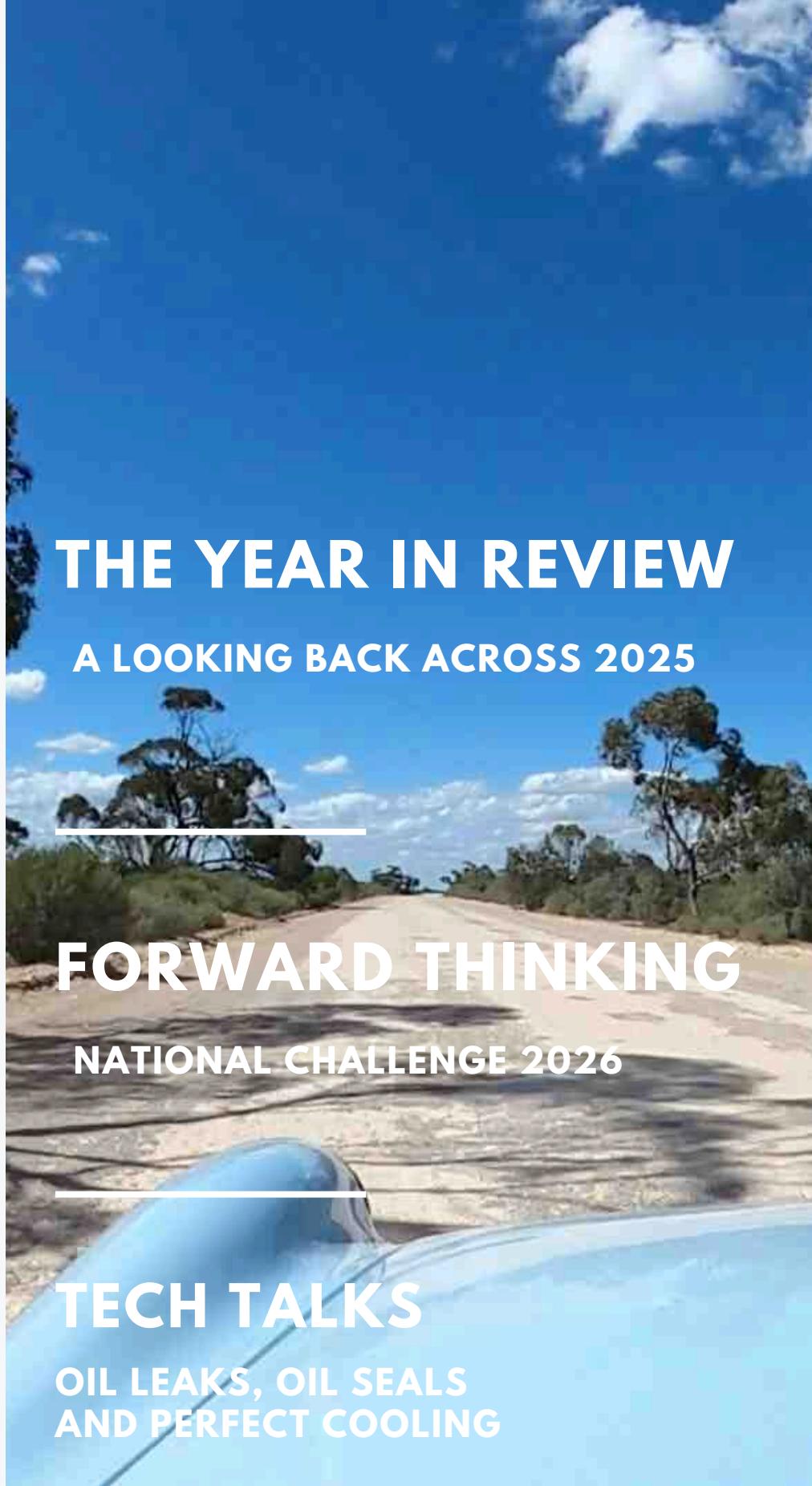


# SPROUTING FORTH 2025



**THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE  
SPRITE CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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OTT

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 PO Box 21,  
 Fullarton SA 5063

## FROM THE TOP

## A Note from the NEW Management

Well I was not expecting to be given the opportunity to lead the club into 2026 as President .

Firstly I would like to thank the 2025 committee for all their hard work keeping our little club so healthy . It must be at least 15 to 20 years since I have held this position , and big thankyou to you the members .

2026 is going to be an amazing year with our second National Challenge since the club started in 1972 . I personally feel very privileged to hold this position in such a big year . 2001 was our first Challenge and I remember the amount of work that went into it . Two days at Mallala and being able to block off one of the main roads in Gawler for the Motorkhana . If you have some spare time the Challenge Committee would love to here from you .

As I mentioned at the December meeting, I am a bit technology challenged so if you have any photos or short videos from the club runs , please send them to me and I will do my best to get them up on the big screen at our monthly meetings .

I would also like to thank Glen Donhardt who has accepted the position as Vice President on the few occasions that I may not make it to the meeting .

Keep the top down and the revs up

**Grant Stephenson**  
**2026 Club President**

# YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU

If you feel like you are reading something from last year's magazine ... you are, as the challenges faced by every club never go away.

Running a club, large or small, is no easy feat. What I'm sure looks like a swan gliding gracefully across the surface of a mill-pond in reality is 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!

Once again, we need an independent auditor to check the 2025 books before March. You don't need to be a book keeper or an accountant, just someone willing to spot check the books and make sure we are honest!

We also need a magazine editor to help prepare the Burble and the End of Year magazine (please!!).

We always need help organising events and functions or just the mechanics behind operating an Incorporated 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 run or an event that is keeping you awake at night, let the Committee know!

## CLUB MEETINGS

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.

Please come along and say hello!





## SOLID GPS TRACKERS

Keen readers may remember a member talking about GPS trackers and the peace of mind a new Australian product gave him. You may also recall a short article in last years Sprouting Forth about Solid GPS.

Since then a few of us have followed suit and purchased a Solid GPS unit to help protect our prides and joy. In return, Solid GPS have come on board to help the Sprite Club of SA deliver the 2026 Nationals and kindly donated three GPS units that the club raffled off across 2025 to raise funds for the Challenge

And the winners were:

- Sue Stephenson
- Kerry Fisher
- Grant Stephenson

### How Solid GPS Works



#### 1. Charge It.

Once you receive your tracker, charge it overnight and turn it on.

Then, download the Solid GPS app on the App Store or Google Play Store, or log in to our website.

#### 2. Hide It.

After charging and turning your tracker on, hide it nearly anywhere inside your vehicle. Such as:

- Caravans: Inside a cupboard or drawer
- Cars: Inside the boot, glovebox, dashboard, etc.
- Motorcycles: Anywhere inside your bike
- Trailers: Securely hidden underneath
- Boats: Inside or near the dashboard

#### 3. Track It.

When your vehicle moves, your tracker will detect that movement and update your vehicle's location at its quickest, every 2 minutes. (Or up to every 10 minutes).

Then, track your vehicle 24/7 through your phone or computer.

**3 Month Battery**

**Standard Tracker**

**Standard Battery**

**\$157<sup>gst</sup>**

Average 3-Month Battery Life

- USB Rechargeable
- 85mm\*10mm\*22mm
- 31-Days Free Tracking
- 4G SIM + Unlimited Data\*
- Free Standard Shipping

**Order Standard**

**6 Month Battery**

**Large Tracker**

**Larger Battery**

**\$197<sup>gst</sup>**

Most Popular

Average 6-Month Battery Life

- USB Rechargeable
- 83mm\*55mm\*22mm
- 31-Days Free Tracking
- 4G SIM + Unlimited Data\*
- Free Standard Shipping

**Order Large**

**12 Month Battery**

**MEGA Tracker**

**MEGA Battery**

**\$247<sup>gst</sup>**

Best Value

Average 12-Month Battery Life

- USB Rechargeable
- 83mm\*55mm\*23mm
- 31-Days Free Tracking
- 4G SIM + Unlimited Data\*
- Free Standard Shipping

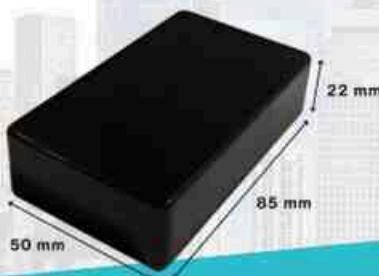
**Order MEGA**

\*Requires a \$6.99 P/M or \$88.99 P/4 subscription.  
31-day Free Tracking Before Subscription Begins.

## AUSTRALIA'S HIGHEST RATED GPS TRACKER

Thousands Of Vehicles Are Stolen Yearly.

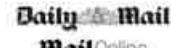
Recover Your Stolen **Harley Davidson** Instantly With Solid GPS.



**Order Now**

4.9 | 551 Reviews

### As Seen On





## 2025 COMMITTEE

C UB PRESIDENT S

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SECRETAR R D

---

TREASURER

---

C UB REGISTRARS

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# 2025 CALENDAR

AKA WHAT WE THINK MIGHT HAPPEN NEXT YEAR!

## January

- 1st - New Years Day Breakfast Run
- 18th - Gary's Fish and Chip Run
- 26th - Australia Day Thong Throwing Competition

## February

- Clubbies Kick Off
- All British Day
- 22nd - Annual Ice Cream Run

## March

- Ice Cream Run

## April

- All Historic Mallala
- Sprite and Midget National Challenge

## May

- Peter Hall Memorial 6 hr
- Midweek Run

## June

- Winter Warmers Weekend Pub Run

## July

- Midweek Run

## August

- TBA

## September

- 54rd Annual Dinner

## October

- Barossa Vintage Collingrove Hillclimb
- Mid Week Run

## November

- Annual Display Day (with the Austin Healey Owners Club of SA)
- Annual General Meeting
- Sports Car Cruise

## December

- Christmas Meeting



# CONDITIONAL REGISTRATION

## I RTANT N TIC A R AD!

For the final time, a reminder that if you have not renewed your membership AND had your log book signed off for 2026, you cannot drive your Club registered vehicle on the road (until you do so!!).

This means if you are considering the New Year's Day run and you haven't done the admin, you can't drive! As I don't want the club to get a bad reputation, I will be checking on the first run of the year!

The 2026 membership fee is only \$60 and a new logbook is only \$5. Don't start the year with a massive fine for being caught driving unregistered. Get your subs in and and contact one of the Registrars to sort out your log book! Its so easy to avoid a hefty fine!

*Grant Stephenson, President  
Gordon and Don, Registrars*



  
**SPRITE REGALIA**  
**SALE**

- 50th ANNIVERSARY GRILL BADGE \$10
- 50th ANNIVERSARY LAPEL PINS \$5
- CLUB T-SHIRTS with LOGO \$30
- CLUB HOODIE \$55
- CLUB POLO with LOGO \$40
- NEW SPRITE GRILL BADGE \$35
- LIMITED Ed '1974' GRILL BADGE \$25
- SPRITE CAR STICKER \$3
- BASEBALL CAPS \$25
- BUCKET HAT \$25
- CLUB GOLF UMBRELLA \$35



# KICKING OFF 2026

## Breakfast Run - 1<sup>st</sup> Jan

What's now become an annual tradition, the Sprite Club will again gather for a New Year's morning run and breakfast. Give me a day or two to come up with a plan this and I will put the details on the website between Christmas and New Year. If you have an idea for a run that's keeping you up at night, let me know!!

## Fish and Chip Run - Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Jan

Gary has planned an early 2026 Fish and Chip run. Following much the same plan as 2024, the plan is as follows:

Meet - 1530, Fullarton Park Community Centre (aka, The Clubrooms)

Route - drive to Seaview Fish and Chip shop to pick up the F&C, then on to the Historic Kingston House

Food orders essential - please send order to [gary@doddpc.com](mailto:gary@doddpc.com)

Menu - can be found at [seaviewchickenandfish.com.au/menu](http://seaviewchickenandfish.com.au/menu)

BYO - chairs!!



## Australia Day Thong Throwing Competition

Des and Penny have once again kindly offered to host the annual Throwing of the Thong competition at their beautiful home in Oakbank, overlooking the Oakbank Race Course.

This is a hotly contested competition and, as a former winner myself (Ed.), it comes with great pride and responsibility.

More details to follow, with BYO lunch, drink and chairs essential. Des and Penny will put on tea and coffee, as well as Strawberries and Cream and, of course, the competition itself. Its a great day out so put it into the diary early!!



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A compact workshop where you and your car get personal attention

Fast, friendly, efficient service from the only supplier open 7am to 7pm, 7 days per week

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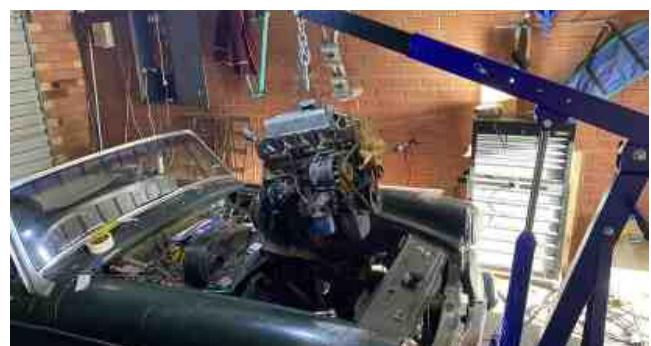
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# 3FOOTED MONSTER®

HOON  
COFFEE



# IMAGES OF 2025





# 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE GRATEFUL

## A Year Living With a Bugeye Sprite

It started with seeing Janice's Sprite at the 2024 Bay to Birdwood. She'd purchased a car I had my eye on for a while. We also met Gordon there, who helpfully suggested we visit the Club Display Day the following month, which we did. I thought I'd show my wife Vittoria what I was interested in buying next; a series 2 Sprite or Series 1 Midget. She, of course, gravitated to the Series 1 Sprite. All the same, I'm grateful she's keen on cars.

On that day, we talked to Gordon and other friendly club members. We were very tempted by a Sprite there for sale but was 'pipped at the post' by another offer.

I'm grateful to Gordon for his very helpful advice when we continued our search thereafter, as well as facilitating our club membership and Historic Registration when we did eventually buy a car.

I'm grateful to Sean and his Clubby Crew for enthusiastically chatting to my friends and I when we came to check out their cars at the Rezz.

I'm grateful to the club members, so friendly and willing with tips and advice. In particular, thanks to Peter Stanley who, not only graciously offered me some lowering wedges, but also came over to help us install them when we almost gave up in frustration

I'm also grateful to Robin for indulging my obsession for historical Sprite content found in obscure places and then publishing it in the club magazine.

I'm also grateful to Robin for indulging my obsession for historical Sprite content found in obscure places and then publishing it in the club magazine.

I'm grateful to my good friend Daniel who came over to help get the car running again, after I performed some 'routine maintenance' and unintentionally disturbed the unsecured distributor. He set the timing and idle, as well as tried to (unsuccessfully) reassure me that I'm not a complete idiot.

I'm grateful to my daughter's partner, Joseph, who politely listens to me blather on about cars like I know what I'm talking about. He keenly lends me a hand when I'm working on the car but also spurs me on when I'm ready to give up. He's also the 'spark' to get me up early for car shows.

These are just a small collection of gratitudes. If I try even only a little harder, I'm sure I'd come up with many more. A worthwhile exercise at any time of the year.

Merry Christmas, from Bruno!





# NEW YEARS DAY BRUNCH RUN

A perfect way to start the new year!

What's now become an annual tradition, the Sprite Club gathered for a new year's morning run and breakfast.

This year Gary planned the route; starting in Glenelg we wound through the beach side suburbs, skirted around North Adelaide before ending up in Norwood for coffee and food at Cafe Bravo.

A fabulous collection of Sprites, Midgets, a Mini, MX5, MGB and a few others! Just a great way to start the year off. Thanks to everyone who came along!



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Fast, friendly, efficient service from the only supplier open 7am to 7pm, 7 days per week

**PHONE or FAX ORDERS**  
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**HOON**  
**COFFEE**



# CARS, COFFEE AND COMPETITION

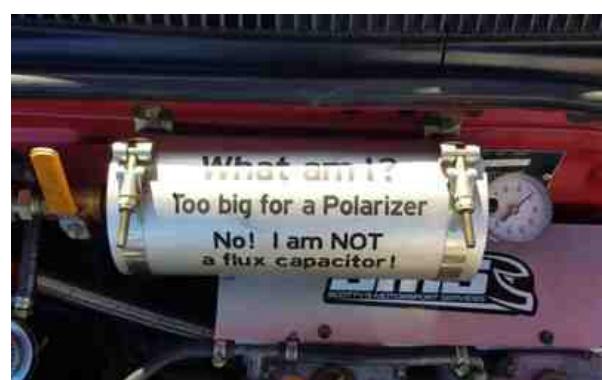
Its 6.30 Sunday morning and the alarm is going off , a quick cuppa tea, up with the roller door, 8' degrees and the roof is off the Sprite [ of course ] , and we are off by 7.15 .

The heater is hardly working by the time we got to Happy Valley shopping centre at 7.30 , we were not the first Sprite to arrive, the other Sprites must be locals.

Nine Spridgets turned up, lots of other cars big and small, Ford, Chev, VW, Jaguar, Rover, Holden, Mini, 240Z , MX-5. You get the picture; lots to see and owners to chat too. I think our club did us proud . By 10.00 the shoppers were moving in so its time for the Sprites to move on.

We decided to put a quick run together thanks to Steve & Cathy Leane. Up to Chandlers Hill Rd , Grants Gully Rd , Piggott Range Rd, then back across to Lonsdale.

The short run concluded at Apogee Motor Sport Services. Owners Scott and Helen Stephenson had put on a display of an amazing range of race cars . Scott gave us a rundown of the services that they provide.



The short run concluded at Apogee Motor Sport Services. Owners Scott and Helen Stephenson had put on a display of an amazing range of race cars . Scott gave us a rundown of the services that they provide and organised a coffee van to be onsite. Coffee on a chilly morning is always a good thing!

Thanks to all the members that made it on the morning and to Scott and Helen for sharing Apogee's premises.



# ONE GOOD DEED LEADS TO ...

## Sprite Drama on Main South Road Ends in, err, Triumph

By Gary Dodd

What began as a routine good deed quickly turned into a roadside adventure for one club member after the recent All British Day. Fresh from receiving a factory workshop manual for the Sprite (already a duplicate in the collection), the plan was simple: drop by Steve and Kathie's place to pass it along.

But fate had other ideas.

As the Sprite turned onto Main South Road, a loud clunk from the rear signaled trouble. Within moments, drive was lost. Thankfully, quick thinking and a safe pull-over kept both car and driver out of harm's way. A glance underneath revealed no oil slicks or dangling parts, but the diagnosis was grim: gearbox or axle failure.

With no time to waste, a call went out to Steve. True to form, he arrived within minutes, and after a brief discussion, the RAA was summoned. The Sprite was soon on a tow truck bound for Steve's garage.

The verdict? A replacement axle was needed. What followed was a heartwarming display of club camaraderie. An emergency call-out on

Facebook sparked an extraordinary wave of offers. Within hours, Dean King delivered an axle straight to the doorstep — a gesture that epitomized the spirit of the community.

From there, Steve worked his mechanical magic. By Monday morning, after a barista coffee shared with Steve and Kathie, the Sprite was back on the road, purring once again.

### Gratitude in Gear

A huge shoutout goes to Steve for his hands-on help, Dean for the speedy delivery, and every member who offered assistance. It was a reminder that while our cars may occasionally falter, the strength of the club lies in its people — ready to lend a hand, an axle, or simply a smile when it's needed most.



# PETER HALL 2025 IN PICTURES!

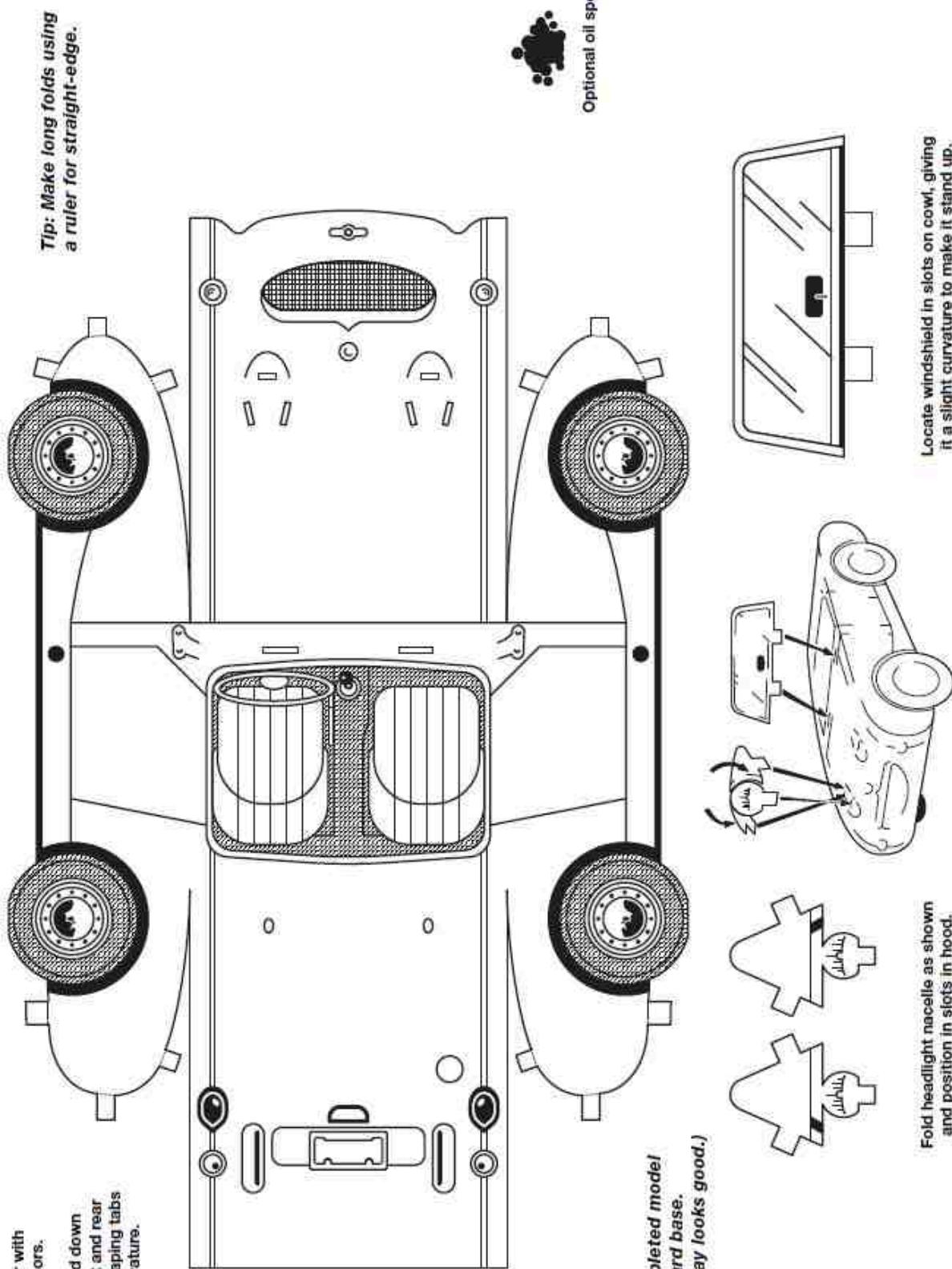


## Moss Motors Car Cutout Model

It is easier to color your Sprite before you cut it out.  
Felt tip markers or color pencils work great.

Carefully cut out the car with  
an X-Acto knife or scissors.

After cutting out car, fold down  
tabs, then roll over front and rear  
body panels, gluing or taping tabs  
inside to hold body curvature.



*Tip: Tape completed model  
to cardboard base.  
(Black or dark gray looks good.)*

Fold headlight nacelle as shown  
and position in slots in hood.

## AUSTIN-HEALEY SPRITE MK I

Commonly called the "Frogeye" Sprite in the U.K., and the "Bugeye" Sprite here in the U.S.A., this tiny sports car has enjoyed an enthusiastic following over the years. A total of 49,615 were produced between 1958 to 1961.



# PIES, PEAS AND ROCKER COVER RACING

Mirror mirror on the wall, who's the fastest rocker cover racer of them all....

The smell of a warm pie, a bowl of hot pea soup and a rocker cover racer is the main ingredients for a great night for the Sprite Club of SA. This year to add to the special Pie and Pea Night the attraction of rocker cover racing drew 44 members and friends to the clubrooms in August.

With a range of pre-dinner nibbles and some "test 'n tune" on the Rocker Cover Racing track started the night. Soon the pie floaters were ready, thanks to Grant and Angela and a range of assistants, the pie 'n peas were served and duly consumed.

Then it was time for some Rocker Cover Match Racing. A best of three rounds saw eight winners line up for the finals. With various styles and colours and added attachments saw the final two racers, President Robin Dunk and Alex Moncrieff line up for the finals.



This final went 2-1 to President Robin.

With a raffle draw many went home with a bottle of wine, cholates or one of the many stubby holders from 2026 National Challenge Raffle sponsor Solid GPS – do not forget three (3) Solid GPS trackers are being raffled for \$10 a ticket – see us at the meeting or you can buy tickets on the Sprite Club Web Site.

Thanks to all those who attended for the night and a special thanks to Robin, Grant, Angela and a cast of helpers that made the Pie, Peas and Rocker Cover Racing night a great event!

# A GREAT DAY ... FOR DUCKS

It looked so promising! Saturday was beautiful and the rain was forecast to arrive late in the day.

It will be fine we all said. Some went as far as leaving their rooves behind they were so confident that it wasn't going to rain! I mean, another British car club nearly cancelled their display the Sunday prior and that turned out very well indeed.

But lets face it, owners of Austin Healey's and MGs are made of sturdy stuff. The idea of a few drops of rain wasn't going to scare us off. So, something well north of a million dollars of Healeys big and small, MG Midgets, race cars, clubbies and delectable Associate cars turned out for the Display Day, 42 cars in all.

We watched the rain radar and the clouds building on the horizon. It all seemed to be skirting Glenelg, hitting KI, Goolwa and Mount Gambier on its way to Melbourne.



Gordon's phone rang and it was one of our members from Clare ... "I'm on my way and I'm in Mallala. It looks bad?". "No, its just a few drops, it will be fine ...". Famous last words.

Michael McLaren left his beautiful Mk3A in the careful hands of the club. Well, we got the tonneau buttoned down but it wasn't exactly water tight (sorry Michael!).

And despite the rain, a good few many of us drove home with the rooves off. Some all the way back to Gawler or Clare ... as that's where the roof was!

One highlight was to see SUS back under the power of an A Series, even if it did give Helen a scare on the way to Glenelg by trying to overheat! Given how cold it got by lunchtime theres an irony in there somewhere! We hope she got home without calling the RAA!



Gerard's amazing restoration of the Morris Commercial Van was a clear crowd favourite, as was Don's Bugeye and a stunning example of a 100/4 took individual class honours in the People Choice awards, with the Morris Van getting so many votes it was the clear winner on the day.

On the subject of People's Choice voting .... I'm somewhat concerned tho that, once again, nobody voted for the Presidents Midget. Not even me. I didn't think that was fair, voting for your own car so I was left to rue yet another display day as I drove home, in convoy with the Club Treasurer, both of us with our rooves off .. in the pouring rain. Completely crazy, the pair of us!



And after all of the rain, not finished with the day, Gerard went back to Marque Restorations and commenced making a Sprite ... from the aluminium of a Guinness Zero can. Can't wait to see how this one turns out! Knowing the quality of the work that Marque Restorations turns out, it will likely scoop the awards at the 2026 Nationals!!

# Moss Motors Car Cutout Model

## MG MIDGET

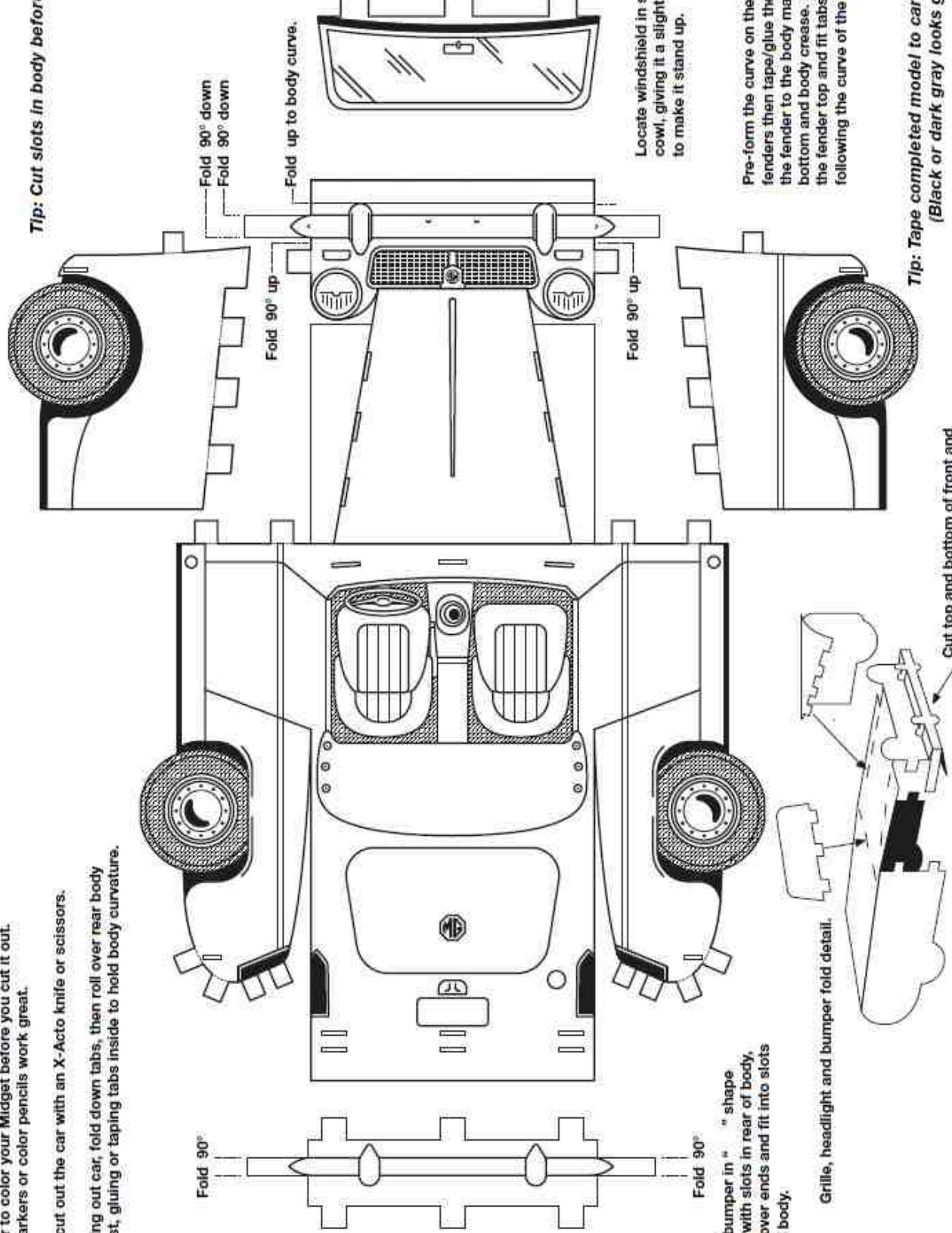
The MG Midget became a favorite amongst collectors and enthusiasts all around the world, due to its more affordable prices. 236,089 MGs were built between 1961 and 1980.



It is easier to color your Midget before you cut it out.  
Felt tip markers or color pencils work great.

Carefully cut out the car with an X-Acto knife or scissors.

After cutting out car, fold down tabs, then roll over rear body panels first, gluing or taping tabs inside to hold body curvature.



*Tip: Cut slots in body before folding car.*

## HOLIDAY FUN

*Pre-form the curve on the top of the fenders then tape/glue the back edge of the fender to the body matching up the bottom and body crease. Now roll over the fender top and fit tabs along hood, following the curve of the headlight.*

*Locate windshield in slots on cowl, giving it a slight curvature to make it stand up.*

*Locate windshield in slots on cowl, giving it a slight curvature to make it stand up.*

*Pre-form the curve on the top of the fenders then tape/glue the back edge of the fender to the body matching up the bottom and body crease. Now roll over the fender top and fit tabs along hood, following the curve of the headlight.*

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*Tip: Tape completed model to cardboard base.  
(Black or dark gray looks good.)*

*Tip: Make long folds using a ruler for straight-edge.*

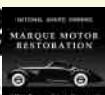
*Cut top and bottom of front and rear overriders and fold out.*

# JOIN US AT THE 2026 SPRITE & MIDGET NATIONAL CHALLENGE!



**MURRAY BRIDGE**  
**27 APR - 1 MAY 2026**

Proudly Supported By





## 2026 NATIONAL CHALLENGE

Like Christmas, its almost here!!!

A Week of Wheels, Wine, Wits, and Wonderful Nonsense, otherwise known as the 2026 Sprite and Midget National Challenge.

Its been in planning and preparation stage for nearly two years ... and its nearly here. Are we ready? Well, like every well planned Christmas Lunch the answer is ... no! But, like Christmas Lunch, you won't know it on the day as it will all fall into place!

### What is the National Challenge?

If you've ever wondered what happens when you mix a fleet of small but mighty British sports cars, a group of highly enthusiastic owners, several thousand kilometres of Australian highway, a world-class racetrack, a cryptic clue run, and a wine region that could tempt a saint... well, wonder no more. The 2026 Sprite & Midget National Challenge is rolling into Murray Bridge, and it promises to be the most entertaining automotive adventure since someone first asked, "Do you reckon we can fit the luggage in the boot?" (Answer: no. Always no.)

### The Great Interstate Pilgrimage

As tradition demands, the event begins long before anyone reaches the Murray. Queenslanders will set off early, adamant that it's 'just down the road', armed with sunscreen, optimism, and a playlist that will be stuck in their heads until June. Victorians will insist the trip is "nothing really," despite secretly packing three thermoses, a blanket, and a laminated fuel-stop schedule. Hopefully the Tasmania's don't miss the boat as its a long swim towing the car behind Surf Life Saver style. And the Western Australians ... well, they'll still be somewhere between Kalgoorlie and the Nullarbor, waving at the same emu they saw yesterday and wondering why the map says they're only halfway.

But that's the beauty of a national challenge: the journey is part of the story, and the stories get better every time they're retold. By the time everyone rolls into Murray Bridge, the cars will be dusty, the drivers will be buzzing, and the navigators will be quietly questioning their life choices.

Perfect.

Welcome to the Mighty Murray!

Murray Bridge and the lower Murray region are the ideal playground for Sprites and Midgets. The river winds lazily through cliffs and farmland, the roads twist and sweep like they were designed by someone who really loved corners, and the late-April weather is just cool enough to justify a jacket but warm enough to keep the roof down. It's the kind of place where every drive feels like a postcard and every stop feels like a story waiting to happen.

### Show & Shine – Where the Cars Sparkle and the Stories Shine Even Brighter

The Show & Shine is where Sprites and Midgets line up in all their polished glory. Some will gleam like they've never seen a speck of dust. Others will proudly display the patina of a life well lived. Judges will admire originality, shine, and that indefinable "Sprite spirit," while owners will explain—sometimes with great conviction—why that oil drip is actually a factory-correct lubrication feature.

Expect tall tales, proud grins, and at least one person who swears their car is "just about finished" despite having said the same thing every year since 1998.

### The Cryptic Clue Observation Run – A Test of Wits, Patience, and Marital Harmony

No National Challenge would be complete without the legendary cryptic clue observation run. This is where teams discover just how well they can interpret clues that seem to have been written by a poet, a prankster, and a cartographer who hasn't slept in three days. Expect instructions like "Turn left where the river whispers," "Count the chickens that aren't there," and "Proceed until you reach the place that feels right." Some teams will nail it. Others will end up in the Adelaide Hills by accident. A few will swear they followed the clues perfectly and still somehow arrive at a bakery in Strathalbyn or a vineyard in Langhorne Creek. Maybe even have to stop for directions at the pub? But no one will mind, because the scenery is gorgeous, the roads are brilliant, and the laughter is half the fun.

### Sprint Racing at The Bend – Where the Little Cars Go Big

Then it's off to The Bend Motorsport Park, Australia's premier motorsport playground, for sprint-style racing in partnership with the MG Car Clubs of Australia. This is where the A-series engines sing, the tyres squeal, and the drivers rediscover the joy of pushing their cars just a little bit harder than they probably should.

The Bend's world-class layout will give everyone a chance to chase personal bests, swap stories in the pits, and enjoy the kind of friendly rivalry that makes motorsport so addictive. Expect big smiles, small cars, and lap times that will be discussed for years.

### Motorkhana – Precision, Panic, and the Occasional Cone Casualty

If sprinting is about speed, motorkhana is about finesse... or at least the attempt at finesse. Tight turns, quick reactions, and the occasional cone that "leapt out unexpectedly" make this event a crowd favourite. Drivers will demonstrate impressive car control, questionable decision-making, and the ability to laugh at themselves when things go sideways—sometimes literally. Watch for Dean in his massively overpowered part Sprite, part Monster, attempt to tame his horsepower and turn his circuit racer into a ballet dancer.

### Wine, Hills, and Vales – The South Australian Bonus Round

Of course, no visit to South Australia is complete without indulging in the state's greatest natural resource: wine. With the Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale just a short, winding drive away, participants can enjoy cellar doors, scenic lookouts, and roads that seem purpose-built for small sports cars. Picture it: a crisp late-April morning, the roof down, the engine humming, the road curling through vineyards and gum-lined ridges. It's the kind of drive that makes you fall in love with your car all over again.

### A Celebration of Cars, Camaraderie, and the Joy of the Journey

The 2026 Sprite & Midget National Challenge isn't just an event—it's a celebration. A celebration of the cars we love, the people who love them, and the adventures that happen when you put them all together in one place. From the mighty Murray to The Bend, from cryptic clues to motorkhana cones, from wine tasting to wheel-to-wheel sprinting, this year's challenge promises laughter, excitement, and memories that will last long after the engines cool.

And just when you thought the fun was confined to the cars, the Awards Dinner will add its own dash of style. This year's theme is "Goodwood Fashion" — so dust off your tweed jackets, polish those brogues, and channel your inner 1950 & 60s pit-lane glamour. Think flowing frocks, dapper waistcoats, and maybe even the odd cravat for good measure. It's all about celebrating the spirit of Goodwood with a wink and a smile, so whether you're dressed to impress or simply dressed to amuse, you'll fit right in.

So pack your bags, prep your machine, and embrace the adventure. The road to Murray Bridge awaits—and every kilometre is part of the story.

# Sprite & Midget National Challenge '26

Murray Bridge  
27 Apr - 1 May 2026



Proudly Supported By



# NATIONALS 2026 UPDATE - ACCOMODATION

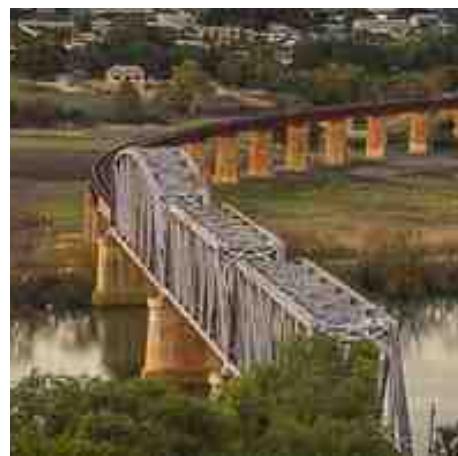
Its official. Its 12 months (nearly to the day) until the 2026 Sprite and Midget Nationals in Murray Bridge! With the MGCC (SA) officially announcing their plans for 2026 we can now let the proverbial cat out of the bag and reveal that the Sprite Club and the MGCC(SA) will be working together on some of the events, particularly the motor sport events which will see the clubs sharing the track and skid pan at The Bend for the Sprint and Motokhana events, with other collaborations being considered across the week-long event.

**Accommodation.** As many of you already know, the Sprite and Midget Nationals includes all accommodation, meaning you don't have to worry about planning it! This year we will be using the BridgPort Hotel, overlooking the Murray River, in Murray Bridge. Without a doubt it's one of the best regional hotels you will find anywhere and the Sprite Club has been able to negotiate a preferred rate for the week. Its a 100 room hotel and indications are that we will be taking around 50 of the rooms, so get your expression of interest in quickly before they are all gone!

We think the Bridgport Hotel is a perfect base for the Nationals! Boasting a fabulous restaurant and walking distance to other local eateries, as well as a short stroll to the actual 'Murray Bridge' and the parks and gardens along the river (including the famous Bunyip!), we hope that everyone's needs will be met!

The Bend Motorsport Park is less than 30 minutes up the road and the National Motor Museum is about 45 minutes away in the Hills, and a range of local wineries in the Langhorne Creek area less than 30 minutes away, there is plenty of scope to entertain everyone! And don't forget, the sinuous driving roads that wend their way through the Adelaide Hills all make for what we hope will be an amazing week exploring the region, rekindling old friendships and perhaps making some new ones.

Not to forget what its all about; getting out and about in your Sprite or Midget, or indeed, any car, to enjoy the sights and scenery of the lower River Murray!



## AND THE COST??

With two items left to lock down we hope to have the final entry form up and on the web early in January, including a final date for payment approximately 6-weeks out from the event if you are planning. We've targeted what we think is an amazing value for money Challenge and we are very close to landing on the mark!

The total package includes accommodation, all evening meals and the traditional farewell breakfast. All costs are *per person* and on a *twin-share* room basis. A single occupancy room option may be available for the serial snorers depending on final numbers!

Motorsports, wineries and the River Murray. What's not to get excited about??!

And wait, there's more, with a range of Challenge '26 Merch, including shirts, beanies and grill badges coming too!

# RUN THROUGH THE NIGHT TO THE 2026 SPRITE & MIDGET NATIONAL CHALLENGE!



**MURRAY BRIDGE**  
**27 APR - 1 MAY 2026**

Proudly Supported By





## A dedicated team

Finish is a reflection of effort.

That is our philosophy. Whether repairing accident damage, restoring vintage vehicles from any condition to concourse-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.

We appreciate vehicles of all sizes, makes and models. We work on Australian, European, American and Japanese vehicles. For any enquiries, please give us a call or pop in and see us in person.

Marque Restoration has had the privilege of restoring many shining examples of motoring history. Many Concours de Elegance and Concours de Originality 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.

[READ MORE](#)



### Coachwork

Marque Restorations are one-off Coachwork specialists. We can take your vision, whether inspired by the past or a totally unique concept, from driving board to driving car. Using the best of both traditional and modern techniques, our master craftsmen can bring your idea to life.



### Mechanical Repairs

Mechanical repairs and part fabrication to classic cars, pre 70's vehicles a speciality. We can rebuild or repair to 'as new', engines, gearboxes, differentials, suspension and exhausts etc. We also offer general servicing, maintenance and tuning services to keep your prized machine in tip-top shape.



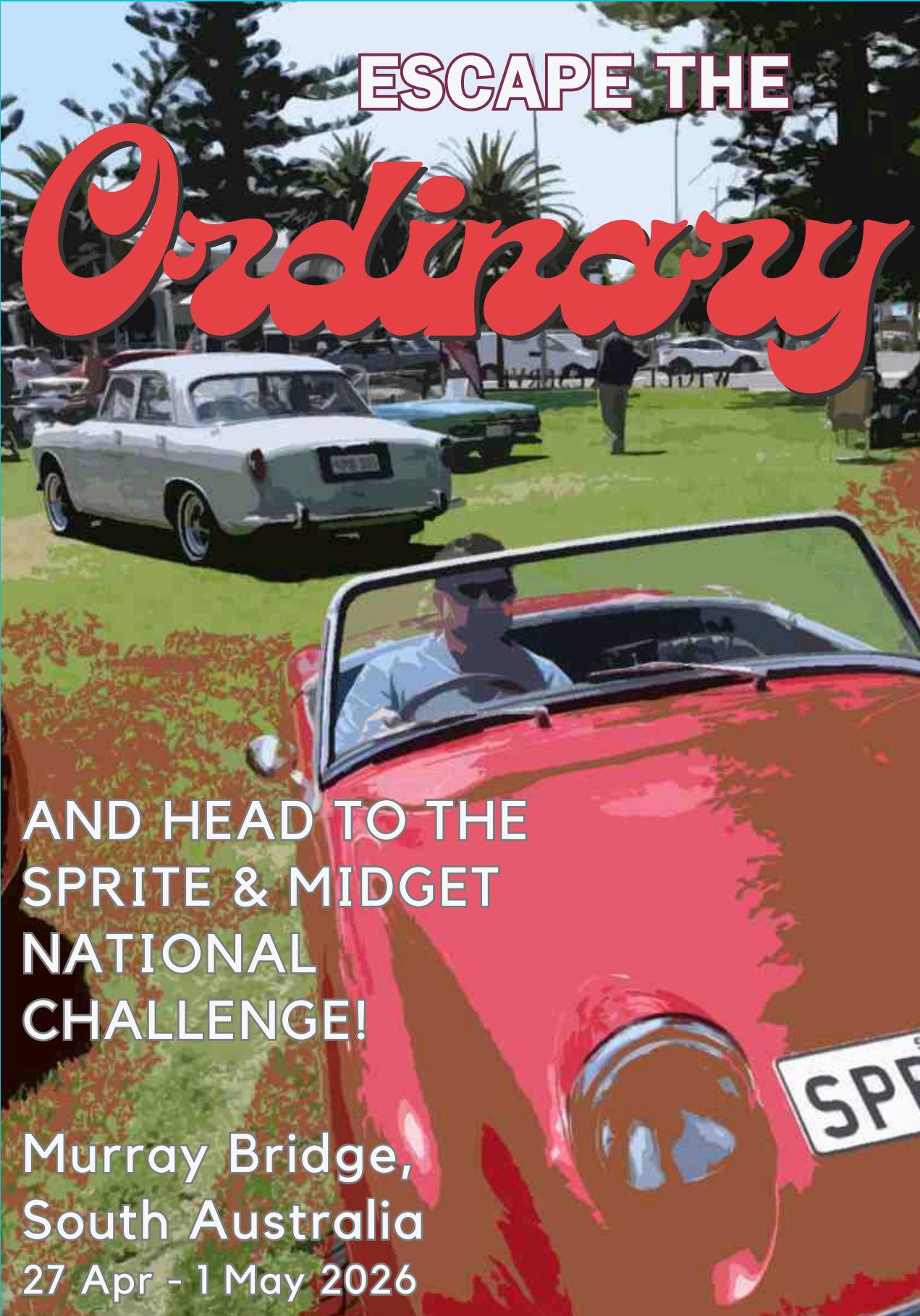
### Resprays

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 concourse 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.



# ESCAPE THE *Ordinary*

AND HEAD TO THE  
Sprite & Midget  
NATIONAL  
CHALLENGE!

Murray Bridge,  
South Australia  
27 Apr - 1 May 2026

Proudly Supported By



# OVER HEATS AND OIL LEAKS

Summer is here, and the heat is on its way, but fear of a hot day shouldn't be a reason not to take your classic out for a spin. A burnt bum from parking in the sun is (bring a towel!!) but a well maintained cooling system should be more than adequate for your car to survive a spin out through the hills or down along the coast on all but a roasting hot day!

In the following pages we will look at how to keep your cool, a comparison between the original radiator and a new fangled alluminium one and, just for good measure, lets talk a bit about oil leaks and some ways to solve it.

Read on!

Component	Engine, Transmission, Gearbox, and Differential		Gearbox and Steering Gear		Grease from:	Oils/Coolants
	Normal operating conditions	Extreme operating conditions	Normal operating conditions	Extreme operating conditions		
Engine conditions	SAE 10W-30, SAE 15W-40, SAE 20W-50	SAE 5W-20, SAE 10W-30, SAE 15W-40, SAE 20W-50	SAE 70W-90, SAE 80W-90, SAE 85W-90	SAE 75W-90, SAE 80W-90, SAE 85W-90	S.A.E. 90	All conditions
Transmission conditions	SAE 75W-90, SAE 80W-90, SAE 85W-90	SAE 75W-90, SAE 80W-90, SAE 85W-90	S.A.E. 75W-90, S.A.E. 80W-90, S.A.E. 85W-90	S.A.E. 75W-90, S.A.E. 80W-90, S.A.E. 85W-90	S.A.E. 90	All conditions
Steering Gear conditions	MIL-L-25488	MIL-L-25488	MIL-L-25488	MIL-L-25488	MIL-L-25488	Mil-G-87502, MIL-G-87502, MIL-G-87502
Brake Master Cylinder	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50 (GM Dexosite 20W-50)	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50 (GM Dexosite 20W-50)	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50	Mazda Dexosite 20W-50
BP	BP Motor Oil 20W-50, BP Motor Oil 20W-50	BP Motor Oil 20W-50, BP Motor Oil 20W-50	BP Motor Oil 20W-50, BP Motor Oil 20W-50	BP Motor Oil 20W-50, BP Motor Oil 20W-50	BP Motor Oil 20W-50, BP Motor Oil 20W-50	BP Motor Oil 20W-50
HILL	Mobil Super 20W-50, Mobil Super 20W-50	Mobil Super 20W-50, Mobil Super 20W-50	Mobil Super 20W-50, Mobil Super 20W-50	Mobil Super 20W-50, Mobil Super 20W-50	Mobil Super 20W-50, Mobil Super 20W-50	Mobil Super 20W-50
FILTERATE	Filtrete Super 20W-50	Filtrete Super 20W-50	Filtrete Super 20W-50	Filtrete Super 20W-50	Filtrete Super 20W-50	Filtrete Super 20W-50
STERLING	Steed Super 20W-50, Steed Super 20W-50	Steed Super 20W-50, Steed Super 20W-50	Steed Super 20W-50, Steed Super 20W-50	Steed Super 20W-50, Steed Super 20W-50	Steed Super 20W-50, Steed Super 20W-50	Steed Super 20W-50
SPURGEAR	Spurgear Q-20W	Spurgear Q-20W	Spurgear Q-20W	Spurgear Q-20W	Spurgear Q-20W	Spurgear Q-20W
CAFFIER	Caffier GTF-10, Caffier GTF-10	Caffier GTF-10, Caffier GTF-10	Caffier GTF-10, Caffier GTF-10	Caffier GTF-10, Caffier GTF-10	Caffier GTF-10, Caffier GTF-10	Caffier GTF-10
ESMO	Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50	Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50	Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50	Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50	Esso 20W-50, Esso 20W-50	Esso 20W-50

## OL

### Engine

With or with mineral oils to consider include Castrol classic, enrite classic or enrite R

### Gearbox

SAE 10W-30 for a standard Sprite or 10W-30 for a Midget gearbox!

### Differential

SAE 10W-30 for a Midget

### Clutch and Brake Fluid

or



With over 25 years experience in Sprites and Midgets, Rod provides expert parts and service.

**Rod Wells**  
**m: 0487 821 362**

Narre Warren South, VIC 3805  
E: thebugeyebarn@bigpond.com



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# THE GREAT OIL LEAK SAFARI

## Life with an A or B Series Engine!

If you've ever owned a A or B series engine powered car like a Midget, Sprite or any number of Austins and MGs, you'll know that chasing oil leaks isn't so much a maintenance task as it is a lifestyle choice. Forget yoga, mindfulness, or kombucha—true enlightenment comes from lying on your back under a 60-year-old British sports car, staring at the sump, and wondering whether that drip is new, old, or simply a figment of your imagination.

Owning a Spridget is a bit like adopting a mischievous terrier. It's small, lively, and guaranteed to leave a mess wherever it goes. The oil leak is its calling card, its signature flourish. You don't so much fix leaks as you learn to live with them, like eccentric relatives at Christmas.

## The Leak as a Rite of Passage

Every Sprite owner begins with optimism. You buy the car, polish the chrome, and tell yourself you'll keep it "original but tidy." Then, one morning, you notice a small dark patch on the garage floor. "Condensation," you mutter. "It's just marking its territory."

By week two, the patch has grown into a continent. By month three, you're considering naming it after Captain Cook. And by year one, you've accepted that the Sprite is less a car and more a mobile oil distribution system.

## The Leak Hunt

Chasing oil leaks in a Sprite, or indeed an MGB, is a sport in itself. It begins with the classic crawl: torch in one hand, rag in the other, sliding under the car like a commando on manoeuvres. You emerge covered in grease, convinced you've found the culprit—only to discover the leak has migrated overnight, like a cunning fox.

The sump gasket is a favourite suspect. Tighten it, replace it, swear at it—it doesn't matter. The car will simply shrug and ooze from somewhere else. Timing cover? Rear main seal ... sorry, you think the rear seal qualifies as a 'main seal'? Come now, come now! Rocker cover? All guilty, all innocent. It's less "whodunit" and more "they all did it."

## The Social Dimension

Spridget owners bond over leaks the way sailors bond over storms. At club meetings, conversations go something like this:

- "Mine's dripping from the gearbox."
- "Lucky you. Mine's upgraded to the diff."
- "Ah, but has yours started leaking from the speedo drive yet? That's the deluxe package."

There's no shame in it. In fact, the more leaks you have, the more authentic your Sprite becomes. A bone-dry Sprite is viewed with suspicion, like a vegetarian ordering a meat lovers pizza.

## Coping Strategies

Of course, there are coping mechanisms. Some owners place trays under the car, like sacrificial offerings.

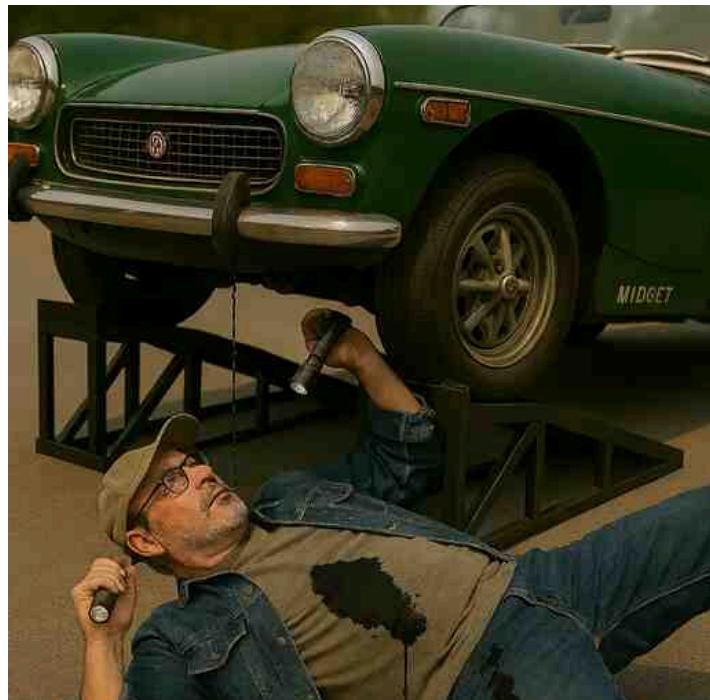


Others spread kitty litter across the garage floor, creating a sort of avant-garde carpet. A few brave souls attempt chemical sealants, but these usually end up sealing nothing except their wallets.

The most pragmatic solution is to embrace the leak as a feature. Think of it as rust-proofing for your driveway. Or as a handy way to keep dust down in the shed. One wag in our club even claimed his Sprite's leaks were "eco-friendly," since they encouraged native plants to grow in the oil-stained soil.

### The Philosophical Angle

There's a deeper truth here. The Sprite's leaks remind us that perfection is overrated. In a world obsessed with sterile, sealed-for-life machinery, the Sprite is gloriously human. It sweats, it dribbles, it misbehaves. It's alive. Besides, leaks are proof that there's still oil in the engine. A dry Sprite is a dead Sprite. Better a drip than a seized crankshaft.



### The Punchline

So, the next time you find yourself chasing an oil leak in your Sprite or Midget, don't despair. You're not failing—you're participating in a grand tradition stretching back to Donald Healey himself. Somewhere in Warwickshire, in 1958, a young apprentice probably tightened a bolt on the first Bugeye engine, wiped his hands, and thought, "That'll do." And from that moment, the leaks began.

The Sprite isn't just a car. It's a conversation starter, a community builder, and a reminder that life's messes are often the most memorable.

So lay down the rag, pour yourself a pint, and raise a toast to the great oil leak safari. Long may it drip.

## DIAGNOSING AND SOLVING A LEAKING REAR SEAL IN A-SERIES ENGINE

The A-Series engine, a mainstay of classic British motoring, powers iconic vehicles such as the Austin Healey Sprite and M Midget. Despite its robust design and enduring popularity, the A-Series is notorious for rear main seal oil leaks—a problem that has challenged owners and restorers for decades. The original scroll-type rear main seal, while innovative for its era, is often a source of persistent oil seepage. In response, a variety of aftermarket lip seal conversion kits have emerged, each promising improved reliability but introducing their own complexities and considerations.

The A-Series engine's original rear seal is not a conventional elastomeric seal but a scroll-type or "half-moon" arrangement. This design relies on a helical groove machined into the crankshaft and a closely fitted aluminum or cast iron housing. As the crankshaft rotates, the scroll acts as an "oil screw," directing oil away from the crankshaft exit and back into the sump. The effectiveness of this system depends on extremely tight tolerances—typically an air gap of just .15 to .20—and a functioning crankcase ventilation system to maintain slight negative pressure.

While innovative, the scroll seal is inherently prone to seepage, especially as engines age and tolerances increase due to wear. The design is also highly sensitive to crankcase pressure: any loss of vacuum or increase in blow-by can quickly overwhelm the scroll's ability to return oil, resulting in leaks at the engine-to-bellhousing interface.

Recognizing the limitations of the scroll seal, several manufacturers have developed lip seal conversion kits for the A-Series engine. These kits replace or supplement the original scroll with a modern elastomeric typically nitrile, Buna, or PT唇 seal, similar to those used in contemporary engines. The lip seal

provides a physical barrier, with a flexible sealing lip pressed against a smooth section of the crankshaft, often aided by a garter spring to maintain contact pressure.

Lip seal conversions fall into two broad categories:

- **Non-machining kits:** These typically fit over the existing scroll area or utilize the flywheel boss as the sealing surface. They require careful preparation but do not involve permanent engine modifications.
- **Machining-required kits:** These require the rear main cap and sometimes the crankshaft to be machined to provide a concentric, smooth surface for the lip seal. This approach can offer superior sealing but is more invasive and costly.

Some advanced kits attempt to combine the benefits of both systems by retaining the scroll as a primary oil return and using the lip seal as a backup, thereby maximizing reliability.

## Common Causes of Rear Main Seal Leaks in A-Series Engines

**Scroll-Type Seal Failure Modes.** The scroll seal's effectiveness is contingent on several factors, and its failure is often multifactorial:

- Worn or Misaligned Scroll and Housing
- Crankcase Pressure Issues
- Main Bearing Wear
- Improper Assembly or Sealant Application
- Crankshaft Surface Damage

**Lip Seal Conversion Failure Modes.** While lip seals offer improved sealing in theory, they are not immune to problems:

- Improper Machining or Installation
- Seal Material Incompatibility
- Crankcase Pressure
- Flywheel or Spacer Interference
- Aftermarket Part Tolerances

Additional contributing factors might include:

- Oil Quality and Overfilling
- Improper Oil Pan Fitment

Now, before you start pulling the engine out, it's always a good idea to eliminate everything that it might not be. Detective work, if you may. Don't rely on a Facebook group to diagnose your problems for you. Get in and under the bonnet and properly investigate the source BEFORE you pull the engine!

Lets have a bit of a deeper look at some of the solutions.

## Original Scroll Seal

The scroll seal remains the most "authentic" solution for restorers seeking originality. When rebuilt to factory tolerances and paired with a properly functioning PCV system, it can provide acceptable oil control. However, achieving and maintaining the necessary tolerances is challenging, especially in high-mileage or previously rebuilt engines. Restoration often requires line-boring and specialized machining, which can be costly and is not always successful in eliminating leaks.

## Non-Machining Lip Seal Kits

These kits are attractive for their ease of installation and reversibility. They typically use the flywheel boss or an unmodified crankshaft surface as the sealing area. While some users report good results, others experience persistent leaks, especially if the sealing surface is rough or out of round. Kits that retain the scroll as a backup (e.g., Gerard's Garage) offer improved reliability, but all such solutions remain sensitive to crankcase pressure and require careful installation.

## Machining-Required Lip Seal Kits

Kits from the likes of MED Engineering and similar suppliers require the rear main cap to be machined and, in some cases, the crankshaft to be polished or ground. When installed correctly, these kits offer the best chance of a long-term, leak-free result, especially for high-performance or competition engines. The trade-off is the need for permanent engine modification and the associated cost and complexity. These kits are best suited to engines already undergoing a full rebuild or where originality is not a primary concern.

## Hybrid Kits

Hybrid kits attempt to combine the best features of both systems. By restoring the scroll's function and adding a lip seal as a secondary barrier, these kits provide redundancy and improved oil control. User reports and race shop endorsements suggest high reliability when installed correctly, but installation remains complex and requires attention to detail.



Compare the pair:  
Cross flow 1275 Midget vs 2.0L Alfa Romeo Radiator

## KEEPING THE SPRIDGET COOLING SYSTEM 'COOL'

Owning and driving an Austin Healey Sprite or MG Midget is a joy steeped in heritage, but it also comes with responsibilities that modern car owners rarely think about. Chief among these is the cooling system—a vital lifeline for these small, high-revving engines.

### Modern Cars vs. Classic Sprite or Midget (or any classic really!)

Modern cars, thanks to advanced cooling systems, electric fans, efficient radiators, and computer-controlled thermostats, most modern vehicles can idle for hours in traffic without breaking a sweat. The expectation today is that you can sit in gridlock with the air conditioning running, and the temperature gauge barely moves.

Our beloved Sprite or Midget however ... these were designed in an era when prolonged idling wasn't part of everyday driving. There simply wasn't the traffic there is now! Their cooling systems are simple: a mechanical fan, a small radiator, and a water pump. While perfectly adequate for spirited driving on open roads, they can struggle in modern traffic conditions. Long idling or slow-moving queues can quickly lead to overheating.

For a Sprite or Midget, keeping the cooling system in top condition is not optional—it's essential. A clean, efficient radiator ensures maximum heat dissipation. Any clogging or corrosion drastically reduces cooling capacity.

Hoses and seals all need to be regularly checked and replaced. Old rubber perishes, leading to leaks and pressure loss. Regular inspection prevents sudden failures.

Mechanical parts wear over time. A failing pump or sticky thermostat can spell disaster for the engine, and using the right coolant mixture is essential as it prevents rust and scale, which are common enemies in older systems.

### Consequences of Neglect

If a modern car overheats, it's usually due to a rare fault and you will most likely get a warning light to tell you of impending doom. For a Sprite or Midget, overheating can happen simply because the system isn't maintained or the car is asked to do something it wasn't designed for—like idling endlessly in summer traffic. The result? Warped cylinder heads, blown gaskets, or even catastrophic engine damage.

### The Takeaway?

Driving a Sprite or Midget is about embracing its character. Unlike modern cars, these classics demand respect for their mechanical limits. Keeping the cooling system in good condition isn't just about reliability—it's about preserving the joy of driving them as they were meant to be driven: lively, light, and full of charm.



## ALUMINIUM OR COPPER-BRASS.

### WHICH IS BEST?

As owners, we face a pivotal question: should the original copper/brass radiator be retained and serviced, or is it time to upgrade to a modern aluminium unit?

#### The Boring Techy Bit

Copper is renowned for its superior thermal conductivity—approximately 398–400 W/m·K—compared to aluminium’s 205–237 W/m·K. In theory, this means copper/brass radiators should transfer heat more efficiently than aluminium. However, radiator performance is not dictated by raw conductivity alone. The design of the core, fin density, tube size, and airflow characteristics all play crucial roles in real-world cooling.

Aluminium radiators, while having lower thermal conductivity, often compensate with wider tubes, thinner walls, and more efficient fin designs. Modern manufacturing allows for larger surface areas and optimized airflow, narrowing the practical performance gap.

#### Classic Spridget Cooling Demands

The Sprite and Midget’s A-series engines are small-displacement, four-cylinder units that, in standard tune, do not generate excessive heat. However, overheating can occur in hot climates, during spirited driving, or in stop-start traffic—especially if the original radiator is partially blocked or the cooling system is neglected. And many of us have ‘breathed’ on our little cars, because that’s what we do!

**Aluminium Upgrades:** A troll of social media groups finds that owners report that well-made aluminium radiators can lower running temperatures by 10–15°F (5–8°C) compared to tired originals, with no overheating even at high RPMs.

**Serviced Copper/Brass Units:** Many users with professionally cleaned or recored copper/brass radiators report stable temperatures even during heatwaves, provided the rest of the cooling system is in good order. A properly flushed and maintained original radiator, combined with a correct coolant can keep temperatures below 195°F in heavy traffic and even spirited driving.

While copper/brass radiators have a theoretical edge in heat transfer, modern aluminium radiators with efficient core designs can match or exceed their real-world cooling performance, especially when the original unit is aged or partially blocked. For standard or mildly tuned engines, either type—if in good condition—will suffice for most driving scenarios. For high ambient temperatures or modified engines, a quality aluminium may offer a margin of safety.

#### Considerations

Aluminium radiators are significantly lighter than their copper/brass counterparts—often by 30–60%. For a Sprite or Midget, this can mean a reduction of 2–4 kg (4–9 lbs) at the very front of the car. Maybe important in Peter’s hillclimb special, but perhaps not so for everyday life!

Copper/Brass cores are naturally resistant to rust, but vulnerable to galvanic corrosion at solder joints (lead/tin solder is less noble than copper/brass). Over time, solder joints can degrade, leading to leaks. Aluminium, on the other hand, forms a protective oxide layer, but is *highly* susceptible to galvanic and electrolytic corrosion when in contact with dissimilar metals (e.g., iron engine blocks) and exposed to conductive coolant. Stray electrical currents or improper coolant can rapidly eat away at aluminium cores.

If originality and concours correct is paramount, then a traditional radiator is a must. But for everyday usage, it’s almost a matter of personal choice. Bear in mind that a traditional radiator shop can repair and properly service a brass radiator, whereas an aluminium one is pretty much replace.

For the majority of Sprites and Midgets, a professionally cleaned and serviced original copper/brass radiator remains the best upgrade choice. It delivers reliable cooling, preserves originality, and is easily repairable for decades of continued use. That said, consider a new aluminium radiator if you require maximum cooling for extreme conditions, have a heavily modified engine, or are willing to accept the trade-offs in originality and serviceability.

In all cases, ensure the rest of the cooling system (fan, thermostat, hoses, ducting) is in good order, and maintain the correct coolant and electrical grounding to maximize radiator life and performance.

# CURING OVERHEATING

From the pages of Colin Dodd's  
SpriteParts Tech Tips

How did your Sprite/Midget cope with the summer heat? Not too well? OK, so now's the time to fix it before you forget, and before next Summer surprises you.

## Thermostat

You should have one. If it has been removed, the car will run hotter, not cooler. The standard thermostat opened at around 85C - too hot. Fit a quality low temperature thermostat, say, 74C.

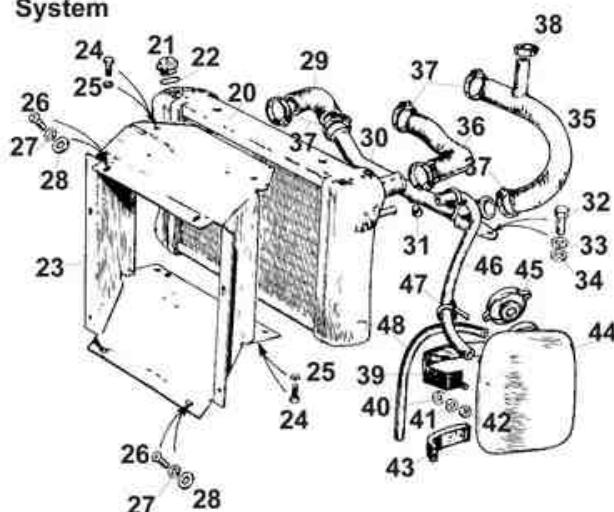
## Water pump

The standard water pump had pressed metal blades on the impeller, and would almost keep a 948cc engine cool. The pumps fitted to 1275cc engines had a deeper cast iron impeller, with closer tolerances, and are much more effective. If you haven't checked your pump, do it now. And if you have the earlier style pump, you might even find all the blades have corroded away, and in effect you have no pump! Fit the later cast impellor pump.

## Fan

If you have the original pressed metal 2 or 4-blade fan, change it for the later 6-blade plastic fan. You might consider adding in an additional electrical fan.

## Cross Flow System



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## adiator

Your vertical flow radiator will have 66 tubes and 12 fins per inch. The water filled tubes transmit the heat to the fins, which transmit and radiate it to the air. A heavy duty radiator is available, with 16 tubes and 18 fins per inch. More tubes more fins better cooling. Colin can supply these on exchange, or can re-core your radiator. The same rule of thumb applies for later 'cross flow' style radiators found in late build Mk 1275cc and the 15 ' Midgets.

## adiator conditioner or coolant

If you have lycol in your cooling system, please empty it out. lycol is a great anti-freeze, and will also raise the boiling point of the water, both of which are irrelevant unless you drive in sub-zero conditions or your cooling system is ineffective and the water is boiling in the first place. And lycol is a lousy conductor of heat. It doesn't take it away from the engine, and it doesn't transfer it to the radiator fins, as well as even pure water. With lycol, your engine will run hotter, and the higher concentration of lycol you use, the hotter the engine will run! There are plenty of other radiator conditioners available that don't use lycol. We sell a Penrite product.

## Oil Cooler

Your oil also contributes to the cooling of the engine. Cooling the oil will help keep the water temperature down. All 1275cc engined cars had an oil cooler as a standard fitment, but they can easily be added to earlier cars.

ive it a go and let us know how you get on.

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# IS ONE SPRITE EVER REALLY ENOUGH?

Every Sprite has a story, sometimes you just have to dig a bit to find it!

By Des and Penny Chabrel



One day in the mid-1980s, Penny was at work when a colleague tapped her on the shoulder with the kind of tip that can change a life – or at least a garage. She'd heard of a sports car for sale up in the Riverland.

Knowing Penny already had a Sprite, she assumed this mystery machine must be one too. And as every Sprite owner knows, one Sprite is never enough. So naturally, we decided we'd better go and have a look.

Armed with directions that could best be described as "optimistic," we eventually found ourselves at a vineyard in Cadell. And there it was – a Sprite, just as promised. Well... sort of. Instead of sitting proudly on its wheels, it was distributed across half a dozen boxes like some kind of mechanical jigsaw puzzle.

The story unfolded quickly. A young bloke in his early twenties had bought the car, driven it for a couple of years, and then decided to restore it. He stripped it down, boxed it up... and then discovered he actually wanted a portable disco setup so he could take music around the district. Priorities change. A deal was struck: Dad bought the car, the lad bought his disco

machine, and the Sprite sat quietly boxed in the shed while the parties raged on.

Twelve months later, Dad had decided he wanted a boat instead, and the Sprite was back on the market.

We peered cautiously into the boxes, trying very hard not to look too enthusiastic. The major components were all visible, and the seller assured us that every last nut, bolt, and bracket was present – exactly as it had been when the restoration began a year earlier. After a quick discussion, we decided it was worth the gamble.

We arranged to transport the entire "Sprite-in-a box" to my father's property in Barmera, where it would wait



patiently for its second chance.

And wait it did. Six years, in fact.

After moving house and finally having the space and time, we retrieved the boxes and resumed the restoration that had been paused for more than half a decade. Over the next six months, Penny and I rubbed the body back and resprayed it in Brunswick Green – a touch lighter than its original British Racing Green, but a colour that suited it beautifully. The brightwork responded well to a lot of elbow grease, and the engine



and gearbox were left sealed, still healthy from their earlier life. New brake components were fitted for safety, and slowly but surely, the Sprite began to look like a car again.

By mid-1994, our "new" car was finally ready for the road.

Since then, it has taken us on countless club runs, display days, and adventures. Every kilometre has been a reward for the hours poured into bringing it back to life.

And as with all good Sprite stories, the folklore only grew richer with time. About twenty years later, we discovered that our past president (and current Registrar) Gordon had been best mates with the young lad from Cadell – and had even accompanied him on the original trip to Adelaide when he bought the (then white) car.

To add another twist, another past president (and now Club Secretary/magazine Editor), Robin, had heard from his father that there was a Sprite in Cadell ... but by then, we'd already snapped it up years before!

It just goes to show: every Sprite has a story. Sometimes you just have to dig through a few boxes to find it.

---

*South Australia, like most of Australia, has many towns most of us have never heard of, let alone visited. Some near, some afar, and Cadell can probably be put into this box. How strange is it that a tiny town, best only associated with the States minimum security prison, is almost a crossroads of our little Club?*

*Gordon grew up there and years before my own father had grown up there. And the Sprite in this story, it ended up there, albeit it in pieces.*

*As for Des, his father lived in my own home town, about 45 minutes up the road from Cadell, where the Sprite was again stored for a bit longer!*

*Years later Gordon would mastermind filling the Cadell River Ferry with some 21 Sprites and Midgets!*

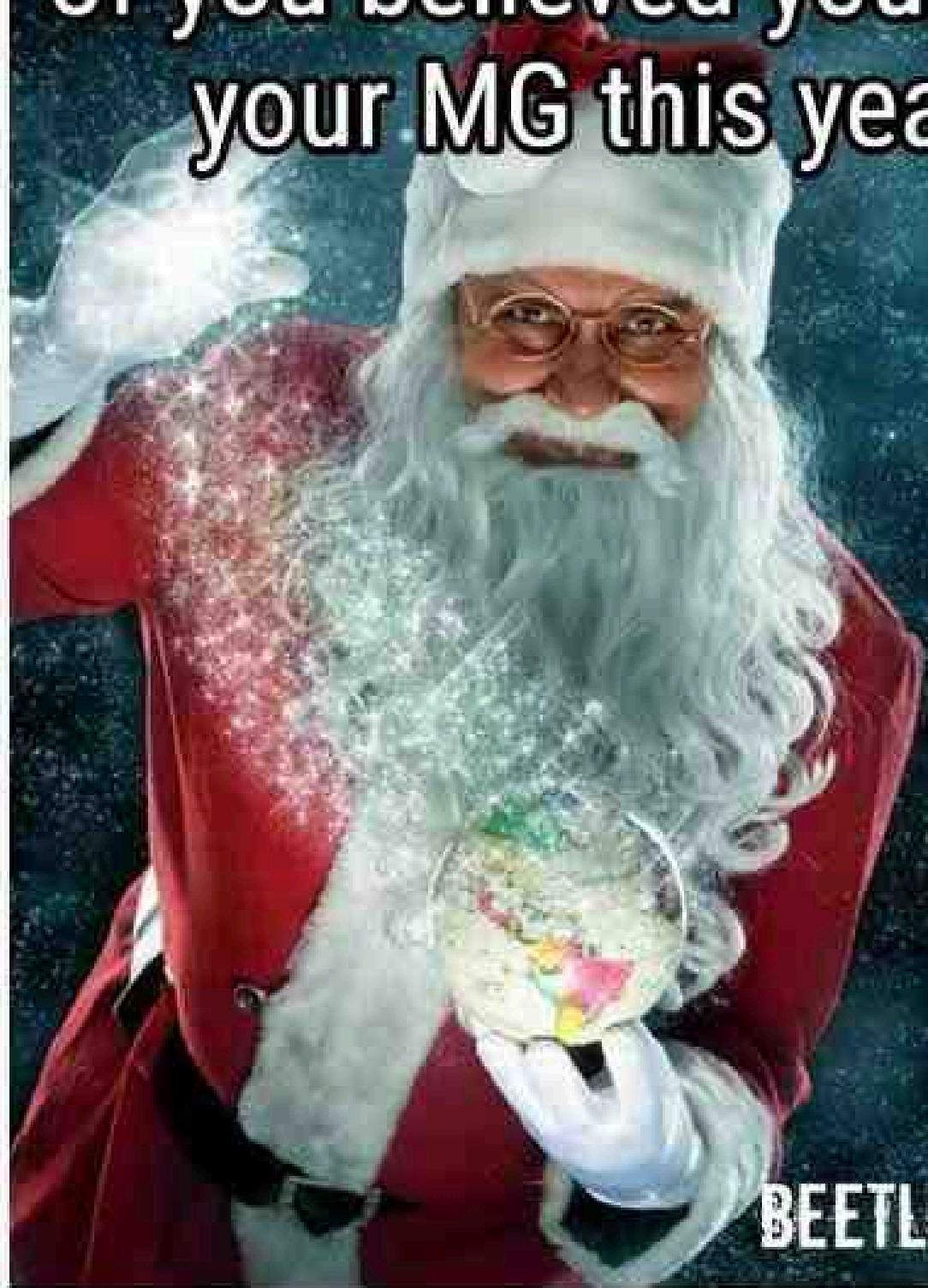
*It really is a small world!*



**Main cost items:**

Kerosene and degreaser (buckets of it).	\$ 20
Paint materials	
Acrylic primer, filler and colour	\$ 280
Carpet kit	\$ 120
Gearbox (to replace original used elsewhere)	\$ 450
Lense for parking light	\$ 45
Mechanical service items	\$ 50
Approximate total not counting on road costs	\$ 1000

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believe in Santa, some  
of you believed you'd fix  
your MG this year



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LONDON, PARIS: NEW SPORTS MODELS

2/6

# SPORTS CAR WORLD

Registered at the GPO, Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical.

JANUARY, 1964



TRACK REPORT: FOLEY'S FIREBALL  
FULL ROAD TEST: PLUSH CARAVELLE

# Spritfire



LADIES and gentlemen, the contestants. In the green corner we have Austin Healey Sprite, a plucky little character who has been in this game for some years now and weighed in this morning at 13.5 cwt. In the red corner stands Triumph Spitfire, a relative newcomer to this scene, but the smallest member of a family well-known in the sporting world. At the weigh-in Spitfire was 112lb heavier at 14.5 cwt, but was also bigger and slightly better muscled than his opponent.

In this, our second Comparison Analysis, the staff of SPORTS CAR WORLD presents a completely objective assessment of the two cars, their performance and handling capabilities, creature comforts and adaptability to Australian conditions. Both are in a price bracket well within the reach of the ordinary working man, and one has only a slightly better performance than the other, which handles better. Between the two there is only a £72 price disparity, so, in all fairness, they are worth comparing.

Both have modern, eye-pleasing body stylings, with the Sprite more slab-sided and functional while the Spitfire shows traces of the flowing hand of Michelotti. The Sprite front end is particularly functional, with a wide radiator grille opening and the headlights set high above the bonnet in the mudguards. The side lines of the AH are decidedly smooth and plain with a straight upper edge from the front mudguards across the top of the door to the rear fender. At the rear it is geometrically pretty, with the parking, brake and tail-lights in a cluster on each mudguard.

## COMPARISON ANALYSIS

*An article aimed at the young man about to buy a small sports car, to get him as confused as we.*

By CHRIS BECK

The Spitfire is entirely different. At the front the vee shaped bonnet and grille remind one of the 1962 Ferrari sports/racing cars. The headlights are recessed about an inch and the parking and blinker lights are of the Lucas pimple variety that have been used on many British and Continental cars in the last five years. In profile the Spitfire has scroll-like flowing lines with the doors scalloping slightly in the fashion of the earlier TR series and the MGA, but unlike them the rear treatment is one of curves. The braking lights are mounted at the extremity of each rear wing, the blinker lights are situated below the boot, inwards of the bumper bar overriders. The Sprite features full width bumper bars both front and rear, while the Spitfire uses a full width knock deflector at the front, but has two small half bumpers at the rear. On both cars the petrol filler cap is not lockable and on the Austin Healey it is placed below the boot-

# or Sprite?



lid near the right hand light assembly. On the Triumph the well known snap-action cap of the TR lineage is fitted in the centre of the rear panel above the boot lid.

Styling is an intensely personal thing, and no two members of our staff were of the same opinion about the two cars. While I disliked the plainness of the Sprite in profile, I could not approve of the Spitfire's rear end, which seemed to have had things added as an afterthought. Viewed from the front I felt the Austin Healey was probably more functional and cleaner, but the Triumph was a prettier, more ornate looking car. But, again, I emphasise that these were only my personal opinions. After weighing all my thoughts and other people's as well I felt the Spitfire probably has the edge over the Sprite in the styling department.

Both cars are well-instrumented, each having a fuel gauge, a water temperature gauge, and a speedometer with a mileometer and a trip odometer. In the Sprite the speedometer is calibrated to 100 mph while in the Spitfire the final marking is 110 mph. The tachometers in both cars are electric, the Spitfire's scale ending at 6000 rpm — a point which can be easily overstepped — and the AH's running to a realistic 7000 rpm. The Sprite has an oil pressure gauge while the Spitfire has only an oil warning light. In the Sprite the instruments are immediately in front of the driver while those in the Spitfire are mounted in a panel above the gearbox housing in the centre of the car. The Jaeger instruments fitted to the Spitfire are definitely easier to read as the lettering is not as cluttered

*The Sprite handled better, but the Spitfire was quicker in a straight line. The Spitfire oversteered — rather violently; the Sprite was almost neutral, with the faintest trace of positive understeer.*

as that on the Smiths units fitted to the Sprite, although the Sprite instruments are better located.

In the Spitfire the wipers, lights and choke are controlled by push-pull knobs and the high beam switch is a stalk fixed to the left hand side of the steering column. The blinker controls are operated by another stalk protruding from the right hand side and are self-cancelling. Ignition is by key start. On the other car tumbler switches are used for the wipers and lights and the dimmer switch is on the forward bulkhead near the driver's left foot. The choke and starter are pull knobs and a key ignition is used. The blinkers are operated by a toggle switch, which is mounted horizontally, in the middle of the dash and are not self-cancelling. Both cars have crash padding on the leading edges of the facia and although the Sprite's instruments are in a better position one puzzles at the key ignition/pull starter and the manually cancelled traffic turn indicators, both of which went out of vogue years ago.

In both cars the seats had a good length of adjustment, but those on the Sprite were a little more comfortable, while those in the Spitfire provided better lateral support. In the Sprite the backrest swings forward for jump seat access, but the Triumph has a catch on the floor



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Fact is the Austin Healey people make nothing but sports cars. Out of this specialization has come Sprite's 1100 c.c. dual-carburetor engine that turns up 90 plus mph—yet is virtually maintenance free. Add to this such custom touches as

adjustable foam bucket seats, vented roll-up windows, and a weather-tight top that keeps the fussiest date happy.

But, before any cautious Mom or Dad jumps to conclusions, remember that the Sprite is frisky without being foolhardy. It's got low-slung suspension that puts a bear-hug on the winding-est roads. Quick rack-and-pinion steering. And disc brakes in front and big drums in back for fade-free stops.

So why envy sports car owners

when you can be one yourself for less than two grand? Go on in to your MG/Austin Healey dealer and see.

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AUSTIN HEALEY **Sprite**

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## Stand up that man who

which lets the whole seat assembly come forward — a la Mini. Safety belt anchorages are supplied as standard in both.

In parcel room inside the cockpits the Spitfire wins easily, but the rear of the Sprite is far more comfortable for a third passenger. There is no glovebox in the Sprite, but the door pockets can be used to carry maps, driving gloves, and other paraphernalia usually associated with sports cars. The Spitfire has two parcel pockets incorporated in the dash — one on the right and the other on the left — and these could carry articles of sizes and shapes that would not fit in the Sprite's pockets.

Open sports cars are great in sunny weather, but when it rains I like a hood over my head just as much as the next man. Hood operation of both cars is very similar, but the Spitfire wins handsomely by having wind-up windows, instead of sliding side curtains, which in rain tend to remain immovable. When touring fast in the Spitfire with the hood down it is very easy to raise and lower the windows, but in the Sprite the side curtains are either fitted or the air blows around the screen and into the cockpit. Stowage of the hoods and hood bows is also an important factor. In the Sprite the hood is just folded and put in the boot and the side curtains and bows are placed in small vinyl sacks, but in the Triumph the arrangement is much neater. The hood itself is stowed behind the rear seats in a special pocket and the bow fits neatly into a special bracket in the boot.

Handbrake and gearlever positions on both cars are normal. The Sprite has its remote shift protruding from a metal cover half way between the dash and the seats and its handbrake, of the ratchet type, is situated on the passenger's side between the seat and transmission tunnel. A cranked gearlever coming from behind the dash bulkhead and a fly-off handbrake are located on the transmission tunnel in the Spitfire.

Shift gates on both cars were fairly stiff. The synchromesh on the Sprite gearbox is of the baulk ring type and almost unbeatable, and the ratios seem to be extremely well chosen. This is not so in the Spitfire. The positioning of the cranked gearlever makes changing a little harder and although the synchromesh is good, there is really no comparison between the two. Also,



the ratios in the Spitfire seem a little low, as second gear runs out at 46 mph where the Sprite can be held in this ratio until 51 mph.

The disc/drum braking set-up on both cars was extremely effective, hauling them down from their respective top speeds without a qualm. It was hard to judge which was the better system, but after a series of strenuous tests the Spitfire seemed to have just a little edge over its rival. On hills the handbrakes worked well, although the movement of that on the Sprite was a little long.

Comparing the two motors we find that the Sprite has a substantially longer stroke than the Triumph, but both are still undersquare. Maximum power of 63 bhp is developed in the Spitfire at 5750 rpm as against the Sprite's 55 bhp at 5500 rpm.

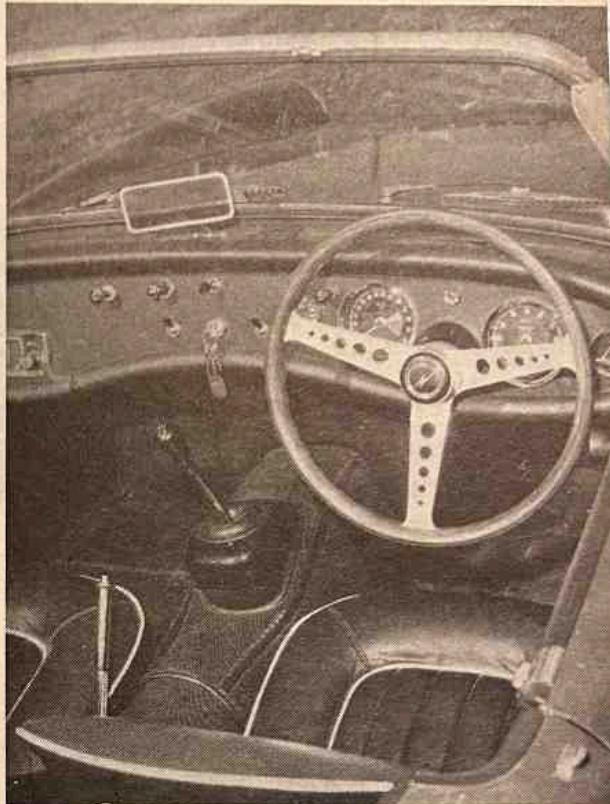
At 76 ft/lb the Spitfire also develops 14 more ft/lb of torque than the Sprite, although both will pick up from below 20 mph in top without snatch. During our acceleration runs both cars run well over the 6000 rpm mark and the valve



**said: "Give me a TC...."**



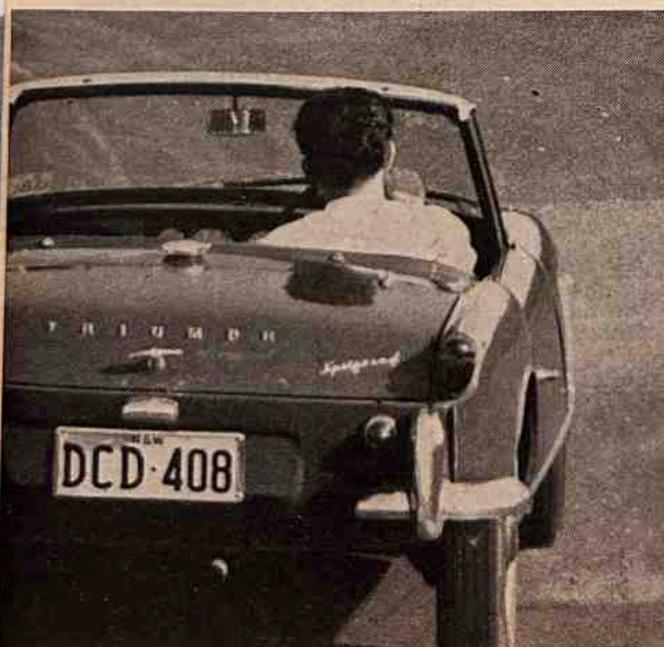
*Above: Body panel work of the two cars is entirely different although it serves exactly the same ends.*



*Right: The interior of the Sprite is a little cramped. The wood rimmed steering wheel is an extra. Instrument layout is exceptionally good. A roomy interior, the Spitfire allows a greater freedom of movement.*



*Below: Both cars had the same amount of body roll. The independent rear end of the Spitfire is excellent on rough roads but has roll-oversteer limits.*





gear just threshed wildly, but the valves refused to chatter.

Both engines are fitted with 1.25 in. SU carburetors with pancake, dry-element air cleaners. Where the bonnet of the Sprite hinges backward the whole front of the Triumph hinges forward giving an amazing amount of access to the front suspension and engine. If any of our staff had to do any mechanical work on either car, the Spitfire would be preferred because of its accessibility.

Batteries on both cars are mounted on the bulkheads. On the Spitfire it is quite an easy matter to replenish the distilled water supply, but on the Sprite the job is a little difficult because the bonnet slope impairs movement. Servicing periods for both cars are the same, oil change and grease every 3000 miles.

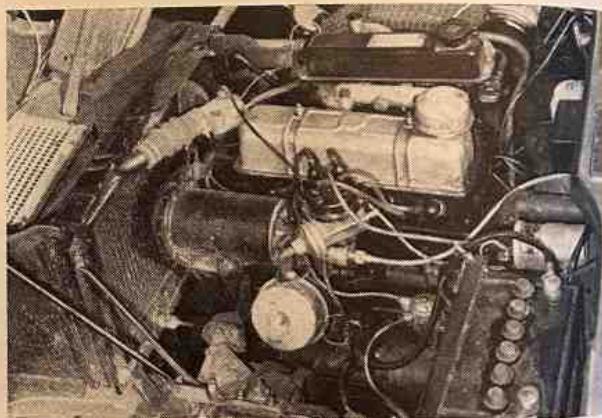
Wishbones with coil springs are used on the front suspension of both cars. This provides a good ride over rough roads and there is none of the front end tautness associated with English sports cars sold in this country a few years ago.

At the rear the suspension set-ups are entirely different. The Sprite uses a rigid axle, located and sprung by quarter-elliptic springs and hydraulic telescopic dampers. This system holds the car well on the road, although there is an ever-so-mild choppiness. The Spitfire, however, uses a fully independent rear suspension which is practically the same as the swing axle system fitted to the Triumph Herald. A single transverse leaf spring is used in conjunction with telescopic dampers. The ride in both cars was about equal; if anything the Spitfire had an extra mouthful of cake and was therefore a little softer, but it rolled a little more than the Sprite.

The performance of both cars is not greatly remarkable when one thinks of the many sedan cars readily available to the public that could easily leave them in a cloud of tyre-smoke in a straight line.

(Continued on page 63)

*The Sprite is a much plainer looking car than the Spitfire, which shows the touch of the Italian designer, Michelotti.*



*Both motors are in-line fours. The Spitfire produces 63 bhp while the Sprite develops 55 bhp. Both rev very willingly always.*

**SPIRITFIRE OR SPITE?***(Continued from page 14)*

On our brief test we found that the Spitfire was slightly faster through the standing quarter mile, but slower to 50 mph than the Sprite. The main reason for the latter is that a change from second to third gear must be made between 40 and 50 mph and this results in the loss of a fraction of a second.

There was only 1.9 mph difference in top speed and the Spitfire is more economical on fuel.

For handling tests we took the cars to Oran Park near Camden. After various staff members had familiarised themselves with the cars and track by going sideways through one or two corners we circulated quickly for several minutes while our photographer took the necessary action pictures. Then down to some serious testing. First thing we discovered was that the Spitfire flung the tail out in a corner. The transfer of weight by centrifugal force created a distinct roll-oversteer which progressed to the point where the car would lift a rear wheel and the revs would soar.

In the handling and roadholding department the Sprite seemed to be superior. At high speed through a corner it was almost neutral — with a tinge of understeer. Over the edge the tail went out but this needed hardly any correction.

On the new lengthened circuit both cars turned in identical lap times of 1 min 11 secs; while the Sprite was quicker around the corners the Spitfire closed the gap on the straight.

If I had to buy one of these cars the choice would be difficult. There is good and bad in both and looking at it objectively, they are very, very equal. This is one choice in which I would consult a woman. For the deciding factor might just well be the color of the high beam indicator light.

**THE SCALES THAT TIP THE BALANCE***(Continued from page 28)*

At this point the flywheel is attached to the now-balanced crankshaft and the two units revolved as one. The front dial on the balancing machine is isolated and any discrepancy with the flywheel will be shown on the rear dial. The actual point of unbalance is found by a sliding scale on the machine and as with the crank, weight is added diametrically opposite this point until perfect balance is found, then the flywheel is lightened by this amount by drilling.

The con-rods and pistons are statically balanced, the former being done as two halves again. Each rod is suspended across a dual-gauge balance, one gauge of which gives the weight of the big-end, and the other the small-end. In each case the lightest rod is found then the other big and small-ends are lightened by the removal of metal until the all weigh exactly the same. The piston weights are generally pretty close, but sometimes one of the set is found to be out and adjustments have to be made.

Finally the clutch receives attention. As with the pistons, the manufacturers of these units work to quite fine limits but when attached to the flywheel and crank and spun as a single unit the clutch can make some slight difference, it is therefore balanced along with the rest in a similar manner to the flywheel.

Before being returned to the owner the balanced components can be crack tested if required and con-rods can also be polished. When they arrive back from the machine shop the parts can be assembled directly into their engine with confidence that they are in perfect balance.

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D133/R

SPORTS CAR WORLD, April, 1968 67

**AUSTIN HEALEY  
SPRITE****TRIUMPH  
SPITFIRE****SPECIFICATIONS****CHASSIS AND BODY DIMENSIONS:**

Wheelbase	6 ft 8 in
Track, front	3 ft 0 in
Track, rear	3 ft 8 in
Turning circle	32 ft 0 in
Overall length	11 ft 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in
Overall width	4 ft 5 in
Overall height	4 ft 11 in

**CHASSIS:**

Steering type	rack and pinion
Brake type	disc front, drum rear
Suspension, front	independent, coils and wishbones
Suspension, rear	quarter elliptics
Shock absorbers	telescopic
Tyre size	5.20 x 13
Weight	131 cwt

**ENGINE:**

Cylinders	four, in line
Bore and stroke	64.58 mm by 83.7 mm
Cubic capacity	1098 cc
Compression ratio	8.9 to 1
Fuel requirement	95 octane
Valves	pushrod overhead
Maximum power	55 bhp at 5500 rpm
Maximum torque	61 ft/lb at 2750 rpm

**TRANSMISSION:**

Overall ratios	
First	13.5
Second (synchro)	8.08
Third (synchro)	5.8
Fourth (synchro)	4.22
Final drive	4.22 to 1

**CHASSIS AND BODY DIMENSIONS:**

Wheelbase	6 ft 11 in
Track, front	4 ft 1 in
Track, rear	4 ft 0 in
Turning circle	24 ft 0 in
Overall length	12 ft 1 in
Overall width	4 ft 9 in
Overall height	3 ft 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in

**CHASSIS:**

Steering type	rack and pinion
Brake type	disc front, drum rear
Suspension, front	independent, wishbones and coils
Suspension, rear	independent, swing axles and coils
Shock absorbers	Telescopic
Tyre size	5.20 x 13
Weight	141 cwt

**ENGINE:**

Cylinders	four, in line
Bore and stroke	69.3 mm by 76 mm
Cubic capacity	1147 cc
Compression ratio	9 to 1
Fuel requirement	95 octane
Valves	pushrod overhead
Maximum power	63 bhp at 5750 rpm
Maximum torque	76 ft/lb at 3500 rpm

**TRANSMISSION:**

Overall ratios	
First	15.4
Second (synchro)	8.87
Third (synchro)	5.73
Fourth (synchro)	4.11
Final drive	4.11 to 1

**PERFORMANCE**

Top speed	85.6 mph
Maximum, first	28 mph
Maximum, second	51 mph
Maximum, third	70 mph
Maximum, fourth	85.6 mph
Standing quarter mile	21.5 seconds
0 to 30 mph	4.9 seconds
0 to 40 mph	7.3 seconds
0 to 50 mph	10.5 seconds
0 to 60 mph	16.2 seconds
0 to 70 mph	23.8 seconds
0 to 80 mph	37.7 seconds
Brake fade resistance on test hill	95 percent
Fuel Consumption, cruising	37 mpg

Top speed	87.5 mph
Maximum, first	26 mph
Maximum, second	46 mph
Maximum, third	71 mph
Maximum, fourth	87.5 mph
Standing quarter mile	20.7 seconds
0 to 30 mph	4.9 seconds
0 to 40 mph	7.2 seconds
0 to 50 mph	11.5 seconds
0 to 60 mph	16 seconds
0 to 70 mph	22.8 seconds
0 to 80 mph	34.1 seconds
Brake fade resistance on test hill	96 percent
Fuel Consumption, cruising	42 mpg

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# I SAW MUMMY TUNING CARBS AT NIGHT...

I saw Daddy fixing up the Sprite last night  
Underneath the mistletoe, with spanners  
shining bright

He had the bonnet up with steam all round  
The radiator hissed, the fan spun loud  
And Mum just laughed, said “He’s more in  
love with that than me!”

I saw Mummy tuning up the carbs just right  
While the Midget sat beside, all smug in  
Yuletide pride  
She checked the timing, wiped his brow  
Said "She'll run sweet for the club run  
now!"  
Oh what a sight, that Christmas night, in  
the garage glow so bright!

I saw Daddy polishing the Sprite's chrome  
face  
Singing carols with a grin, in his oil-stained  
embrace  
He hung a wreath on the grille with care  
And wrapped the gearstick in tinsel flair  
Then took a selfie with the Sprite and said,  
“She’s my Christmas date!”

I saw Mummy dreaming of a hillclimb  
flight  
With the Sprite and Midget side by side, in  
snowy morning light  
She said “Forget the sleigh, forget the  
reindeer too,  
Our little cars will pull us through!”  
Oh what delight, that Christmas night,  
with classic cars in sight!

I saw Daddy sneaking out at half past  
three  
To warm the Sprite before the frost could  
freeze the BMC  
He said "She hates a cold start, needs a  
gentle hand,  
Not like those modern things that just go  
on demand!"  
So he hummed a tune, by garage moon, in  
winter harmony!



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

