the carpark area (not really a carpark, just an entrance way to the premises), and as the car parked, I hid in the bush to avoid having to fess up. I have often wondered what that person must have thought, as they clearly saw me peering around the workshop door, but that I had disappeared by the time they got out of their ute.

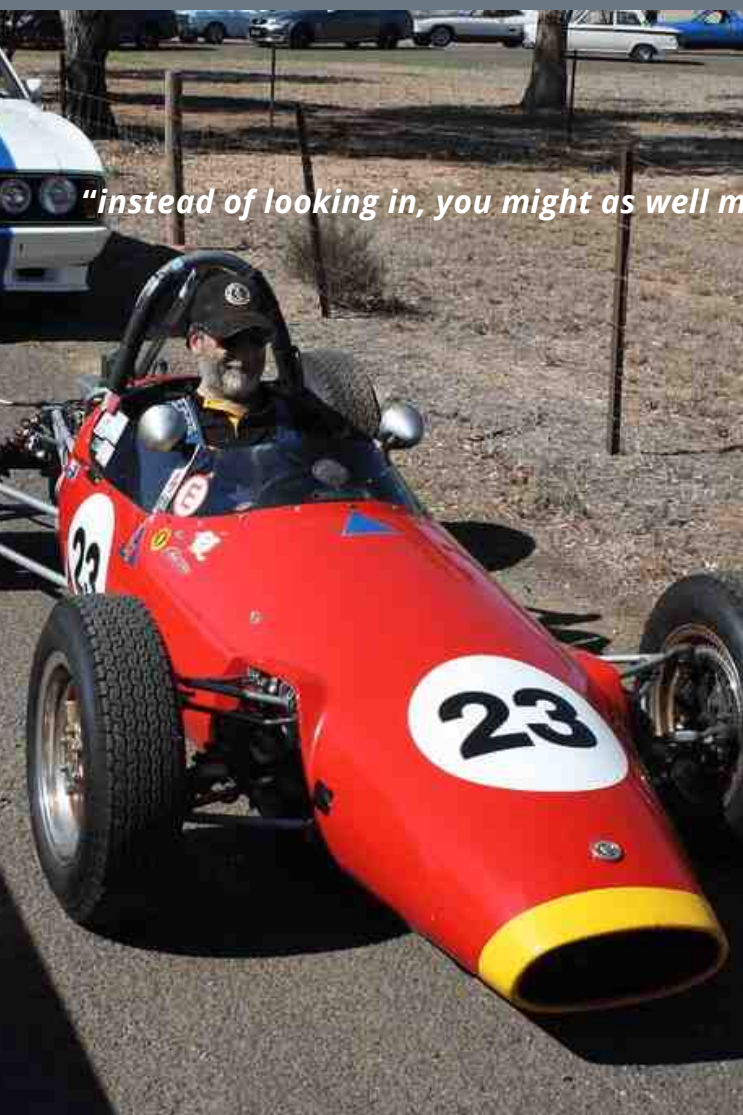
Not long after that incident, it was school holidays, and of course, I had again cycled down to Conmurra Avenue, probably secretly hoping I would be invited in for a tour. All of sudden the garage door slid back, and this older

grabbed me by the front of my jumper, making me think I was going to be in trouble and have the police called (a real fear as my father was a policeman). It turned out it was Cliff Cooper, and he had a broom in his hand, again making me think I was about to get a hiding.

His words still ring clear to me when he said *"instead of looking in, you might as well make yourself useful, and come in and sweep up"*! That was my 'in' to Elfin Sports Cars, and from that day on, I used to go down as often as I could, and simply walk in and grab a broom, and pretend to sweep up, in reality never doing much sweeping at all, and as much as possible, hanging around close to those working on the cars or talking about what they were doing. It was probably just as well, as many of the basic layouts of chassis were simply

drawn in chalk on the workshop floor, and if I had swept those chalk lines up, I'm sure I would have been given a hiding.

It was a case of almost being in a live 'Boys Own' comic, as while many school mates were interested in racing cars, I was actually getting inside the factory, and talking to the people who designed and built them. Garry was a quieter bloke but very interesting to listen to, while Cliff was louder and I thought at the time, a bit of an ogre, but nothing could be further from the truth. Others were John Webb, the genius alloy body builder, Dale Koennecke who looked after the engines and built engines, and a smaller Italian guy named Ernest Littera, who seemed to me to be able to do absolutely anything, as well as Cliff and Garry. A younger guy was there at the time doing his apprenticeship as a fabricator, named Gregg Mobbs, and it was Greg who owned and raced an Elfin Clubman, and later designed and built the first seven of the seventeen Kestrel Clubmans, plus others who came in to do things,



*"instead of looking in, you might as well make yourself useful, and come in and sweep up"*!

such a Bruce Wendt, a PMG Technician by day, but who also wired every Elfin to leave the factory.

As an aside, there are a few later connections from that period, Bruce also wired my Kestrel Clubman and of course Greg welded up the basic chassis for my Kestrel (No 7) before I took over the build with great assistance from Tim Rees, and I later used Dale Koennecke as an expert witness in a case I was appearing as counsel in. When I had Dale in chambers to proof him as a witness, he kept saying he thought I was familiar, to which I detailed my time going to the Elfin factory as a child. On hearing that, Dale roared laughing and said "of course, the workshop rat"! Apparently that was how I was explained to people who came to the Elfin factory on a legitimate basis.



# ARE YOU A PAST CLUB MEMBER?

**... let us know!!**

Like many clubs, members, sadly, come and go as they buy and sell different cars. Maybe they move away and look for a car group closer to home. There are many reasons for leaving, too many to list here!

At the time of writing we have approximately 110 subscriptions and, because of our somewhat unique membership process, approximately 160 members. But what we don't have is an accurate register of past members and we mean to rectify this in 2024! The ultimate aim being to give members, past and present, a permanent membership number in, as near as possible, chronological order of when you joined!

But we can only do this we need to build a record of former members. So, I'm calling on members, past and present, to contact the club and let us know what you know about when you (or a family member) joined!

If you know the details down to the day-month-year, that's amazing, but we don't expect people to know this quite to this detail. If you know the month-year, maybe the year or even "about 1983 or 84" that also would be fantastic if you can let us know. If you can remember details of your car for the historical records, then even better!

We want to offer past and present members the opportunity to purchase a key ring with their membership number engraved as a permanent memento. And if we can get enough details and even some pictures of members' former cars, next Year's Sprouting Forth may have an article about past members and their cars!

So, let us know at [admin@spriteclub.com.au](mailto:admin@spriteclub.com.au)!

I continued to do this for a couple of years, but schooling at St. Ignatius at Norwood got in the way, as I was never home early enough to get down to Conmurra Avenue, though I did drop in on a few occasions when I was on school holidays. From memory this would probably have been in about 1963, as I recall being about ten years of age at the time, and that would fit in with getting a bike for Christmas just before my tenth birthday. I recall that I probably did this for two years or perhaps slightly longer, as that would also fit with my going to St. Ignatius, so probably between 1963 and 1966. This would also fit with the cars I recall seeing, which were the Catalina/Formula Junior, Elfin Mono open wheelers, the first of the Elfin Formula vee cars, and Elfin Mallala sports car.

*Paul Doube, Jun, 2023*



*Final Drive—Paul's beloved Kestrel on its way to WA to his son who continues to enjoy the delights of Clubman motoring*

# Legend of the Lakes

The Legend of the Lakes 2024 edition has been run and done whilst Sprouting Forth has been in preparation.

Grant Stephenson prepared this report for the Club after the 2023 edition of the event.



For the last 8 years I have been going to Mt Gambier for the Legend of the Lakes hill climb as part of the Goolwa Ford crew. This year it was my turn to drag out the Escort, after it had a major upgrade . We arrived at the track on Thursday afternoon , well its not the usual track. Most of the year it is a public road down to a beautiful grassed picnic area next to Valley Lake, with approximately 150 cars entering the three day event.

Friday – is classic day so entries are down to about 80, so plenty of runs; which is a good thing as the only track time I have had before this stage was in the passenger seat of a 30 year old Landcruiser. Scrutineering went well as the car was all new and clean . The first run I had a bunch of nerves, so easy does it on the accelerator. New car, New track made it to the top in 1.47 , nothing to be proud of, but the car ran well . Only four runs for the day, but I was happy and finished with a 1.32 .



Saturday – after a few tips and a rev up by the team, and I was ready to go again . Still no tyre warm ups as the axles , diff , gearbox are a bit fragile I don't think they will take 200 HP . My times kept getting quicker with each run, with Saturday finishing with a 1.29 . Unfortunately an oil spill on half of the track from another driver and rain put an end to the day two hours early . Our accommodation was at the caravan pk at the top of the track, so nice and close a the end of the day.

Sunday – back down to the track again at 7.00, soggy wet grass due to the over night rain, so no service crew vehicles in the pits . A quick check of the car and a run to scrutineering, all good to go. So its day three I haven't broken the car yet, and all the parts I need to make the Escort bullet proof are on order. Still couldn't bring myself to a burnout [ tyre warm up ]. My confidence is growing, so on day 3 I am looking for a 1.20, but the rest of the team said NO, aim for the teens so I had better pull my finger out. On the start line and the Green light means go. 1<sup>st</sup> gear – 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, hit the rev limiter and pushed the car, only two runs to pull this off, left hand into the bus stop turn, then right hand down jabbed the hand brake perfect slide on the rear [ all those hand brake turns at Border Town paid off ] power slide out, hit the rev limiter again and across the finish line 1.17-32. Made it one and a half seconds quicker and my fastest time for the weekend. I'm happy, the team is happy, but still one more run to go for the weekend. Final green light, GO nothing to loose, hit the rev limiter even harder this time



using most of the 200 HP. Don't bin it Grant, a little voice in my head said. Left hand into the bus stop, right hand down jabbed the hand brake [ you guessed it, over committed] only supposed to be 180 degrees, I went at least 220 degrees. Damn it, by the time I got myself sorted there goes a second or two finished the day on a 1.19-90.

What a fantastic three days of motor sport with a new car, and all I did was turn the key and put fuel in it, didn't even put a spanner on the car . I can not recommend this event enough, and will be back next year . The South Eastern Auto Club do an amazing job every year.

*With a lot of new parts for better reliability and familiarity of the course, Grants best run for 2023 was 1.10 .... Ed*



Photo Credits:  
Grant Stephenson and Event Organisers



## *feeling spritely*

The great feeling you get from an Austin Sprite lasts longer than the lift you get driving. The blood-racing excitement of creaming along in a race-bred champion does something for your spirits. It's the Sprite-ly feeling! Suddenly everything is more fun. The lowest priced true sports car you can buy, the frisky Sprite is a revelation on the road, a cat on the corners. Test drive the fun-tastic Austin Sprite at your dealer's today. It's from the famous stable of BMC sports cars, running mate to the terrific MG and sizzling Austin Healey.

*A product of the British Motor Corporation (Australia) Pty. Limited.*

**\* SECURITY**



BMC BACKS YOUR MG or Sprite FOR LIFE WITH AN UNMATCHED SYSTEM OF AFTER-SALES SERVICE AND A SPARE PARTS NETWORK THAT PUTS LOW-COST, FACTORY-APPROVED REPLACEMENTS INTO EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY. THE FAMOUS BMC WARRANTY APPLIES FOR 12 MONTHS OR 12,000 MILES & IS YOUR PASSPORT TO SECURITY.





# Flashback: National Challenge

With the 2024 Sprite and Midget Nationals, the first for several years, looming ever closer, Gordon Boyce rummaged through his past files to find this retrospective penned in the lead up to the 2001 National Challenge.

## *What is a National Challenge?*

The National Challenge started as an interstate motorkhana between the NSW, ACT (this club closed soon after) and Victorian Sprite Clubs. This was at Wagga Wagga in April 1970. The venue was moved between Sydney and Wagga Wagga over the next few years, and in 1973 it was held during August. Some of the SA Sprite Club members ventured over for a look.

In 1974 the venue moved to Hay, as it was more central for the SA members. SA won the event outright, thanks to the driving skills of Founder Member, Joe Walker!! During 1975 Queensland had some representation and SA had 36 members present. 1976 was the final motorkhana at Hay, with discussion held towards making the weekend a "National Challenge".

1977 saw Hume Weir race track the venue for the Sprint event, with standing and flying laps, a motorkhana on the banks of the Murray River, Ladies Teams and a winery visit on the way home. This event was held on the ANZAC Day long weekend with over 70 competitors from NSW, SA and VIC. It also marked the first wheel

turn, on what is now Don Taylor's "Super Sprite", which took fastest time of the day in the sprints, beating John Moore (VIC) in his 327 Chevy powered panel van.

For 1978 the event moved to the longer Easter Weekend, but doubts over the Hume Weir circuit caused the event to move to Winton (VIC) for 1979. This proved popular with the inclusion of driver training, private practice and concours d'elegance, for 170 participated with 90 competing, with 9 from Queensland.

1980 was also held at Winton, and then in 1981 it moved to Oran Park near Sydney. By now the format of Good Friday – Private Practice and Driver Training at the circuit, Easter Saturday – Sprints (later becoming Super Sprints), Sunday – Concours (am) and Motorkhana (pm). During the evenings there would be many Social Activities including dinners, dances, trivia quiz's, Sprite Olympics, theatre



*Hopefully the accommodation has improved!*



sports, spark plug changing competitions and the famous “Fluffy Bunnies” (see how many marshmallows you can stuff in your mouth and still say “Fluffy Bunny”).

Over the next 10 years the National Challenge moved between VIC and NSW using many race circuits. 1982 was back at Winton, 1983 Catalina Park (NSW), 1984 Winton, 1985 Oran Park, 1986 Winton, 1987 Oran Park, 1988 Winton, 1989 Oran Park, with 1990 being a highlight at Phillip Island (VIC). This was one fantastic, but quick racetrack.

Cost of running the event and having a central venue for most Clubs led to Winton hosting the National Challenge for 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994. Members wanted a change of venue, so it moved to the newly opened club track at Wakefield Park near Goulburn (NSW) for 1995. The Sprites returned to Winton for 1996, and headed north to Wakefield Park for 1997, 1998 and 1999.

*Photo Credits:*

*Gordon Boyce, Grant Stephenson and Reinhard Walker*

The 30th National Challenge was held at Winton during 2000, with a revised format (due to track bookings) of Friday practice and sprints at Winton, Saturday motorkhana at the Driver Education Centre at Shepparton and a concours and navigation run on Sunday.

Two things were included over the past 10 years, a regularity event on the Friday for those Sprite drivers who cherished their cars more than abused them and more social events, including a theme party on Saturday Night (so you did not compete or drive home with a sore head!!), social drives to surrounding points of interest (wineries!!!), so members could make the Challenge a holiday as well.

As you will notice SA has yet to host a Challenge (although interstate members have been asking for over 20 years to have one here!!) The committee has been busy over the past 18 months fundraising, investigating accommodation and motorkhana venues and planning this event. I think you will agree it has been well worth the wait.

*A Sprite Odyssey National Meeting, Gordon B, 2001*





# Peppering the Sprite

If there is one thing we can all agree on, its that the Sprite and Midgets have been an affordable path into a traditional British sports car and, like Austin 7s, Morris Minors and the ubiquitous Mini, for little outlay (comparatively) and some elbow grease, they are very tuneable with 5, 50 or 100% increases in power and handling fairly easily achievable.

And boy and girl racers have been tuning their Sprites and Midgets since they were first released!

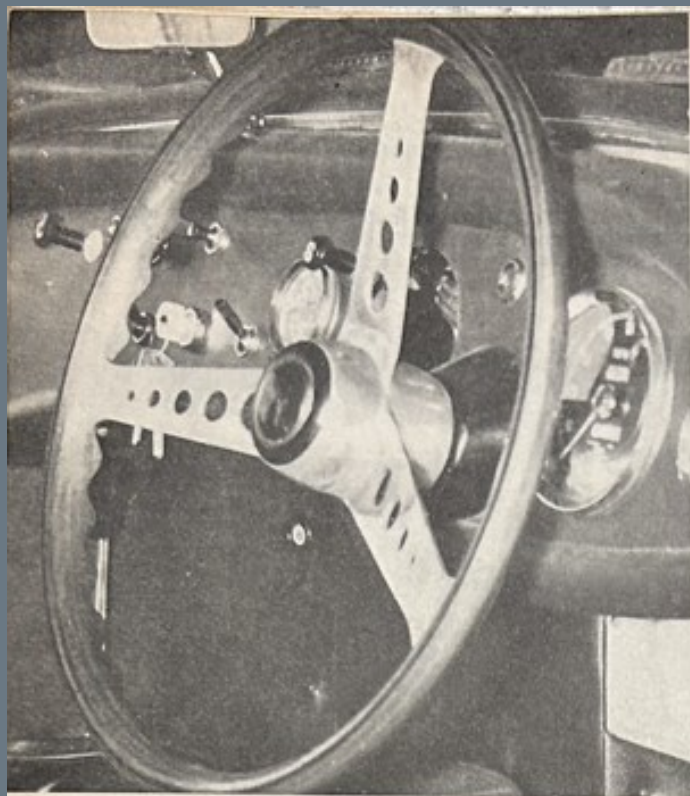
Despite great advancements in technology, some things just don't change when it comes to tuning our Sprites and Midgets as the following article by Mike McCarthy found in a 1963 Edition of Sports Car World (see next pages), once mandatory reading for any Australian fan of all things Sports Cars.

Maybe the language has changed but I'm pretty sure if you peeked under the bonnet of any mildly breathed on Sprite or Midget at the next Club run you attend you will find one, some or all of these modifications in some way shape or form!

Enjoy!

*(Although there is always that one bloke who takes it possibly a step too far ... Ed,)*





*Lightweight wood-rimmed wheel, as well as being decorative, allows quicker response.*



**Here's a hot recipe for a 110 mph  
Austin Healey Sprite.**

# PEPPERING THE SPRITE

By Mike McCarthy

**I**T'S not difficult to find reasons why the Austin Healey Sprite should be enjoying ever-increasing popularity as a competition car.

Apart from the fact that it is easily adaptable for competition work, the Sprite offers a relatively inexpensive basis for aspiring drivers.

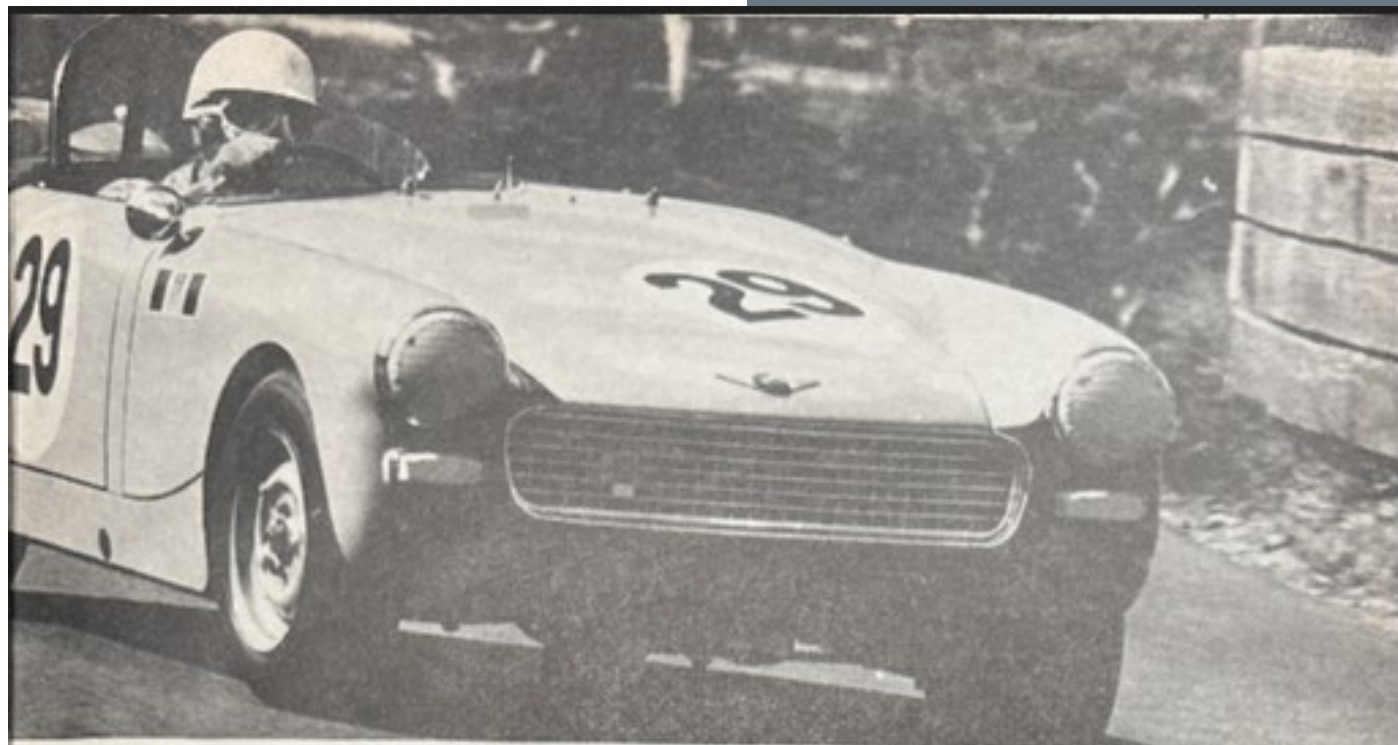
It is perhaps the least expensive way of participating in the production sports car class and marque sports car races which are becoming more and more popular. With early models currently selling around £500 to £550 an enthusiast can have himself a real little goer for less than £1000. By the term goer we mean a car that will top 110 mph, have acceleration to match and flexible enough for city driving.

Because they numerically outweigh the later models, most of the information in this article is aimed at the Mark One, but in many cases the material is applicable to the later series. Nor will we specifically differentiate between tuning methods eligible for both production and outright racing classes. Another point to the credit of the Mk One is that it weighs about three-quarters of a cwt less than its successors, a marked advantage where high performance is concerned.

Starting from the ground up, the initial consideration is rubber. Dunlop R5 racing tyres are first choice for the serious entrant, but at almost £30 each they may strain the average budget. Slightly inferior roadholding and cornering power are compensated for by a big reduction in cost if a compromise is made and Dunlop Road Speed's are fitted—at about £40 a set of four.

Unless really radical modifications are made to the engine, there is no need to use tyres larger than the standard 5.20 by 13s. However, if R5s, Road-Speeds or similar tyres are fitted, it is beneficial to replace the standard 3.5 in wide rims with special types measuring 4.5 in between flanges. The wide-based rims improve roadholding noticeably, the conversion costs about £5 per wheel at major speed equipment suppliers.

In addition to Dunlop's contributions there are Pirelli Cinturas at approximately £12 each and the Goodyear Sports Car Special at £18 apiece—the former having dual-purpose road or racing characteristics whereas the Dunlop R5 for instance is exclusively for racing. Unfortunately both the



Cintura and Sports Car Special should ideally be fitted on 4.0 in rims, a size not easily available in this country.

The next stage concerns braking. Effective as the stock drums of the Mk One and Two are for normal driving, inherent deficiencies quickly appear under hard driving. The only way to overcome this (while retaining the basic original components) is to fit competition brake linings at £33.0 a set and liberally drill the backing plates and fit air-scoops.

Although the hard linings increase the brake pedal pressure, the difference is not so great as to warrant servo-assistance. Of course there's no absolute reason why power brakes should not be fitted if braking effort is found to be tiresome.

The IIA's disc front brakes ensure that the car is virtually free from fade and other difficulties

*A Sprite in full song. Genuine 110 mph performance can be had by severely modifying the car. Flexibility can be retained for normal road-use.*

associated with production drum systems.

Stabiliser bars usually come in two types—normal and heavy duty—the former retailing at £7.10.0 and the competition bar for a mere ten shillings more. These are do-it-yourself items, requiring a couple of holes to be drilled before installation.

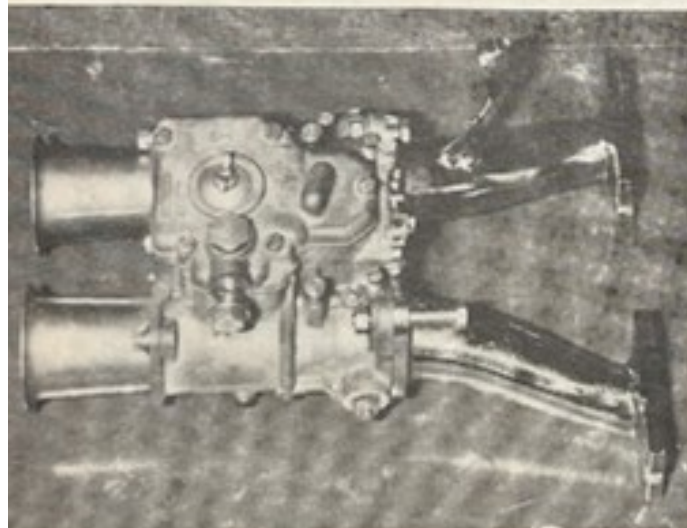
The Sprite's suspension requires only minimal modification, only the hottest of the hot having any changes made to the standard springing. Fewer still are lowered, but most have the damper valves replaced to give a firmer setting.

That almost takes care of everything apart from the engine, gearbox and rear axle—everything except the steering wheel. According to automotive authority Colin Chapman, a light-weight steering wheel will allow faster steering reactions with less effort because of a lower inertia.

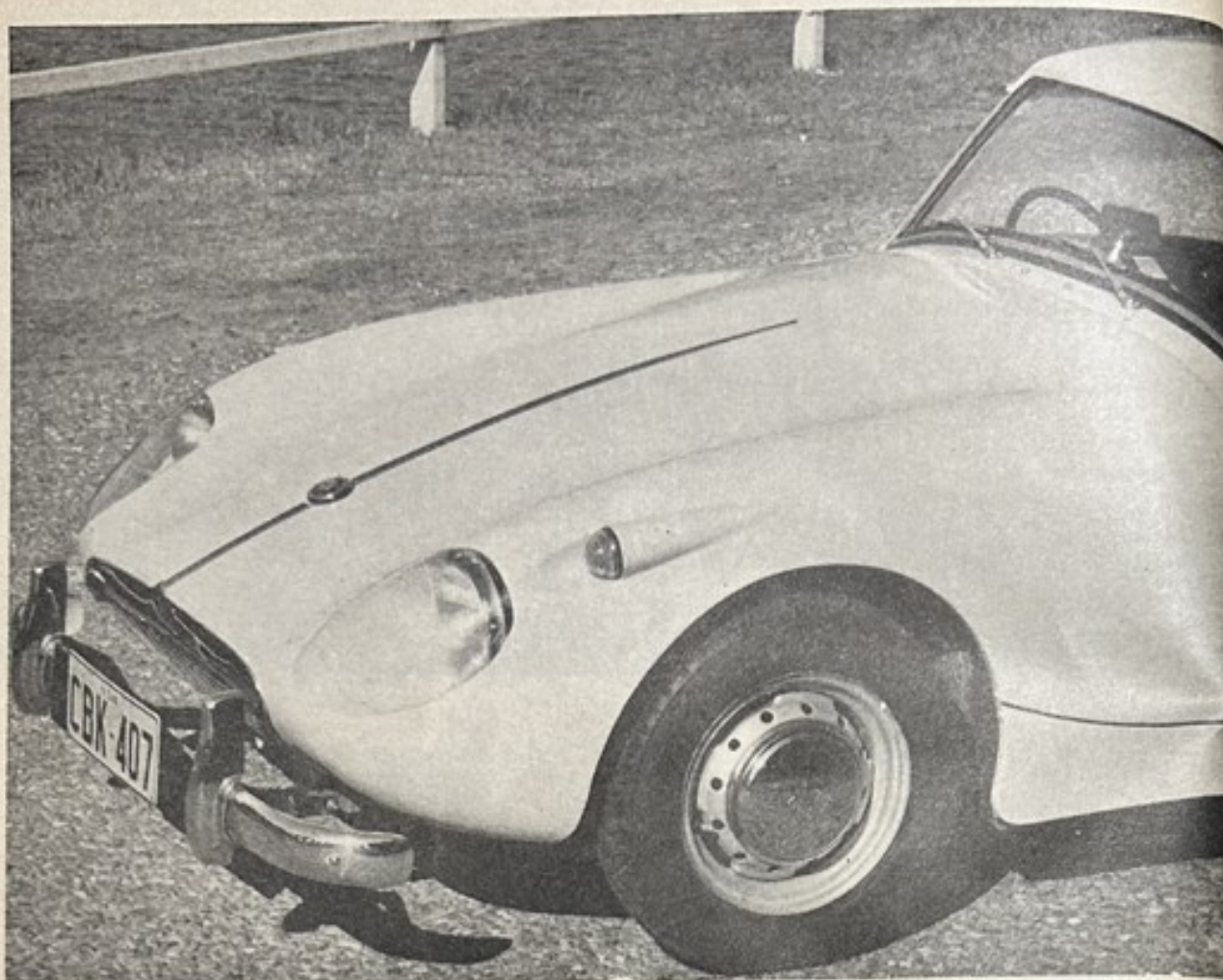
Because of this they can be counted as worthwhile—not just a sporty gimmick. A variety of alloy wood-rimmed wheels are available to suit the Sprite and they cost in the vicinity of £16.

While weight reduction is not permissible for racing production sports cars, this is a point that should not be overlooked by those who want either a fast road car or a machine for outright sports/racing. The easiest means of paring pounds from a Mk One is to replace the original steel bonnet assembly with one of fibreglass. Of the several styles produced some are identical to the original structure whereas others have the headlights placed to the front of the guards. Prices start at £50. Of course there are hardtops too, and efficiently designed models can add measurably to the car's maximum speed.

And now to mechanical matters. An official special tuning manual is available through BMC sports car dealers and it lists five stages of tune that progressively increase the bhp from 43 to 55. This is the upper limit prescribed by the factory, but it is quite moderate by today's standards. Local specialists have the A-series engine deliver-



*To add a little Italian flavor to this hot dish, a Weber carburettor and a special inlet manifold can be fitted to the A-series engine.*



## PEPPERING THE SPRITE ... continued

*Fibreglass fronts and tops considerably improve the aerodynamic form of the Mk 1 Sprite and add to the top speed.*

ing more than 70 bhp, yet retaining reasonable flexibility.

Before doing anything to the engine, the owner should know in advance what he wants of the car, what quirks he is prepared to tolerate, and how much he is willing to spend.

Power costs money. From here on in we shall assume the engine concerned has covered 30,000 miles, this means it will have to have a comprehensive overhaul if reliability and durability are to be maintained.

The crankshaft is usually regarded as being the most critical part of a hot A-series engine. If it is to be used for fast day to day driving the shaft should be satisfactory as it is. Apart from grinding the journals nothing else should be necessary. If intended for really hard work it should be crack-tested thoroughly for flaws and then polished. Racing activities call for a special factory-built crankshaft that is safe to over 8,000 rpm which costs approximately £32. This is for the Mk One as the Mk Two has a strengthened shaft, but the Two A has an entirely different crank altogether.

Connecting rods should also be crack-tested and polished as a precautionary measure. To improve acceleration the flywheel should be lightened by about four pounds. As a guide for do-it-yourself enthusiasts, the Special Tuning booklet has

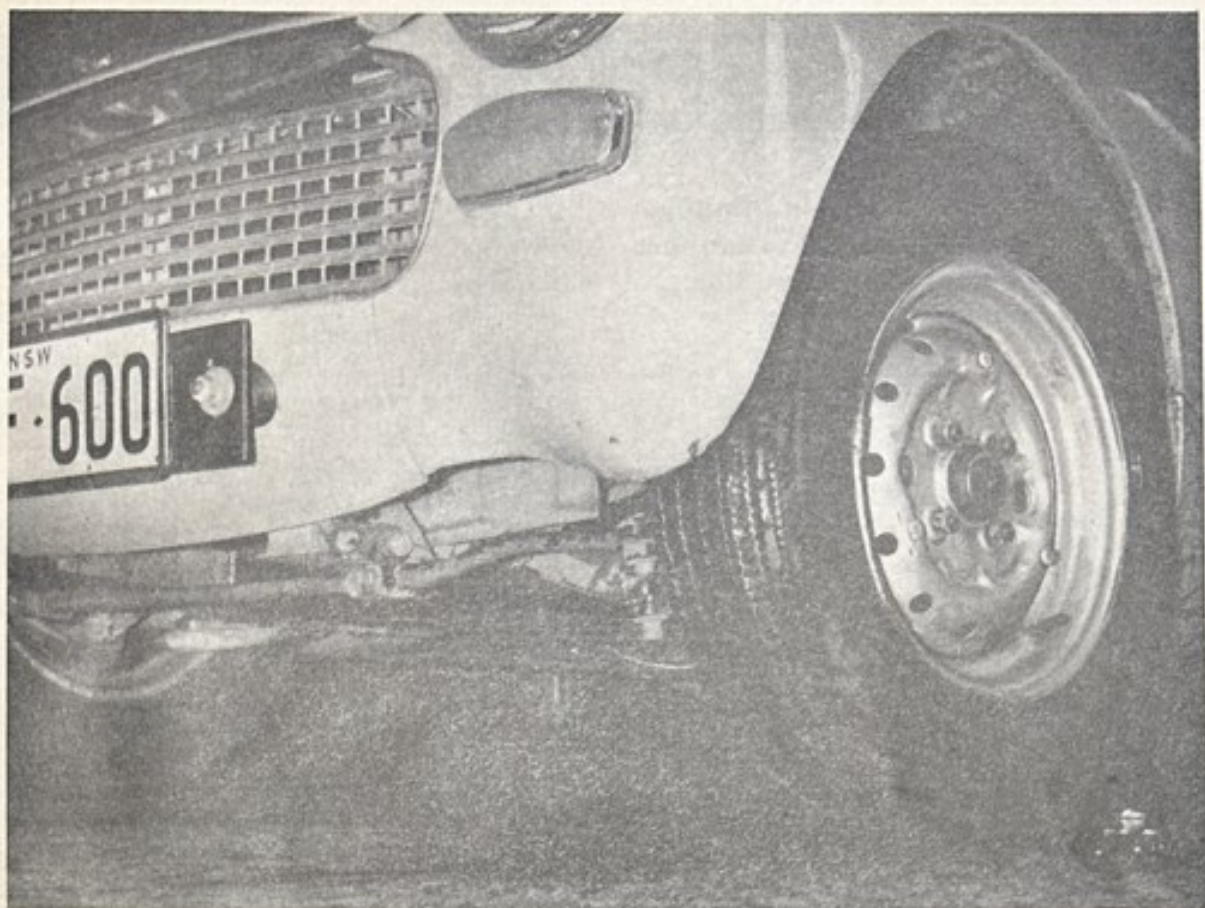
full details of how much and where the metal should be removed. Done professionally the operation costs around £4.

The standard six-spring Sprite clutch pressure plate cannot cope with any great increase in power and to stop excessive slip it is best to purchase BMC's competition nine-spring pressure plate or have the existing unit modified to these specifications for a little less than £8 on an exchange basis from local specialists.

A one-step method of gaining torque is to have the cylinders over-bored to 66.5 mm resulting in a capacity of 1060 cc. This is not a major operation as the cylinders can be bored without re-sleeving. Pistons to suit, with a 10 to 1 compression ratio, cost nearly £30 a set. Another £15 will pay for the pistons, connecting rods, crankshaft, flywheel and clutch all to be balanced and crack-tested.

That virtually takes care of the block assembly with the exception of the oil pump. For positive lubrication at high rpm a gear type oil pump should be fitted and is obtainable as a spare part from any BMC dealer. To cool the oil at high speed a special radiator is needed. It costs about £14.10.0.

The cylinder head may be either mild or wild depending on the requirement. Malcolm Motors, for example, list four stages of modification start-



ing at £20 for a port and polish, and progressing through stages two and three to stage four costing £50. The latter is a full conversion, modified primarily for Formula Junior or outright racing engines. It has extensively modified combustion chambers and ports, special over-size inlet and exhaust valves, different valve guides, and competition valve springs.

Cylinder heads such as this must be complemented by a suitable camshaft and appropriate inlet and exhaust systems.

All four departments, the cylinder head, camshaft, carburetion and exhaust must be compatible otherwise the engine may well lack its desired characteristics. We emphasise that the unit must be modified as an entirety so that each area can give its best.

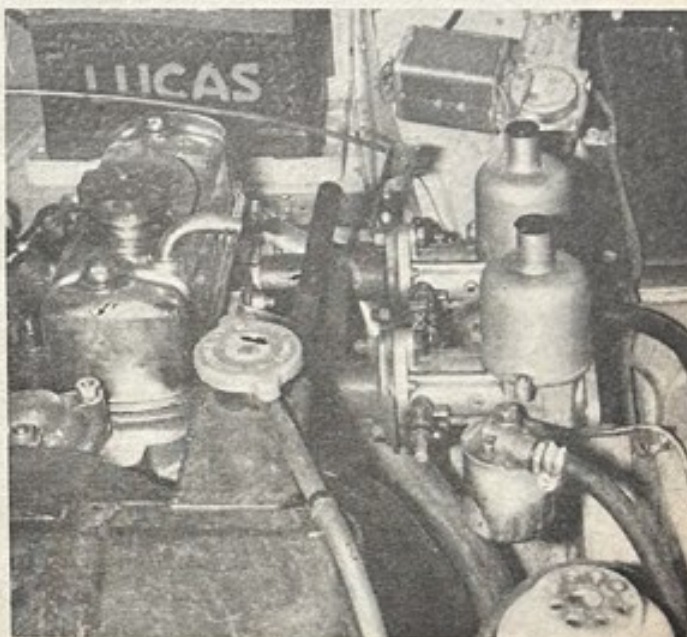
For this reason it is necessary to improve ignition once the engine has been taken beyond the mild stage. An optional distributor can be supplied through BMC dealers, but even this is not wholly satisfactory for hot engines. Better results can usually be obtained by having the original distributor modified to give the required advance-retard. And it's cheaper too—about £3.10.0 for modifications against £9.15.0 for the replacement.

Although some individuals favor Weber carburetors most successful racing Sprites rely on twin 1½ in SUs. The big-bore instruments, complete with manifold and linkages, leave only a little change from £55. When these are installed it is common practice to replace the stock mechanical fuel pump with an electrically operated pump to prevent any likelihood of fuel starvation.

*(Continued on page 62)*

*For really high speed trips, Dunlop Road Speed tyres should be fitted on specially fabricated 4.5 in rims. Note the competition type stabiliser bar.*

*The full-house Sprite engine with two 1½ in SU's should push the car to more than 110 mph.*





## 85% of MG Midget owners are men.

Which means lots of girls will be relaxing in our new, thick contoured rake adjusting seats.

A scene we're sure will appeal to both driver and passenger.

As will the trendy new look.

There's a new matt black recessed grille with chrome surround. New light clusters. Split rear bumpers. Black and silver Rostyle rally wheels. And round the sides you'll find black side-winders. For a long, lean look.

The MG Midget comes in

four wild new colours: Glacier White, Blue Royale, Flame Red, and Bronze Yellow. And of course, you can still get Pale Primrose and British Racing Green.

Get switched on - and immediately you'll know why this is the enthusiasts' car. The famous race and rally proven, twin-carb. engine performs brilliantly.

The MG Midget will give you dynamic acceleration.

Magnificent high speed cruising. And economical fuel consumption.

We've given you all this (rake adjusting seats included) for £835\*. The girl you'll have to get for yourself.

\*Recommended price including P.T. Extra is charged for Delivery, road tax, number plate, and a full year.



Sport the real thing MG Midget.



For laps on end, in re-enactment of the 1934 drama, Hall and Lewis' Lagonda raced mile by mile, corner by corner, straight by straight, trading the lead more times than either could remember afterwards. Then, at a stage of the duel when the course was in the in-between condition that drivers dread, dry hither and wet yon, Lewis went into a valse triste in Newtownards, ricocheting off the town hall with a cockeyed back wheel. At that there was still plenty of fight in him; he made it to his pit, 10 miles away, changed the wheel and got to grips with the horn-tootin' wool man again. But the deck was stacked against Lewis. Later his sump and reserve oil tank started up-chucking and the party for him, was over.

To complete the illusion that time had stood still for two years, both the Lewis Lagonda and the Hall Bentley were on the same race numbers—1 and 7 respectively—they'd worn in the 1934 TT. The Bentley in fact carried lucky number 7, well, fairly lucky, in all its three TTs.

In the closing laps, Hall's one hope of catching the Dixon/Dodson partnership depended on the Riley faculty continuing to believe Eddie would sooner or later have to stop for a fillup. Actually, the possibility he'd go through nonstop hadn't even occurred to them, but just to make sure it didn't, Mrs Hall made an elaborate any-moment-now play with superfluous funnels and cans. So it wasn't until he went by at 120 to begin his 30th and last lap that the stratagem was uncovered.

It had been a smart move, but nothing could be quite smart enough to gyp the Riley pair, with their handicap start of one lap plus 2:26 of the victory loot, Dodson, taking the final spell on Riley No 26, homed 26 seconds in front of Hall, who in turn beat the third-place man, Fane, on a type 328 BMW, by a mortifying 8 min 45 sec. B35AE's race average, 80.87 mph, was the fastest

ever logged at Ards, and was to survive as an overall TT record, regardless of circuit, until Moss in a C-Jaguar turned 83.55 at Dundrod 15 years and a world war later. This 1951 race was two hours shorter, moreover.

Apart from the TT, B35AE's only other prewar competition appearances were in Britain's top international hillclimb, Shelsley Walsh. There Hall demonstrated the old churn's versatility by winning his class the same three years he was earning the nickname of the Eternal Second at Ards.

Thereafter the Bentley dropped from sight for 14 years, finally turning up at Le Mans in 1950. The march of time had dealt less kindly with the car than with its owner. E. R. Hall still looked fat, fatish, fortyish and perennially buoyant. B35AE, on the other hand, had been transformed by the addition of a most inartistic hard-top and a nondescript cowling over the classic Bentley radiator shell. Nonetheless, the co-makers of the Eternal Second legend certainly didn't disgrace themselves, driving singlehandedly to eighth place overall.

Hall sold B35AE to Briggs Cunningham seven months later, complete with all parts necessary for a reconversion to TT specification and in April of 1951 the Bentley that never quite won a Tourist Trophy took up residence in the classic car heaven at Green Farms. #

## PEPPERING THE SPRITE

(Continued from page 21)

Efficient exhaust systems for hot Sprites follow the same general pattern in each case—being fabricated with three header pipes merging into one main outlet—and usually sell between £15 and £17.

A serious hot-up may also include lightened cam followers, at £5.13.0 a set, and rocker spacers at £3.10.0. It is the little things, such as detail attention to seemingly minor points, that spell the difference between the place-getters and the also-rans. Spark plugs for hot road cars are usually Lodge 2HLN or 3HLNs, or KLG FE 80 or FE 100s. The RL47 Lodge and FE 220 KLG plugs are for the most potent plants.

The Mk One's standard gear ratios leave something to be desired for racing purposes, and it is best to fit the same Internals as used in the Mk Two's transmission. Here is a comparison of the overall ratios for all three models when fitted with a 4.22 to 1 final drive.

	Mark One	Mark Two	Mark Two A
First	15.3 to 1	13.5 to 1	13.5 to 1
Second	10.01 to 1	8.08 to 1	8.08 to 1
Third	5.95 to 1	5.83 to 1	5.73 to 1

The parts required to obtain the Mk Two's closer ratios cost approximately £42.

Alternative final drive ratios are 4.55 to 1, 4.8 to 1, 3.9 to 1 and 3.72 to 1. The most popular ratio, apart from standard 4.22, is 4.5 because it allows better acceleration and under some conditions higher maximum speed.

Finally, let's tally up and see just how much it costs to put a Sprite in first class racing condition.

Wheels converted and Roadspeed tyres	£60 0 0
Stabiliser bar (heavy duty)	8 0 0
Engine, completely modified	300 0 0
Clutch (nine-spring conversion)	7 10 0
Balancing and crack-testing	15 0 0
Oil cooler	14 10 0
Mark Two Sprite gear set	42 0 0

£447 0 0

## Torque, torque... nothing but torque!

To soup or not to soup... whether tis better to gas-flow or blow? It's a tough job holding up your end of the conversation unless you're an expert: and you can't lay claim to being an expert unless you have a red-hot rocket to be expert about... which is where Sydney Speed Shop roars on to the scene. With S.S.S. speed equipment and advice behind you, you can own the most talked-about car this side of Silverstone, all without overloading your financial bearings. Try it and see.

## SYDNEY SPEED SHOP

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Everything for the  
sporting motorist  
under the same roof



# GPS Trackers

I know I'm not alone in wanting to know that my pride and joy is secure in its shed. I'm probably not the only person who has the driveway and the shed monitored by cameras to attempt to deter, or at least get an image of, a would-be joy-ridder or car thief.

But cameras are only part of the answer and if the cameras don't get a clear image of the low-life stealing your car/tools/belongings, once its out of the property, sadly there's a high likelihood that the last picture on the cameras will be the last time you see it.

Many of our Club members has pondered this very question and done considerable research into the pros and cons of various systems, from inexpensive Bluetooth and AirTag type tracking devices to high end, state of the art

tracking systems. At the December Christmas Function we had an impromptu presentation of the findings of one member has started using.

After considerable research he decided on the Solid GPS system and, by all reports, they are very very happy with it. Affordable, with long battery life, a reasonable annual plan (\$70 per year) and able to be discretely placed in the car or trailer you are trying to protect. The system talks to your smart phone. you get alerted as soon as it moves and provides location data

And best of all, its Australian designed AND Australian made. You don't have to shop overseas for clever tech!

This isn't a paid advert for [Solid GPS](#) and they are not a club sponsor, it's a reminder to be security conscious both at home and on the road and a plug for a good Australian company who employ Australians and supporting their local community. And I reckon that's about right! Think I need to get one of these myself!

## New to Sprite or Midget Ownership? Here are 4 Top Tips!

**Tip 1. Tools.** New to owning old cars and you don't have any tools? Not sure what brand to buy and put off by the price? Buy a cheap tool kit with a good selection of Imperial and Metric spanners and sockets. Replace the ones you break with the best ones you can afford and keep using the rest.

**Tip 2. Screw stuck?** Can't get enough leverage to get it to turn? A little known fact is the shape of most screwdrivers is so you can put a spanner around the handle for extra leverage so you can push down harder and use the spanner as a lever to try and turn it. Don't over do it though as once you

strip the head you need a new bag of tricks to get it out!

**Tip 3. Wheel Nuts.** Tell the guys at your local tyre shop that the recommended torque for your wheel studs is 45ft/lbs. The wheel studs are not as strong as modern ones and the tyre shops rattle guns can do them up too tight, and potentially snap the wheel stud.

**Tip 4. Free Stuff.** Don't spend your hard earned on manuals until you've visited [www.spridgetguru.com](http://www.spridgetguru.com) and downloaded the free OEM workshop manuals!



# the toastie westie



Specialising in bespoke hand tailored dog coats and accessories in a range of beautiful hand-woven Australian and Scottish wools, with a Sprite Club member in the house it was only a matter of time before I was making monogrammed covers for the club rego log book!



Reference this advert and \$2 is donated to the Sprite Club for every log cover we make!  
Standard—\$25  
Monogrammed—\$30  
(+ \$2.20 postage).

And for the dog lovers, all my coats are tailored to your dogs size and made here in Goodwood, South Australia out of a range of Australian wools and certified Harris Tweeds.



Follow me on all the usual [Socials](#), call me on **0431 247 746** or email me at [toastiewestie@gmail.com](mailto:toastiewestie@gmail.com) and let me know you are from the Sprite Club or an affiliated car club!

## *Can you support your club?*

The sad reality of running any volunteer club in the 21st century is you can't survive on the goodwill of your members alone. Its a constant balancing act to get the membership fees right to cover the costs of venue hire, insurances, affiliation fees and all the other little costs that come into running a club, whilst not driving the members away.

The Sprite Club of South Australia has been very fortunate over the years to have some very generous members and sponsors who have chipped in to help keep the club ticking over. Current sponsors include Colin Dodd's Sprite Parts, Lawless Classic Oils and MiniSport, LardAss Butter and the Toastie Westie, all who have offered our members a discount on sales or paid a small advertising fee to promote themselves here and online.

And lets not to forget the wonderful contributions of long term sponsors such as Gerard Miller's Marque Restorations and other members who have dug deep when it comes to Annual Dinners, Display Days and the like to make our events the success they are.

Running a club just isn't cheap anymore!

If you'd like to advertise in our annual *Sprouting Forth* and our monthly newsletter, *The Bugeye Burble* or have a spot on online and social media platforms (or maybe all them!), sponsorship packages start from as little as \$90 for a half page advertisement.

If you think you might be interested, please contact the club at and lets start a conversation!



# Technical Spot: Brake Fluids

By Nick Phillips, MGB Register Lead.

This article was previously published in the MGCC (SA) magazine and has been updated by Nick for Sprouting Forth.

To keep the science to just one sentence and written in layman's terms; brakes work by converting kinetic energy (the energy in the mass of a moving car) into heat energy, through the friction of brake pads contacting discs / drums.

As we all know, water boils at 100°C but fresh brake fluid boils at more than double that temperature. This allows the brakes on your car to be applied numerous times in quick succession, such as when driving down a steep road, without the fear of brake issues due to the temperature build up in the brake disc and calliper and in the brake drum and its slave cylinder.

Brake fade in rear brake drums is mostly a consequence of the brake shoe material overheating due to the drum's limited ability to dissipate heat quickly enough. The heat generated causes the brake shoe lining to give off gases which build up

on its surface, preventing direct contact with the inside of the brake drum. Racers sometimes drill small holes through the contact area of the drum circumference to allow this gas to escape.

Extreme braking when competing on a race-track is not the only way to induce brake fade. Stopping a heavily laden car also increases the heat that the brake components experience, as does braking to keep your car within the speed limit when driving down a long steep decline, or by frequent brief applications of the brake pedal such as driving down winding hilly roads.

With a fresh fill of the correct grade of brake fluid, there shouldn't be any braking distance reduction noticeable in street-driving conditions. Good quality brake fluid can't be compressed, so all of the effort at the brake pedal is transferred directly to the pistons in the slave cylinders.

However, if water contamination exists, the water will vaporise into a gas above 100° Celsius. A liquid resists being compressed but a gas doesn't. This is what's happening if you experience the brake pedal feeling "spongy" or worse still, when the brake pedal is able to be pushed to the floor while having little or no effect on retarding the speed of your vehicle. This is why it's critical not to have any air or water in the brake's hydraulic system.

Brake fade is a different, temporary phenomenon which occurs if poor quality or incorrect grade brake pads are used, which allow released gases from the over-heated pad material to actually force the pads away from the discs, as previously described for drums. Slotted, or cross-drilled brake discs are used to allow these gases to escape.



## What the DOT?

*Always wondered but were too scared to ask what all the DOTs mean?*

*'DOT' is the abbreviation of Department Of Transport, the US rating standard for brake fluids used around the globe and the different DOT numbers denote the grade are of brake fluid available.*

*DOT 2 was the standard for many years. Castor Oil based has all but stopped, replaced by DOT3 and now DOT 4. DOT 3 is still available to purchase but not widely used in modern production cars. The performance of DOT3 drops off rapidly as moisture is absorbed and therefore it needs to be flushed and replaced regularly, therefore, unless its unavoidable, I recommend to use the newer DOT 4 rather than DOT3, even though it's likely specified in your owners handbook!*

*DOT4 was developed to replace the poor performing DOT3. It's much less hygroscopic than DOT3, so it has better high temperature performance and only needs replacing every two years.*

*Now it gets confusing!*

*DOT3 and DOT4 and DOT 5.1 are all glycol based fluids. DOT5; however, is silicone based DOT5 is a Silicone product which I'll deal with next, after covering the last Glycol based brake fluid.*

*DOT5.1 is the highest recognised grade of brake fluid and exceeds the demands that all but racing cars can require. It has the same temperature ratings as Silicone fluid, which is why it's unfortunately been given a similar name which means that it could (and often is) confused with DOT5.*

*Unlike DOT 3 and DOT 4 which, if absolutely necessary, can be combined together, the Silicone based DOT 5 is cannot be mixed with any of the other fluids (nor really should DOT 5.1).*

When the pace is quick...  
Or the slope is steep...  
Or you're heavily laden...

# IT'S GREAT TO BE ARRESTED!

Which is why the new **CASTROL GIRLING BRAKE FLUID** has been introduced. Its purpose is to give you extra protection under those severe braking conditions. Even if the brakes are gently cooking, it's very reassuring to know that when you push that pedal a slim column of fluid will safely transmit your message right through to the slave cylinders that actually operate the brakes, even if it does have to put up with violently high temperatures in the process. The new fluid is suitable for all cars with Girling brake systems and supercedes Amber. It has a boiling point of over 550F and is consequently able to resist higher braking temperatures than ever before for a longer period. Also built into it is an even better lubrication for those vital rubber seals. Exhaustive tests on track and road have confirmed that the new fluid sets new standards in safety and dependability.

If you want to be arrested safely  
and surely every time you  
push that pedal

**PLACE YOURSELF IN THE CUSTODY OF  
new CASTROL GIRLING BRAKE FLUID!**

For the latest in Castrol  
Brake Fluids, talk to Michael  
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Castrol Classic Range in  
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Michael 0417 929 966



**Resist the urge!** It's unnecessary for the owner of a street-driving classic car to pay the higher price for the "racing" grades of brake fluid with even higher temperature ratings.

**Why DOT 5?** Silicone brake fluid has some excellent properties such as a high boiling point, it won't damage your car's paintwork if it gets spilled or dripped, which of course is a great benefit. The chemistry of Glycol based brake fluid is similar to automotive paints, which is why it does such a good job of dissolving the paint on your concours Classic. It's such a shame to see bubbling paintwork around the master cylinder pedal box in the engine bay of so many cars; my MGB included.

The disadvantages of Silicone brake fluid is that it can be more compressible than Glycol brake fluid, so a slight "spongy" brake pedal can sometimes be felt, which the driver has to get used to. This is because it readily captures air, which as we know can compress, unlike a Glycol fluid.

Brake fluid manufacturers strongly recommend that Silicone and Glycol Ether brake fluid are not mixed. If changing from the Glycol type to Silicone, the brake system should be replaced with new parts or at least flushed thoroughly a few times before being re-filled. If you decide to change back to Glycol brake fluid from Silicone, this should only be done if the master cylinder and all four slave cylinders are replaced, or dismantled, thoroughly cleaned and rebuilt with new seals. The tiniest remnants of the Silicone fluid must be removed before filling with Glycol fluid.

Due to its higher viscosity and poor lubrication properties, Silicone brake fluid must not be used in modern cars with ABS brakes.

When atmospheric moisture gets into Silicone brake fluid, it can cause corrosion in the slave cylinders, but fortunately in our relatively dry South Australian climate this is less likely to occur here

than in other parts of the world. It also helps if the brake slave cylinders have been rebuilt with stainless steel sleeves and pistons.

While Silicone brake fluid has the benefit of not being hydroscopic, if any water droplets do get into it, the water doesn't get absorbed on a molecular level like it does in normal brake fluid, instead, it stays as "free water" droplets, separate from the brake fluid, which will boil at lower temperatures causing brake fade and will also corrode brake lines and unions from the inside out.

An important warning about Silicone brake fluid is that because it doesn't trap water on a molecular level like Glycol fluids do, any water in the Silicone fluid remains as water droplets which eventually collect in the lowest / furthest points of the braking system, that is, the rear wheel cylinders and front callipers, which then causes corrosion in these areas. Corrosion of steel, aluminium or copper can occur when water droplets are present in Silicone fluid. For this reason, owners MUST bleed off an amount of Silicone brake fluid from all four slave cylinders every 12-months. This doesn't mean draining the entire system but just removing a small amount where water could be present at all four wheels, before topping up the master cylinder.

Silicone brake fluid isn't a fill and forget product that some people might believe it to be.

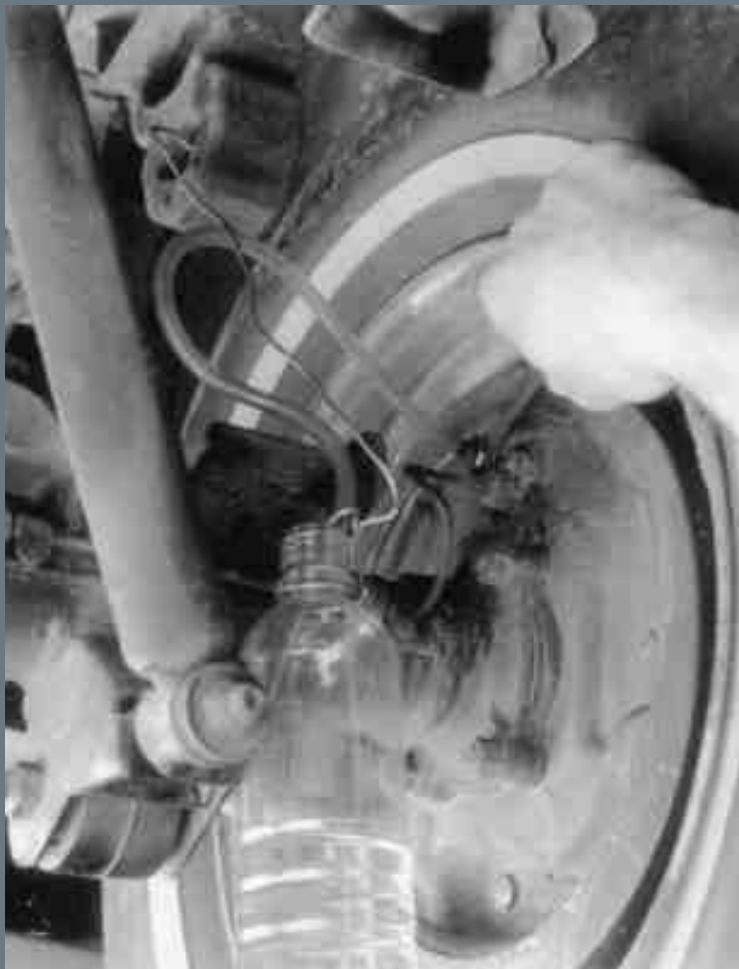
#### **NICK'S TOP TIPS**

- *Check your levels and top up regularly. As your pads wear down, the fluid level reduces!*
- *Flush your brake fluid every 3 years*
- *Use Castrol React Performance in your road car or Castrol React SRF if racing*

Silicone brake fluid has its Pros & Cons, depending on which properties are deemed more important for the vehicle owner's purposes and DOT3 fluid should be replaced with DOT4 the next time the fluid is replaced. DOT3 and DOT4 can be mixed but the DOT4 properties are diluted in the DOT3, so if you have DOT3 in your car now, it's best to flush DOT3 fluid from the system and have a full top up of fresh DOT4.

Some manufacturers produce a brake fluid that they call, for example, DOT4+, DOT4 Plus or DOT4 Super. These products have a similar chemistry to standard DOT4 but they exceed the minimum requirement of DOT4 standards, which the manufacturer wants to emphasise to customers. For just a couple of dollars more, it's probably a good idea to go for the higher temperature rated DOT4s.

Keep your Classic's brake and clutch master cylinders topped up at all times and completely flush



the brake fluid at the factory specified intervals. Having seen so many Classic cars with dangerously contaminated brake fluid, even with degraded pieces of the internal brake system seals in it, I cannot stress the importance of changing the car's brake fluid at least every 3 years. Apart from ineffective brake fluid, the water molecules in the fluid rusts metallic master cylinders from the inside-out and rusts the brake caliper pistons which causes them to seize. I've seen so many like this.

This replacement of the brake fluid is not determined by the kilometres driven, the climatic conditions of the car's location, the car's age, whether the car is raced or if it's locked in a garage for 24-months.

The reason why brake fluid must be flushed and replaced at least every three years is because it's hygroscopic; meaning that it attracts water. Water in the brake fluid reduces its ability to avoid boiling which greatly reduces the braking ability of the vehicle, and it will be a cause of rust inside the master cylinders, slave cylinders, brake lines and unions. Do not think that water can't find its way into the apparently "closed" hydraulic braking system of your car, it does, but not in the way that you might imagine.

Water contamination of brake fluid is not from actual water droplets, it occurs at a molecular level. Individual H<sub>2</sub>O molecules in the atmosphere are readily absorbed by brake fluid, which draws the water molecules through the air vent in the master cylinder cap, and from condensation in the air above the fluid level in the master cylinder, and even through the molecular structure of flexible rubber brake hoses.

Hydraulic master cylinders were changed by after production stopped in Australia from being metal to a translucent plastic material so

the fluid level can be seen without removing the cap. Think about this for a second; Glycol based brake fluid will be absorbing atmospheric moisture in just the short time it takes you to remove the master cylinder cap, have a quick look at the fluid level and then replace the cap.

It's reported that a minimal amount of water molecules will even be absorbed through the "seal" and threaded cap on new brake fluid bottles on the shelf of your favourite car parts shop. You can possibly imagine how much contamination there could be in that part-used bottle of brake fluid that's been sitting on your garage shelf for the past few years.



Unless you're a mechanic who works on multiple car's brakes every week, you should always purchase a small (500ml) bottle of brake fluid. Any bottles of brake fluid on your shelf that've been opened longer than three months ago should be disposed of responsibly. Check also the date of manufacture of new bottles being sold to ensure that they are less than 24-months old.

This water contamination is an on-going process and the more time that passes, the greater the amount of water will be absorbed inside the "closed" hydraulic system. You won't see water droplets sitting on top of the brake fluid in the master cylinder because the molecules are held in suspension within the brake fluid.

You can't visually check the condition of brake fluid, although some brands darken their colour with age. Water contamination in brake fluid has to be measured by equipment that measures the boiling point of the fluid in the master cylinder.

There are battery operated tools that resemble a marker pen which are dipped into the master cylinder, and when a button is pressed, it measures the electrical current passing from one of its probes to the other one, through the water held in suspension in the brake fluid. These tools, it could be argued, are better than nothing but in reality they can give a false reading and also, they usually don't take into account the properties of different grades of brake fluid.

*Nick Phillips is the MGB Register Lead and club technical expert for all things MGB in the MG Car Club of South Australia. Born here in Adelaide, Nick headed to the UK for work, taking his trusty MGB with him and proceeded to win or place highly in events through the UK and on the Continent before retuning, with his MGB, back to SA*



# From the Garage

## of the Ham-fisted Amateur Mechanic

Those who have been reading the Bugeye Bumble this year you may have noticed a series of technical tips from Yours Truly. These have not been rocket science but hopefully helpful information for the not-so-mechanically-inclined members of the Sprite Club (and other readers). This, hopefully, continues the theme of practical tips.

Tip 1. Listen to your teachers. They might actually impart worthwhile knowledge occasionally.

Tip 2. Don't work on your car when you are tired. You may make mistakes.

Tip 3. Smoke from the engine bay is, generally speaking, bad.

Tip 4. Measure twice, cut once (or check once, check twice and only then start the engine...)

Tip 1. Those who know me know that I was fortunate in my younger days to complete an apprenticeship at one of the military Apprentice Training Establishments. In its day these were considered amongst the very best technical training schools you could attend, looking back, a privilege really.

For two years my six classmates and I were

immersed in the theory and skill of hand to become Aircraft Engine and Airframe fitters. From the theory of internal combustion and gas turbine engines to welding, fitting & turning and sheet metal work, the Navy laid it all on for us including mandatory sport, three meals a day, accommodation and about \$110 per fortnight with nothing to spend it on!

But then the lessons turned to electrics. When I look back on it, it makes sense as part of a rounded technical training program but at the time at least one of us took it as an affront.

"... Sir, we are training to be airframe and engine techs, not b\*\*\*\*y electricians". The ensuing conversation ensured that I first spent the rest of the first lesson and then the rest of that course the sitting in the hallway reading my textbook.



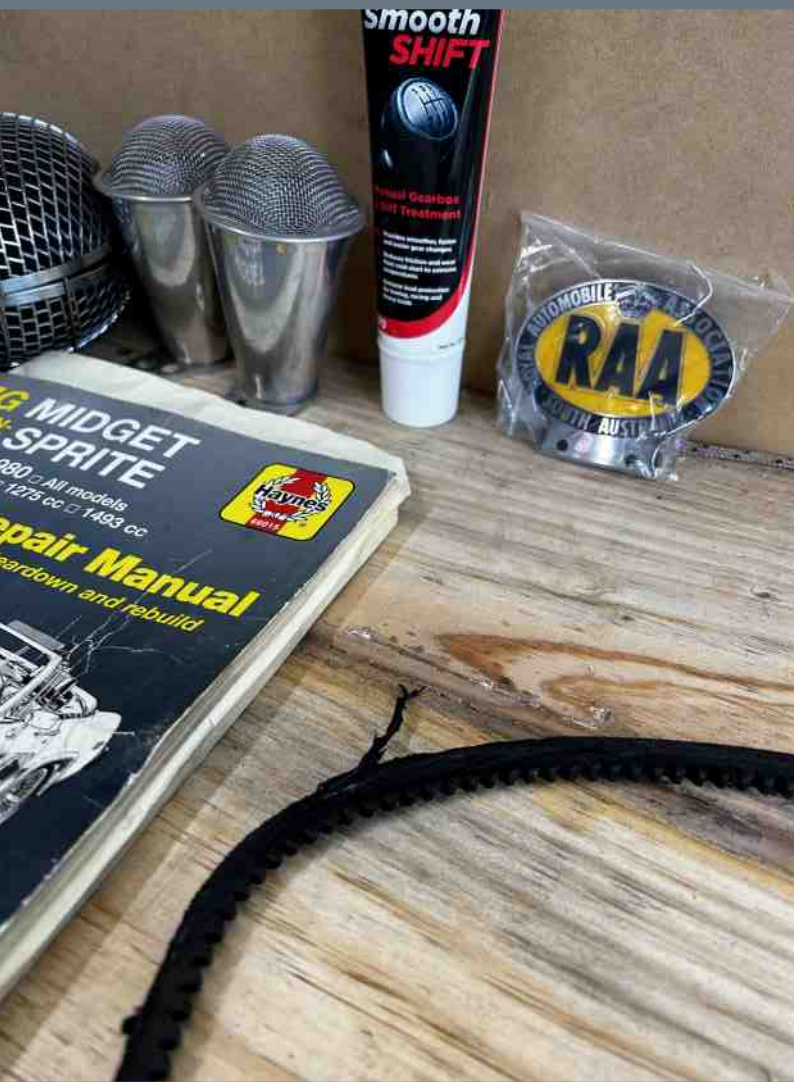
Here we were in 1988, about to embark on a career working on the latest and greatest gas turbine powered aeroplanes and helicopters, yet here we were using books written in the 1950's discussing the electrical system of the Tiger Moth, Sea Fury and Sea Venom? Didn't seem right.

Karma, they say is a cruel mistress; the electrical wiring of a Sprite or Midget has much in common with those 1930 and 40s era military aircraft I objected so vehemently to learning about. I'm now looking to do some electrical modifications to the car, a far better understanding of electrical system and circuits would be so advantageous! If only I'd have kept quiet and listened to the teacher!

Tip 2. The other night a particularly violent storm hit parts of Adelaide quite hard, my suburb in particular. At about 4.30am we were awoken to the sound of water hitting timber which proved to be a torrent of water coming down through the ceiling. That, and the flood from my next-door neighbour's stormwater resulted in a bit of an early start to the day. But that didn't stop me from attempting to get the tuning on the car right that night. I had a new fuel-air analyser try out and I wasn't going to let an early start deter me. What could go wrong? Well, actually, quite a bit. When you are a bit weary things that might be obvious to an alert brain get, well, dulled, so it took about half an hour to twig to why the fan belt wouldn't stay tight ! Don't ask!

With the problem finally solved and the fanbelt put back on I pressed on. Perhaps I should have heeded Tip 2 and headed inside as had I not been over tired I'd have realised the issue 30 minutes earlier and not lead to the origin of Tips 3 and 4...!

Tip 3. With everything now back together, the analyser is reconnected I pressed on. Starting the engine there's an odd clunk. I probably should have stopped and looked (refer Tip 2) but it was all working .... then the analyser went into error mode again. Bugger. Focusing on the error codes, I don't notice the smoke now pouring out from the engine bay nor the acrid smell. Thinking about it today, the clunk was a probably more of a bad sign than the error message but my brain was by now a bit, well, slow but I can assure you, the plume of smoke issuing forth from the front of the car jolted me into action!



So on to Tip 4. Had I perhaps recognised in myself I was somewhat tired by this stage and had rechecked everything before starting the engine I might have noticed the fanbelt had slipped over the crankshaft pulley and dropped between the block and the pulley rather than sitting as it should. The engine initially easily turned the fanbelt around until it overheated and jammed from the friction, causing a huge plume of smoke to emanate from the engine bay as the belt overheated and then began to shred itself. The tuning session was clearly over and I beat a hasty retreat to the beer fridge to drown my sorrows.

I'm still no wiser closer to re-tuning the car and a quick trip down to Minisport has netted me a new fanbelt ... maybe start again (afresh) tonight!



## What's a ....?

What, I hear you ask, is a fuel-air analyser? It's electronic wizardry that allows you to accurately set the fuel to air mixture by measuring the content of the exhaust gases. It means you can adjust the jets to get the optimal ratio of fuel to air at any engine speed.

I'm sure we've all read the workshop manual and how it recommends listening to the sound of the air through a hose to adjust the balance of the carburettors and then the 'pin lift method' to adjust the mixture. These traditional methods are perhaps fine for those of us with highly tuned ears but largely inaccurate for the vast majority of home mechanics.

Personally, I use Gunson Colortunes so I can 'see' the colour of the flame in the cylinders at idle to adjust the mixture until it is burning a

nice deep blue colour, much like the Bunsen Burners we all used in High School science lessons. Colortunes are great for getting the idle mixture right but it's really only accurate for a car that's at a nice steady idle.

If you have access to a rolling road every time you want to 'play', that's great, but for most of us that's not a reality so this is where a Fuel Air analyser comes into its own. It will allow you to see how the car is tuned higher up in the rev band. They are not expensive and fortunately one of the best comes from [RayTech Automotive](http://RayTechAutomotive.com), a small company over in Western Australia.

RayTech also make an excellent electronic carburettor balancer that takes the guess work from listening down the hose!

A great device for tuning your car ... just don't burn the car down whilst using it!



# THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

## A Spritely Christmas story

(Originally published Dec 2022, now updated and, hopefully, improved!)

### My humble apologies to Clement Clarke Moore and Dr Seuss (and the faintest of Christmas nods to Monty Python....)

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

The stockings were hung by the garage with care, in hopes that St Colin of Sprite Parts goodies might land there. The Spridgets were nestled all snug on their sheds, while visions of Castrol Classic danced in their heads. And mamma in her nighty, and I in my cap, had just settled our brains for a mid-summer's nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter! Away to the window I flew like a flash,

tore open the venetians to the sight of a hell of a crash!

When, what to my weary eyes did appear, but a bloody great sleigh, and eight, slightly winded, flying reindeer. And a bloke in a suit, covered in mud really quite thick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

Oh bugger, he muttered, the sleigh was bent out of shape and all of it dented, with only tonight to deliver the presents to dreaming children the world over, now the night was all ruined, for a white Roos he had run over.



That doesn't look good muttered I, and grabbed him a beer, his reindeer became startled, did up and disappear. And with the White kanga joining the choir invisible, the remaining White Boomers too long bolted, concern for their health quite unequivocal.

A bent sleigh in the night, the steering all shot. The right ski was all bent, the left reigns in a knot. "What the heck now shall I do?" he said between swigs, tears running down his fat cheeks, as he thought of the kids.

Looks of disappointment of presents not there and losing their faith, in the jolly man with white hair. So I passed him my phone with "I know a bloke you might call. The Marquis d' Restoration where there's no job that's too tall,"

"Really? Right now?", the jolly gent spluttered, "but it's so awfully late?"

"Can't hurt" I reply, "those kids, they won't wait!" "Are you sure", he replied, "do you think he might look?" "Oh", I said thoughtfully, "the sleigh might fit right in his book."

So he dials the number that's written in the book and a bleary voice says "Tonight? Sorry, no way. Bring it round early next year and I'll take a look, Maybe we can try for March, or maybe for May."

But then the Marquis offers, "Isn't there a list of car owners' naughty and nice? Don't you have mechanic elves to call out, up North on the ice?"

Said Santa with a growl, lost deep in his funk, "They're on their union stand down, now very likely quite drunk!"

"But hang on a jiff", the voice says with a hoot, "Lets call brother Pat and borrow his Ute. With its cavernous boot, you can load up the sacks, then haul all the loot."





"Yes", I jump in, "but you'll still need some help. That Falcon alone won't manage the hand that's been dealt. With eight roaring Spridgets, you'll never be late!"

Call Gordon and Chris" I cry, "they've got several to offer, and if you plumb don't ask, you never know what they can proffer". "Russell and Judy are probably out, meandering along, but Pete might have one or two and you might want to call Don".

"Yes, I think these are you best bet, just don't rely on Jez, he'll most likely forget!"

More rapid than eagles his saviours all then came, and with a smile on his face, he whistled and called them by name:

"Now, Skinner! now, Union! Now, Dellorto and Weber! On, Austin! on, Healey! on, Lucas and Midget!

To the top of the porch. To the top of the wall! Now race away! Race away! Race away all!

As valve rockers dance before the wild push rods that did fly, and with those A Series on cam, he did hill climb to the sky, up to the corkscrew, atop the Hills, they rapidly flew, with the cars full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

"Oh My", muttered Santa, "this is now quite a Spritely Adventure!"

And then, in a twinkling, I heard back up on the roof, "Oh bugger and damnation, blasted Lucas went poof."

As I drew in my head, and was turning around, down the chimney St. Nic came back with a bound. Dressed in fur overalls, all stained head to his foot, and his clothes were all tarnished with gearbox oil and Lucas smoke soot.

A bundle of toys he now flung off his back, he looked like beaten and downhearted, like a tramp with only his pack. "That's it, I'm bugged", he moaned, "the Prince of Darkness has got me"

His eyes were down cast,

"Just carrots and milk, dear God, where's the damn Sherry??".

His droll little mouth, now drawn down like a bow, And his beard mixed with grease, no longer whiter than snow. A stumpy screwdriver he held tight in his teeth, and puff on a Cuban and smoke rings like a wreath. He had such a broad face and a massive round belly, that shook when he sobbed, like a bowlful of jelly.

Then with a glint in his eye and a twist of his head, soon gave me to know the kids of the world had but nothing to dread. He spoke not a word, but consulted his phone, and called Sir Sean of the Clubbies, to more reliably help his way on, to continue his work and then fly all the way home.

Then he filled all the stockings, and if he didn't give a faint little twerk, laying his finger on his large nose, and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He lept into the Ute, with Sprites all on song, away they all flew, that burble heard long. But I did hear him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all Spridgets a good night!".





# Castrol Classic XL 20w50

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Sprites and  
Midgets for over  
50 years!**

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A large, conical Christmas tree made of greenery, decorated with red and white ornaments and stars, stands in a city square. The tree is surrounded by a red fence. In the foreground, there are two classic cars, a light blue one and a red one. The background features modern and classical buildings under a clear blue sky. A sign for 'POLITES' is visible on a building to the right.

Merry Christmas  
and &  
Happy New Year to all

From the Members and  
Committee of the  
Sprite Club of South Australia

Happy and Safe Motoring to  
All!