

SPRITE TORQUE



www.spriteclub.com

December 2019

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Welcome to Sprite Torque

Welcome to the this Christmas edition of Sprite Torque

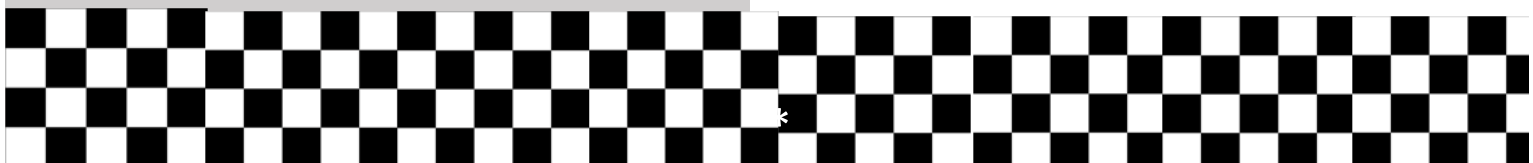
Welcome to our new committee! Articles are again a little lean this month so please help me out and show us your restorations and projects, or maybe even just send me a photo of your pride and joy and a little story about how she came to be in your possession and the adventures you've had together?.

If you have anything to share, please send them to bron.wray@gmail.com

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas

Stay Spritely

Bron



Committee

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Colin Dodds

Steve Rivett

Greg Holden

Leah Holden

Petersmith

Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc.

ABN: 62879038-526

Club Patrons: John Sprinzel Graham Healey

PRESIDENT

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president@spriteclub.com

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(02)9654 1344

secretary@spriteclub.com

TREASURER

Les Payne

0415 826 650

treasurer@spriteclub.com

Life Members

1975 Bob Owers

2015 Brian Walton, Ian Gibbs, Wendy Gibbs, Graham Wells,

Avis Fowler, Greg Holden, Alan Barlow, Dave Lawrence, Colin Dodds

2016 Barry Taylor

Ian Jenson, Barry Cockayne, Les Payne, Bill McLennan

2019 Eileen Barlow

Marque Mentors

Mk 1 Sprite Greg Holden 0408777936, Colin Dodds 0414 789 263

Mk 2 Sprite Neil Scott 0409 326 021

Mk 3 Sprite Greg Strange 02 93192299,

Mk 3 Midget Mk 3 Midget Colin Dodds 0414 789 263

1500 Midget Greg Prunster 0428 169 931

S.C.C.A

PO Box 696 Kingswood NSW 2747

Magazine contributions to: editor@spriteclub.com

Snail Mail to : PO Box 696 Kingswood NSW 2747

(magazine contributions close 20th of each month)

Monthly Meetings

Parramatta RSL Club—2 Macquarie St, Parramatta. NSW 1250

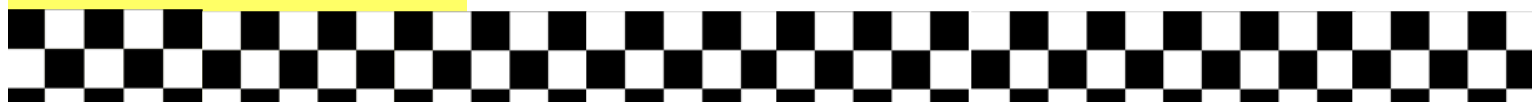
2nd Tuesday of each month starting at 7:30pm—Lachlan Room

S.C.C.A. WEBSITE: www.spriteclub.com

(View Sprite Torque in colour in the MEMBERS ONLY section)

S.C.C.A. Email List: <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/spridgets-aus>

PLEASE NOTE: The Committee positions are all honorary and are undertaken by private individuals in their spare time. Please contact them at sensible times and accept that they may prefer to call you back at a time more convenient for themselves. The Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc. accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or reliability of articles, correspondence, opinions or advertisements contained herein.



PRESIDENTS REPORT



Well December has arrived and 2019 is coming to a close. For me at least this has been a very short year and the months have literally flown by. As a club we can look back on a very successful year on both the social and competitive fronts and as your new President for 2020, the Club's 60th year, I look forward to even bigger things next year.

I need to make mention of AGM at the end of November which featured an excellent social drive beforehand, thanks to Carol & Colin Dodds for hosting & organising. I got to be chauffeured around my daughter Elly in my Midget, which made a nice change for once & I also got to look at all the other interesting cars on the run. Thanks again to Graham & Liz for hosting the AGM again at their home.

Well into December properly and my first month as President.

I called in on the HSRCA races at Sydney Motorsport Park on Saturday/Sunday 1st December and was very pleased to see so many members there using their cars in a sporting manner, some racing and some in regularity. You might wonder why I was not racing, but I was very short of time that weekend as I was getting married the following weekend and going racing the weekend prior to a wedding never ever entered my head (honestly, I never even considered it....well?). I will quickly give a shout out to everyone who was racing, please forgive me if I miss anyone – Andrew Sebesfi, Nick Sebesfi, Simon Meyer, Brian Weston, Rick Forster, Colin Dodds all in MG Midgets, Alan Sebesfi, Tammie Hotz, Blake Hotz, Barry Cockayne, Greg Prunster all in Sprites, Sam Girgis, Bob Rowntree & Noel Bryan all in MGB's and Peter Mohacsi in his Formula Vee. I was only able to pop in on Saturday which had qualifying and the shorter races. Sunday saw the longer Group S endure where Simon Meyer put in a fantastic performance to get second place behind the winning Porsche 911 – well done Simon. Later in the day a special race took place called the BMC Challenge which was open to BMCA series engine cars, which saw the Sprites & Midgets taking on the Mini Cooper S's with Simon winning outright & Nick Sebesfi coming third – in fact Sprites & Midgets dominated the results, which was great to see.

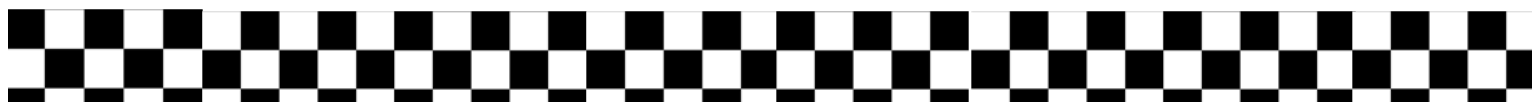
That has been pretty much everything for me from an SCCA point of view for December. As I mentioned before, I got married on 7th December and have been on my Honeymoon since then in the Maldives. This meant I missed my very first committee meeting as President so thanks to Barry Cockayne for chairing that for me. I have however had time to reflect on what we might get up to as a club in 2020 and will share that with you progressively through 2020. On a personal note there are 2 things I need to get sorted in 2020, the first is to upgrade my race license from the provisional one I have held for several years now. The second thing I need to sort out is a Group S race car. If anyone has a complete Group Sb Sprite or Midget parked in their garage that they want to part with, please let me know quickly as I am about to start converting my road car to Group S spec and this might save me some time.

Finally I would like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I hope that everyone stays safe during the holiday period and that we remember to look after ourselves as well as our friends & family.

Regards

David Baigent





2020

National Sprite Challenge

Thursday 9th April – Monday 13th April 2020

PRICING NOW AVAILABLE!

- **2 days on Morgan Park Raceway**
- **Social drives / Rally**
- **Motorkhana • Concourse**

Please express your interest in attending this event via email to membershipscq@yahoo.com.au so we can keep you up to date with accommodation and event information. If you would like to discuss event details or accommodation options feel free to contact Keith Gordon on 0432 483 228.

Expressions of interest for post Challenge Rally. If there are enough drivers interested the club will organise a Rally in the Noosa area.



**Send us your expression of interest but don't send money yet.
We will be asking for that mid-January.**

Competitor: \$857

(Each person will also have to pay a refundable deposit on their transponder \$100)

Social: \$597

Spectator: \$528

Children: \$276

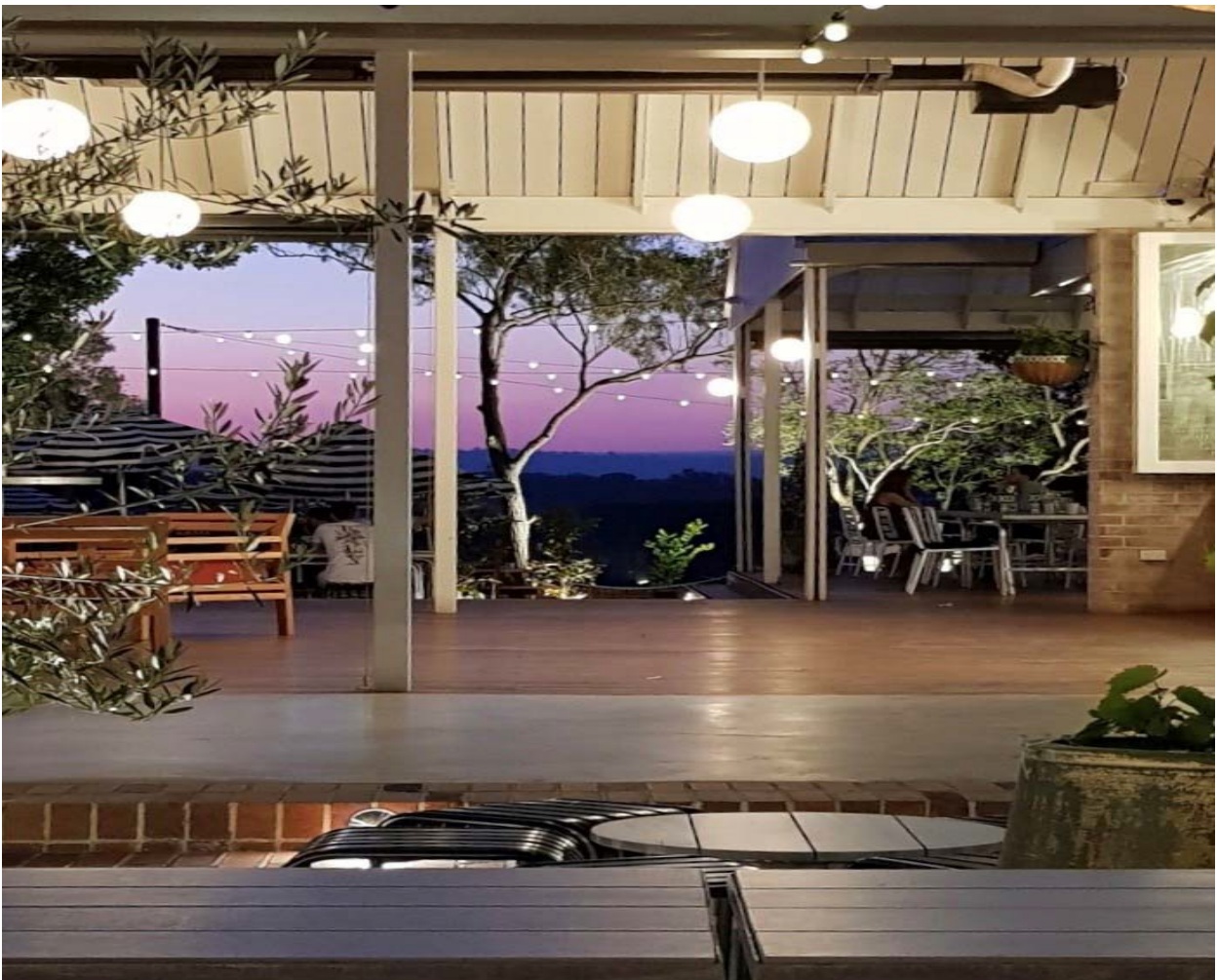
Trophy Presentation Night come dressed from

THE
GREAT GATSBY

Saturday 1st February 2020 Drive Day to Camden Valley Inn

Come along and join us for a nice drive from Penrith starting at 1.30pm and driving through Mulgoa, Silverdale, Warragamba, The Oaks and through to Camden to have dinner at the Recently renovated Camden Valley Inn in Camden.

Join us for a nice drive and dinner with friends. The Mini Car Club will be joining us as well. Call Avis 0412051594 or Anne 0419620034 if you would like to come along so we can book numbers



EST 1939

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING
10TH December, 2019

Venue: Parramatta RSL Club, Parramatta
Meeting commenced: 7.36pm

Present: Committee members: Graham Wells, Barry Cockayne, Carol Dodds, Rod Pringle, Greg Holden, Leah Holden, Ross Reichardt, Avis Fowler, Steve Rivett, Paul Barbara

Members: Harley Pringle, Madonna Pringle.

Apologies: David Baigent, Colin Dodds, Les Payne, Peter Smith, Anne Smith. As the President was an apology, the Vice-President, Barry Cockayne, took the chair.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Graham Wells presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Moved accepted Steve Rivett, seconded Carol Dodds, Carried.

Business Arising: None other than business covered later in the meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Les Payne was an apology. Graham Wells presented his report.

General Account:

Opening balance	\$8,355.55
Deposits	\$870.00
Payments: R.Pringle BBQ Grafton	\$33.53
Closing balance 30/11	\$9,192.02

Savings Account:

Opening balance	\$46,056.80
Interest	\$3.91
Closing balance 30/11	\$46,060.71

Business Transaction Account:

Opening balance	\$6,781.54
Payments: ST Printing May, July, Sept.	\$913.20
AGM Catering \$562.09, Trophies \$681.38	\$1,243.47
Transfer to debit account	\$1500.00
Bank fee	\$10.00
Closing balance 30/11	\$3114.87

Debit Account

Opening balance	\$3,762.73
Transfer from transaction account	\$1500.00
Payments: Final web-site payment	\$2177.35
S.T. postage	\$83.95

	G. Wells AGM catering	\$182.37
	Sprite car stickers	\$1,259.50
	Closing balance 30/11	\$1,559.56
	Total Cash in Bank	\$59,927.1
	Moved accepted Steve Rivett, seconded Greg Holden. Carried	6

Secretary's Report: Graham Wells reported correspondence:

Incoming:

-CAMS Speed Read, Xmas closures, Officials training, Track insurance cover, Directors liability insurance.

-Les Payne financial report.

- Magazines/Brochures: Motorlife Museum, Campbelltown Steam Machinery, Goblins Gazette, Mascot, Australian Austin Healey.

Outgoing:

-Eileen Barlow Life membership letter.

Coming Events:

Carol Dodds reported:

-We have a number of events in February starting with the Camden Inn run on Saturday 1st.

-The Fish & Chip will be on Saturday 8th.

-The Dickies have offered to organize a pizza day for the Bathurst 1000, October 11th.

-Carol advised she needs to pay a deposit for the Club 60th at the Quarantine Station. All agreed on payment.

Social & competition events for 2020 to date are:

-Friday, January 17th Fish & Chips at Kiama

-Saturday, February 1st Drive to Camden Valley Inn.

-Saturday, February 8th Fish & Chip run

-February 15th 2020. Gerringong Motorfest.

-Friday, February 21st Drive & lunch in Southern Highlands

-Friday, March 20th Drive to Pyree for lunch.

-April 9-13th 2020. National Challenge.

-April 19th SCCA Supersprint.

-Friday, April 24th Drive to Bundeena for lunch.

-Friday, May 22nd Drive to Camden Valley Inn for lunch.

-Friday, June 20th Drive details TBA

-July 5th 2020. Donald Healey Birthday.

-July 25-26th 2020. SCCA 60th Birthday at quarantine Station

-Sunday, August 16th Shannons Day.

-Sunday, September 13th All British Display Day.

-Sunday, October 11th Pizza Day

Greg Holden gave an outline of some events planned for the 2020 Challenge. We have 26 members going to date. Greg will continue to promote the event.

CAMS: Barry Cockayne reported on the State Council meeting.

- With the increasing interest in electric cars in competition, CAMS are working on safety guidelines.
- The discussions on FHRs continue. Barry will do a repeat article for Sprite Torque.

CMC: Barry Cockayne reported.

- CMC are asking for support in their objection to the 30% luxury car sales tax.
- Shannons Classic will be on August 16th & cost will be \$25 per car.
- The CMC judging panel are available for events such as our concourse.
- CMC have a sub-committee working with the NRMA (see later).

Membership: Ross Reichardt reported.

We have 379 members. Two new applications;

- Brad Newstead who has a Mini Moke.
 - Bruce & Pam Melville who have a Mk1 Sprite.
- Rod Pringle moved all be accepted, seconded Leah Holden.. Carried.

Regalia: Avis Fowler reported.

- Lots of orders taken at the AGM.

Sprite Torque: Greg Holden reported.

- Latest issue ready to be mailed this week.
- More articles needed to keep up the content & maintain members interest.

Facebook: Harley Pringle reported.

- We have 362 members on Facebook.
- Photos of the AGM & run have been posed on the site along with a variety of other articles.

Committee Appointed Positions.

The following members have agreed to fill these positions as follows:

Registrar: Colin Dodds

Point score: Brian Walton

CSCA representative: David Baigent

CAMS/CMC representative: Barry Cockayne

Librarian: Dave Lawrence

ABCC representative: Sharon Allen

Public Officer: Graham Wells

Moved these all be confirmed Greg Holden, seconded Leah Holden, carried.

Offer of Road Side Assistance from NRMA.

Barry Cockayne reported on the negotiations between the CMC and the NRMA. The aim is to have the assistance registered to the driver & not the car. This system is in operation in South Australia. The current offer from the NRMA is a 25% discount for classic vehicles. A quick survey showed 6 of 11 present at the meeting had a classic car with the NRMA.

General Business:

- Graham Wells advised he will create a list of updates of committee details for Sprite Torque & the web-site following on from the AGM.
- Carol Dodds asked about the possibility of changing the quorum size for committee meetings. This requires a reduction in committee size. Carol also asked if a position of Immediate Past President could be created on the committee> this requires a constitution change. The items will be referred to the committee for later discussion.
- Greg Holden advised he is doing some research on Club history for the 60th birthday.
- Carol Dodds moved a vote of thanks to Graham & Liz Wells for hosting the AGM.

Meeting closed at 8.36 pm.

Next meeting: January 14th, 2019 in the Executive Meeting Room at Parramatta RSL Club, cnr. O'Connell & Macquarie Sts., Parramatta at 7.30 p.m.



Dear SCCA Committee,

I would like to nominate Eileen Barlow for Life Membership of the Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc.

Eileen whilst not being at the forefront of the club has provided background support to the club.

Eileen, with her family was the backbone of the club for many years. The Barlow family has three generations in the club who have all supported the club through the years.

Eileen after attending National Challenges seeing the Victorians had their own regalia designed and produced our first t-shirts and other clothing. For those around then, Eileen screen printed these shirts herself. Who can remember "The Old Bugeye" shirts which had a caricature of a MK1 Sprite on them? Eileen knitted a yellow jumper with a Sprite on it and the Sprite logo. This jumper is legendary and was still in action at the Grafton Hill climb in on the Sprite weekend at Wendy and Ian's in 2017.

While you may feel this contribution isn't enough to justify a Life Membership nomination, Eileen brought some pride to the club with the introduction of our own regalia. She managed this for many years before it became an official position on the committee.

What Eileen did bring to the club was behind the scenes. Husband, Alan and later sons Dave and Darren all competed for the club in many events. Eileen was there providing support to all the members with words of wisdom, you could always get a snack at the Barlow support vehicle. It was a focal point for all of us. If you needed any help at any event, competition or social, the first people to offer assistance were Eileen and Alan with their family. I can remember, the tree branch used to lift out an engine to assist one of our guys to replace a clutch at a Challenge in Winton. They are still helping members with advice, you just don't see it as they have stepped back from the club after Alan retired.

During the 80s and 90s, Eileen dedicated many hours to the club, helping at events with timing, marshalling and flagpoints on the track. This included the events hosted by the Sprite Car Club and those hosted by other clubs in the CSCA. In the days where timing was done by 6-8 people with stopwatches, Eileen was a regular in the control tower at Oran Park, Amaroo Park or Silverdale. Even when the timing first moved to computer, we still needed helpers to press the timing buttons, enter the car numbers and then collate, print and run down and post them and Eileen was always there, lending a hand. Without people like Eileen helping, the events could not run and she was therefore instrumental in enabling the Sprite Club (and other clubs) to hold Supersprints, Lapdashes, Motorkhanas and Hillclimbs that all club members could participate in and enjoy.

If you participated in a driver training day, something the club used to hold at Oran Park "back in the day", you would have had Eileen wave a flag at you. If you participated in a 6 hour relay race, you would have been met with a cuppa and cake by Eileen. For the Ladies team in the 1994 6 Hour Relay race, it was Eileen hanging over the wall with the board for us.

When Alan held a more formal committee role, Eileen was supporting in the background, sending out entry forms and regulations for SCCA events, compiling results after the weekend and typing them up to be mailed out to all participants. She also assisted on many National Challenges, in the lead up organization and wherever a hand was needed throughout the weekend.

Eileen encouraged many new members at events, she was like several of the other partners, the backbone of the club who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make The Sprite Car Club "happen". Many members just turn up and the BBQ is there, the sandwiches are made, the urn is on and ready to have a coffee. It's members such as Eileen who have made this happen, quietly working behind the committee.

Club meetings used to be held at the Leyland Pavilion, then Strathfield Library, she was always the friendly face making you welcome as a new comer.

In an official capacity, Eileen was Regalia Officer in 1992, 1993, but covered this position during 1994 and 1995.

Eileen also assisted Alan and Brian Walton when they stepped in and filled the editor's position during 1994.

I would like Eileen to be acknowledged for the contribution she has made to the Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc.

Yours,

Avis Fowler (member117)

Seconded,

Barry Taylor (1)

Ian Gibbs (2)

Wendy Gibbs (3)

Beryle Taylor (8)

Bert Langford (113)

Denis Best (472)

NRMA Roadside Assistance for Classic Cars

The Sprite Car Club is a member of the Council of Motor Clubs (CMC) which amongst other things, advocates with Government and other agencies, on behalf of all member clubs for better deals for its members.

Your Club Delegate has been on a CMC Sub Committee which has been negotiating with the NRMA for a new membership deal whereby cover is given to an individual rather than a nominated vehicle.

Such an arrangement is provided by the South Australian equivalent organisation.

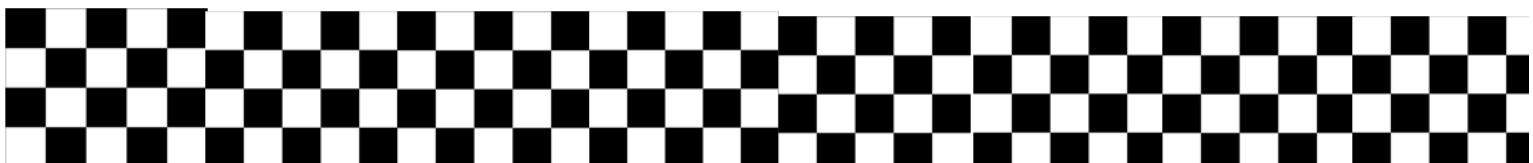
Negotiations have been most drawn out, and have not achieved the original objective. However an offer has been made by the NRMA whereby a 25% discount on the annual membership fee for vehicles 30 years and older and on conditional registration, that is on 'H', 'D' or 'J' plates.

The scheme will be offered on a trial basis and final details are yet to be sorted.

The CMC and the NRMA in the meantime would like some indication of the likely take up of such a scheme amongst classic vehicle owners, so SCCA Members are invited indicate their views.

As an indication, six of the eleven members at the December Committee indicated that they would take up the offer.

If you would take up such arrangement, you might send an email to -
vicepresident@spriteclub.com



THE FINAL WORD

Following on from the 'CAMSTUFF' item in last month's Sprite Torque, CAMS has released the details of the regulations for Forward Head Restraints effective in all Speed Events from 1 January 2020.

As noted, a Speed Event includes a Supersprint and the new Regulation therefore applies – so be aware.

The text can be viewed on the CAMS website at –

[https://issuu.com/camsmotorsport/docs/speed_read_d
ecember_2019](https://issuu.com/camsmotorsport/docs/speed_read_d
ecember_2019)

Frontal Head Restraints (FHR) in Speed Events

CAMS members are reminded that as of 1 January 2020, the mandatory use of Frontal Head Restraints (FHR) will come into effect for Speed events, whereby the vehicle entered is fitted with the necessary requirements to ensure the effective use of a FHR.

In implementing this for Speed events CAMS has applied the mandatory use of FHR to only certain vehicle classifications, those being aligned with the mandatory use across other disciplines of the sport. This will mean that:

Each 1st Category (single seater) vehicle will require the use of FHR except if it is a Superkart or a 5th Category single seater which is exempt from the use of FHR; and

Each vehicle which is the subject of a CAMS Log Book and classified as a Race, Rally/Road or Off Road vehicle will require the use of FHR, the same as if that vehicle was entered into an event for one of those disciplines.

A vehicle which is road registered will not be require the mandatory use of FHR, unless that vehicle is also classified and holds a Log Book as a Race, Rally/Road or Off Road vehicle. This approach is to ensure that those vehicles which compete elsewhere that requires the mandatory use of FHR must now also use FHR in Speed Events.

CAMS encourages all competitors to consider the use of FHR whether it is applied as mandatory to them or not.

The wording for Schedule D for Speed Events for 1st of January 2020 will read as follows:

1 FHR for SPEED Events

A FHR compliant with Standard A and a Helmet compliant with Standard A must be worn when competing in:

- a) Each 1st Category (single seater) automobile, except for:
 - 1) a Superkart; or
 - 2) a 5th Category automobile which is exempt from the use of a FHR.

- b) Each automobile the subject of a CAMS Log Book which applies a RACE, RALLY/ROAD, OFF ROAD or 5th CATEGORY classification that requires the mandatory use of a FHR.

The use of a FHR is not required for a Road Registered automobile for a SPEED Event, except where Article (b) above is applicable.

A full-face helmet is highly recommended for a driver of an open car.

SCCA Point Scores "Top Ten" Final for 2019

Club Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Paul	Hunt	299
2	Rodney	Pringle	190
3	Graham	McDonald	180
4	Joan	McDonald	170
5	Raymond	Fahey	162
6	Carol	Dodds	160
6	Colin	Dodds	160
6	Madonna	Pringle	160
9	Leslie	Payne	148
10	Gregory	Holden	140
10	Leah	Holden	140

Ladies Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Joan	McDonald	170
2	Carol	Dodds	160
2	Madonna	Pringle	160
4	Leah	Holden	140
5	Mary	Barbara	130
6	Juliet	Richardson	110
7	Avis	Fowler	100
7	Carolyn	Ritchie	100
9	Sandy	Thomas	90
10	Annemieke	Edwards	80
10	Margaret	Farlow	80
10	Dianne	Lawlor	80

Sprite Social Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Paul	Hunt	150
2	Paul	Unicomb	110
3	Mary	Barbara	100
3	Paul	Barbara	100
3	Rodney	Pringle	100
6	Raymond	Fahey	90
6	Michael	Meadows	90
8	Madonna	Pringle	80
8	Anne	Smith	80
8	Peter	Smith	80
8	Graham	Wells	80

Assoc. Social Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Graham	McDonald	180
2	Joan	McDonald	170
3	Gregory	Holden	140
3	Leah	Holden	140
5	Kevin	Green	110
5	George	Ritchie	110
7	Carol	Dodds	100
7	Colin	Dodds	100
7	Carolyn	Ritchie	100
10	Rodney	Pringle	90

Sprite Drivers Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Paul	Orton	76
2	David	Baigent	58
3	Eleanor	Baigent	55
4	Jason	Thomas	54
5	Leslie	Payne	48
6	David	Hunt	36
7	Bary	Cockayne	32
8	Rob	Howes	27
9	Andrew	Sebesfi	20
10	Sam	Girgis	19
10	Dennis	Sullivan	19

Assoc. Drivers Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Stephen	Hooker	120
2	Craig	Barney	115
3	Ray	McLachlan	114
4	Paul	Hunt	99
5	Andrew	McLaughlin	89
6	Raymond	Fahey	52
7	Tony	Davis	37
8	James	Finn	32
9	David	Kent	15

Juniors Championship			
Pos	Name		Points
1	Sienna	Allen	60
2	Olivia	Allen	40
2	Elise	Manewell	40
4	Frank	Barbara	20
4	Paul Jnr	Barbara	20
4	Lance	Gyecsek	20

Perpetual Trophy Winners

BMC Perpetual	Paul Hunt
Drivers Championship	Stephen Hooker
Sprite Championship	Paul Hunt
Assoc. Championship	Graham McDonald
Ladies Championship	Joan McDonald
"SPRITE" Social	Paul Hunt
Clubmanship Award?	Not Awarded



Merry Christmas to all!



The treasurer was away from his post part C

South Australia to Birdsville trip 2019

13/10 Sunday

Slept late, 2 loads of washing on before breakfast. After breakfast hung the washing out and had a chat to a lady who was already taking hers in. It is already very hot and windy. Les watched a bit of the Bathurst race and then we took most of the washing in as it was dry and there was a lot of dust blowing around. Fuelled up and took a drive out to Big Red the first sand dune one crosses to go into the Simpson Desert. It was very dusty and we drove back to Little Red, which we drove up as we did not need to let the tyres down. Returned to town, visited the Information Centre and the general store and returned to the van for lunch and so Les could watch the Bathurst car race. Not bad with air con on. I have cleaned out the bathroom cupboards that get a lot of dust in and hopefully have blocked the entry point. We shall see tomorrow! We returned to Little Red to see the sunset over the Simpson Desert.

14/10 Monday

Left Birdsville early as we knew it was going to be very hot again. We travelled 240 km dirt road before we hit bitumen. The road was very narrow with only room for one vehicle so if a road train came you had to pull off the road, and usually cars pulled off for us. It was a bit scary and you had to really concentrate for oncoming traffic. The flood ways were built up with



concrete so that the flooding waters would not lift up the bitumen. It was very hot and we stopped at a small town to have lunch in air con, but all the shops were closed as it was the end of the season for the area, so we had to make do with quick lunch in the van. We continued on and stayed in Quilpie. Long day on the road and very hot scenery alternated between empty areas and very low growing trees, very dry.

15/10 Tuesday

Long day driving as we headed to Roma. We stopped for lunch in Charleville and did some shopping mainly for veg. Roads had dead wallabies everywhere down the road to Roma some being eaten by black birds, very sad. Very dry, no water and hardly any grass. Very hot 42 so we booked a powered site in Roma. Les carried out some repairs on the van and put the shower screen back on, with longer pins, as we are finished on the dirt roads. We started to see taller trees and more grass and some heavily wooded tree areas, which is nice.

16/10 Wednesday

We left Roma and drove towards St George. We came to and stopped at Surat to see a gift shop, which was a lovely clean and bright cafe. We decided to have morning tea and it was lovely. We visited the information centre housed in an old Cobb and Co station building, which was also a museum and art gallery. The museum had a great deal of memorabilia on droving and sheep station owners in the area. You could have been there for hours, if you read all the articles. Lots of old items and equipment from yesteryear and a lovely restored Cobb and Co carriage. The art gallery was reasonably priced, mainly trees and old houses, nothing said you must have me! We continued on to St George, stopping briefly at Beardmore Dam, which contained very little water. Many dead wallabies beside the road and much taller trees, but all the trees had very small leaves, even the gums. We decided to stay at the caravan park in St George right on the Balonne River as it had power because it is still 40 degrees. We went into town as Les was trying to get larger screws to secure the overhead cupboard. He succeeded in this and I visited the unique egg shop, which displays carved and illuminated emu eggs. A Greek man carves pictures/ designs in Emu eggs, which are amazing. The eggs have 20 layers which transition from black to shades of blue and grey until you eventually find white. He had quite a display and there was also a display of the eggs his daughter has done which were as good as her fathers. We had a bit of grocery shopping and back to the van. It looks like a storm is brewing and the locals are expecting rain.

17/10 Thursday

we were up fairly early today and drove to Lightning Ridge. Many wallabies dead on side of road as we headed off. We are seeing more trees and taller trees, pasture land, cattle and sheep. Saw one lonely Emu to the side of the road as well. As we came into the town the grass was grey,

trees basically dying or dead, so just grey trunks, quite interesting. Not as hot as it has been, but in a caravan Park for power and air con. We did a mine tour in the afternoon, where the miner has carved the sandstone area of his cave with people, animals, tv characters etc, all with a fork and spoon. It was quite amazing and he was very prolific. This was all about 40 feet underground. We descended another 25 feet to see where they mined for opals in the clay. The guide was very informative and interesting. It seems a very hit and miss method with no clear rules as to how and where you find opals of quality. They are found in the clay and usually on fault lines, but that is about it. The guide said luck plays a big part and he had been an opal miner for 30 years. Temperature has dropped a little and is quite comfortable.

18/10 Friday

Up early to go on a 4 hour tour of Lightning Ridge. Very interesting and learnt a great deal about opals. We saw various mining sites and learnt how mining was carried out in the old days with pick, shovel and windlass, very manual and heavy work. The process is now more heavily mechanized with digger machines, jack hammers and old cement mixers to wash the dirt off the opals. All this comes at a cost, in the old days you could become a miner for about \$5,000 whereas now the cost can be \$100,000. The running cost has increased from a few dollars to thousands of dollars per month. Mining for opal is like playing the poker machines as a great deal of luck is involved. Although the fault lines indicate there may be opal, you may not find any. You can mine next door to a high producing mine, but you may still not find any. We looked at an open cut mining site, which is unusual for opal, we saw the house, more like a squat, of a miner that lived in it till he was 91, we visited a bottle house built by Germans, a castle built in rocks and a train opal shop. We went into an underground mine and had the mining process explained to us and then watched a DVD on the town. In the afternoon we explored the town and bought some gifts for family and friends. Lightning Ridge is a unique town that is a way of life, rather than a place to live. Evidence of the old mines are everywhere, but very few miners become rich. We went to an Italian restaurant for dinner, which was nice as we usually cook.

19/10 Saturday

Visited the Craft Shop before leaving Lightning Ridge heading for Kaputar National Park. Very interesting place, had large wall hangings depicting aboriginal stories constructed by weaving, plaiting and crocheting. They were beautiful and I managed to add to my frog collection! We checked out Wee Waa and Walgett on the way. As we drove we noticed huge billows of smoke indicating a large fire. We stopped at Narrabri for lunch and fuel. A visit to the Information Centre told us that Mount Kaputar was closed due to a fire. Les had said that the fire we could see while driving was Kaputar. Disappointed as I was looking forward to seeing the sawn rocks - another time, another trip! We decided to visit the Pilliga National Park instead. Drove in and set up camp at the Salt Caves area. Had a lazy afternoon reading. There has been a bushfire through the area a few years ago and the trees are regenerating, so their leaves are very close to their trunks at present.

20/10 Sunday

After breakfast we walked to the salt cave lookout, which was very high, up open steps and platforms. I went half way and decided that was enough and Les climbed to the top. We walked to the dam, not much water, before heading to the Sculptures in the Scrub. We took the scenic route as we missed the road to turn down. We saw 2 emus crossing the road and 2 goannas scurrying off the side of the road as we drove past. We came to 2 trees across the road and Les had to get the reciprocating saw out to cut them so we could move them. Arrived at the campsite in time for lunch. After lunch, it was not very hot so we decided to do the 3km walk to see the sculptures and return walking the Gorge. It was not too strenuous and the sculptures were interesting. The Gorge did not compare to those we saw in WA. Returned to van and read till dinner time.

21/10 Monday

Packed up and left after breakfast and drove down the Newell Highway to the turn off to the Sandstone Caves. Fairly easy 3km round walk, although we did head upwards with steps but quite easy. Huge sandstone rocks with lots of caves, some large, some small and some with natural windows. 2 had evidence of aborigines sharpening tools and drawings and had wire fences across so that you could look but not enter. The colours in the sandstone rocks were amazing. We continued on our way and stopped in Coonabarabran to go to the bank, information centre and lunch in the local bakery. We then continued on to the Warrumbungle's. The views of the rocks and mountain formations were amazing. We stopped at the Information Centre for relevant information and then found a nice shady powered site. Very civilized for a National Park, all sealed roads and bitumen caravan sites, I believe that there are even showers here and bins with a very flash bottle recycling system. There are Wallabies here in the shade of the water tanks

as we drove in. Les put the shower door back on, I did a lot of cleaning as we appear to be off dirt roads now and the dirt and dust that comes in is amazing. Easy dinner again bbq chicken heated up in the steamer with vegetables is my new easy and delicious dinner. I am even going to try to heat some cake in the steamer to have as pudding with yoghurt. Quite a bit of bird life here and have had visits from several looking for food. Had a wander to check out amenities and decided they are usable and saw a number of wallabies and kangaroos coming down to the grass for food. Tomorrow we will explore!

22/10 Tuesday

Walked 7km to a lookout over the Warrumbungle's. Crossed many dry Creek beds and enjoyed being in the bush and hearing birds. Most plants and trees were growing well. Met our neighbours from the campsite and had a chat. Decided not to do the longer walk and headed back. Drove to The Siding Observatory, went into the Information section, had morning tea, looked at the display and then went into the actual observatory and saw the massive telescope. We were up very high and had a great view of the surrounding landscape. Drove to another lookout area and after a short walk had a lovely view of the rocky spires and domes formations famous in the area. Returned to the van, gave Les a haircut and washed the van windows, as we have finished on dirt roads it is nice to be able to see out of them without looking through a film of dust.

23/10 Wednesday

From the Warrumbungle's we travelled to Tamworth and spent a night with Mark and Sue. They are great company and we all had stories to tell. They took us through the Northern part of Tamworth to see how it is developing. On the way to Tamworth we visited Gunnedah and Lake Keepit state park, the Keepit dam has only 0.9% water, so devastating.

24/10 Thursday

Headed towards Port Macquarie, staying at Tia Falls 20klms east of Walcha, beautiful camp with a short walk to the falls still flowing to our surprise. The ranger came in and apologised as he was taking the gas bottle from the BBQ. He had fire fighters not too far away he had to cook for and needed the gas.

25/10 Friday

Heading down the Oxley highway there were flames to the edge of the road and firemen all over. We had lunch with Alan and Marg at Warhope before travelling to Port Macquarie. Picked up Kiana and Cooper from school. The sky here is covered by smoke and has been for several months. Fires all round Port. As we needed to take the Isuzu tomorrow, Cooper and Kiana helped my clean the truck.

26/10 Saturday

Swimming carnival at Macksville today, pleasant weather and kids enjoyed them selves.

27/10 Sunday



Off to the Billy cart races at Beechworth. These races are in there 40th year and they block the streets for a couple of hours.

28/10 Monday

Dropped Cooper and Kiana at school, hooked up van and headed south. We had coffee break with Jim and Anne at Nabiac. They were on their way to Port for 2 weeks with their Van. They had big fires to negotiate coming out of Forster. We stayed at Gerrys Plains for the last night. This was a great camp spot and amenities. Met a lady who has been on the road on her own for 7 years and only returns to see her children for birthdays.

29/10 Tuesday

42 days and back home via the Putty road and a big clean up. Neighbours and friends have been kind enough to keep plants alive and do a little mowing. Time to start planning the next trip to Tassie.

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Coming Events 2020

- Friday, January 17th Fish & Chips at Kiama
- Saturday, February 1st Drive to Camden Valley Inn.
- Saturday, February 8th Fish & Chip run
- February 15th 2020. Gerringong Motorfest.
- Friday, February 21st Drive & lunch in Southern Highlands
- Friday, March 20th Drive to Pyree for lunch.
- April 9-13th 2020. National Challenge.
- April 19th SCCA Supersprint.
- Friday, April 24th Drive to Bundeena for lunch.
- Friday, May 22nd Drive to Camden Valley Inn for lunch.
- Friday, June 20th Drive details TBA
- July 5th 2020. Donald Healey Birthday.
- July 25-26th 2020. SCCA 60th Birthday at quarantine Station
- Sunday, August 16th Shannons Day.
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