



www.spriteclub.com

August 2020

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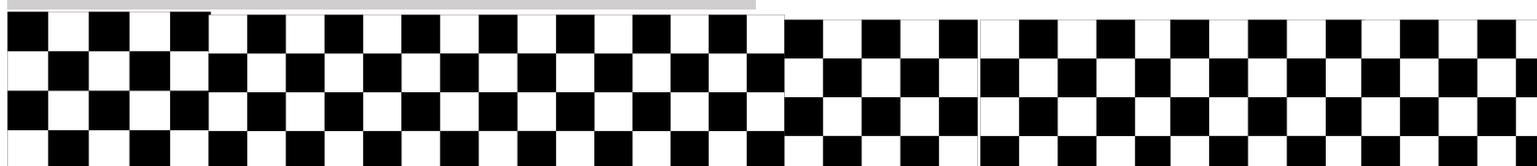
- PRESIDENTS REPORT
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- BUGEYE COVID MASKS – YES THEY EXIST

## Welcome to Sprite Torque

Welcome to the this edition of Sprite Torque for the year. There is not much to report on in these current times.

Thank you so much to our members who have sent me some wonderful articles.. Please feel free to 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](mailto:bron.wray@gmail.com)  
Stay Spritely and stay at home!  
Bron



## Committee

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vicepresident@spriteclub.com

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Leah Holden

Petersmith

# Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc.

ABN: 62879038-526

## Club Patrons: John Sprinzel Graham Healey

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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

The Hills Club—2 -6 Jenner Street Baulkham Hills

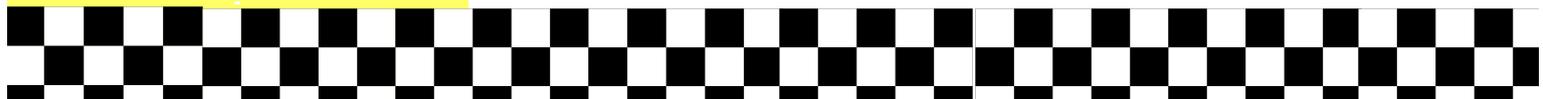
2nd Tuesday of each month starting at 7:30pm—Lachlan Room

**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



Another month passes with COVID-19 being the dominant factor in our lives. My daughter, Elly, is stuck in Melbourne in lock down and only allowed out of her studio apartment for 1 hour a day for 'exercise' and for 'essential shopping'. Even then she is not allowed more than 5km from home. In NSW we have seen cases rise and fall and some additional restrictions placed upon us in terms of regional travel, particularly in large numbers. As a result we took the precautionary measure of cancelling the August weekend run, although postponed is probably a better word to use as we will run this event at some time in the future. This was compounded by our Vice President, Barry, who was scheduled to take this run, having to make an unscheduled trip to Victoria and the subsequent quarantine restrictions that entail.

On the Motorsport front, the HSRCA Spring festival was supposed to take place at Wakefield Park at the end of the month and I was entered along with quite a number of SCCA members. Unfortunately this has had to be postponed due to the latest Covid-19 restrictions and to be honest, having a large number of people from Sydney staying in Hotels in Goulburn is probably not a good idea at the moment when community transmission is a problem. The Event has been rescheduled to the end of October – fingers crossed it happens then.

At home the pool installation is complete and the landscaping done. I just dipped my toe in today, as it has been hot and sunny, but still consider it way too cold for the initial plunge. I have spent quite a bit of time painting fences and improving on the work of the installers, to bring things up to my standard.

Another chunk of my time has been fitting out my new man cave. Like many with a collection of cars, I have amassed a large collection of spare parts over my 35 years of Sprite & Midget ownership. These used to be hidden away all around the house in the garage, roof space, cellar and in the shed. More recently I have had stuff in a couple of rented storage units, which adds up in cost over time. I have now purchased my own storage unit from Aussie Strata Storage and I am slowly moving all my stuff into a 9m x 4m unit with a 5m ceiling which will allow me to install a 2 or 4 post hoist in the future. It even has a beer fridge just in case I have visitors.

With 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the year now gone, we have started to think about how the AGM will occur this year as we may not be able to run it in our normal fashion. Hopefully things will change and things will be able to go ahead as normal, but just in case we are exploring contingency plans to ensure the smooth running of the club continues without issue.

Nothing to report on my cars this month other than they have been relocated to their new home and all seem very happy there.

Stay safe and look after yourselves, friends and family.

Regards

David Baigent  
President – Sprite Car Club of Australia



**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING**  
**11<sup>th</sup> August, 2020**

Venue: Electronic media.  
Meeting commenced: 7.25pm

**Present:** Committee members: David Baigent, Graham Wells, Peter Smith, Anne Smith, Barry Cockayne, Carol Dodds, Rod Pringle, Les Payne, Leah Holden, Greg Holden, Steve Rivett, Paul Barbara.

**Apologies:** Rob Howes

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

David Baigent circulated the minutes from the previous meeting. Moved accepted Les Payne, seconded Rod Pringle, Carried.

**Business Arising:**

None other than items covered later in the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Les Payne reported.

General Account:

Opening balance	\$22,400.36
Deposits	\$1,950.00
Payments: New Marque	\$2,396.46
Snap Printing	\$190.50
Closing balance 31/7	\$21,763.40

Savings Account:

Opening balance	\$46,087.59
Interest	\$3.79
Closing balance 31/7	\$46,091.38

Business Transaction Account:

Opening balance	\$5,650.89
Payments:	nil
Bank fee	\$10.00
Closing balance 31/7	\$5,640.89

Debit Account

Opening balance	\$1,786.93
Deposits:	nil
Payments: Mystery run catering	\$387.90
BMC affiliation	\$20.00

Closing balance	31/7	\$1,379.03
Total Cash in Bank		\$74,879.03

Moved accepted Avis Fowler, seconded Rod Pringle. Carried

**Secretary's Report:** Graham Wells reported

correspondence: Incoming:

- CMC: The Preserve
- ABCC: cancellation of Display Day 2020.
- Motorsport Aust: SpeedRead, Community Sports Recovery package
- OTHR : newletter
- Magazines/Brochures: Goblins Gazette, Motorlife Museum, BMC Leyland Heritage, Australian Austin Healey.

Moved accepted Leah Holden, seconded Les Payne. Carried.

**Coming Event.**

The next Club run is in two weeks & Barry Cockane will lead. With the cancellation of All British Day this leaves September empty apart from a Friday run.

Provisional events for 2020/21 are:

- Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> Drive to Southern Highlands.
- Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> Drive & lunch at Figtree.
- Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup> Drive to Berry for lunch.
- Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. Mystery tour to Q Station at Manly.
- Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> Drive to Bundeena.
- Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> Drive to Greenwell Point.
- Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> Drive to Leura.
- Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> Drive to Camden Valley Inn
- Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup> Fish & Chips at Kiama.

**All British Day:**

Event cancelled for 2020.

The ABCC have advised that all ticket payments will carry over to 2021.

**Motorsport Aust.** Barry Cockayne circulated a report on MSA activities. Key points were:

- A restructuring planned to improve IT & permits/licences.
- Centralisation in Melbourne with State Offices closed to the public.
- Letter on 5<sup>th</sup> August from CEO expanding on restructuring.
- CEO addressed State Council meeting last Saturday on above issues.
- National Supersprint at SMSP on 1<sup>st</sup> November.
- Due to Vic State Govt restrictions staff unable to attend office but Membership Hotline is active so Email recommended for urgent enquiries.

**CMC:** Barry Cockayne reported:

- Basically in recess but committee continues to meet & matters of business circulated in The Preserve.

Report moved accepted by Les Payne, seconded Rod Pringle. Carried.

**Membership:** Ross Reichardt reported:

We have 347 members.

Five new applications this month.

-Ron Jones who has a 1964 Sprite & 1968 Daimler 250.

-Dan McGonigal who has a 1960 Sprite.

-Glen Palfrey who has a 1966 Morris Mini Deluxe.

-Michell Sebesfi

-Alison Bjomberg

The last two do not have cars but are interested in participating in Motorsport & will use Sebesfi owned cars.

David Baigent moved all be accepted, seconded Rod Pringle. Carried.

Ross advised that the on-line membership renewal has been closed & renewals will be by form only.

**Competition & CSCA:** David Baigent reported.

-MGCC Newcastle ran Supersprint at Pheasant Wood. There were 9 SCCA competitors with Andrew Sebesfi third overall.

-Next CSCA event is September 12<sup>th</sup>.

-HSRCA Spring Festival is August 29/30 at Wakefield Park.

**Regalia:** Avis Fowler reported no activity.

**Sprite Torque:** Latest edition is on-line.

**Web-site:** Rob Howes reported everything up to date.

**Facebook:** Rod Pringle advised.

-We have 493 members. Photos from the last run have been posted.

**Action on Committee Meetings & AGM.**

David Baigent circulated an information sheet prior to the meeting. The essential points are:

-Our constitution does not allow for Committee Meetings or General Meetings by electronic means.

-We have been conducting electronic committee meetings on a “no objection” basis this year during the COVID 19 lockdowns.

-In May clauses were inserted in the Associations Incorporation Act to allow associations whose constitutions did not allow for the use of electronic technology to hold electronic committee & general meetings until Sept 20 or if extended by regulation until 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This means we are legal for the period of the regulations.

Ross Reichardt asked if electronic meetings were legal after the end of the regulatory period. (see Post Meeting Note)

After discussion it was proposed: “ That the committee formally submit a proposal to the AGM to amend the Club Constitution to incorporate provisions for the conduct of Committee Meetings, General and the Annual General Meetings via electronic technology whenever considered necessary or desirable and similarly for the conduct of ballots for ordinary or special resolutions.”

**Number of members on committee.**

David Baigent circulated a discussion sheet prior to the meeting.

- The key issue is that the committee has grown to the point where we now have 17 members & there had been difficulties with ensuring a quorum & accommodating the attendees/ensuring participation in debate by all.
- The idea put forward is for a smaller committee with other members having operational roles as required.
- The view is that the committee does not have the authority to restrict the number of committee, this being a matter for determination at the AGM.
- There was considerable discussion on the subject. Some members agreed on the smaller committee concept with others arguing that the larger committee gave more diverse input.
- Rod Pringle commented that he believed the cases where a quorum was not reached was due to the executive members being absent. (see Post Meeting Note)
- It was decided that the committee will submit a proposal to the AGM.

### **Drive to Survive:**

- All four nominees accepted. New provider & candidates to be notified. David Baigent, Colin Dodds, Graham Wells looking after this.

### **General Business:**

- Rod Pringle advised they did Beyond Bitumen Pre-rally & he will write article for Sprite Torque.
- Carol Dodds asked about rotating members booking on restricted runs so all get a chance to go. Les Payne advised it has not been a problem to date.
- Anne Smith asked about having the AGM & Christmas Party separate. Greg Holden advised it was done to try to get more interest in the AGM. (see Post Meeting Note)
- Ross Reichardt advised he has a number of donated books on Minis. Ross will contact Dave Lawrence re putting them in the library.

Meeting closed at 8.32pm.

Next meeting: September 8th, 2020 by electronic media.

### **Post Meeting Note:**

After the meeting Graham Wells advised that his microphone had refused to unmute and he wished to have some input into a couple of areas under discussion.

#### **Action on Committee Meetings**

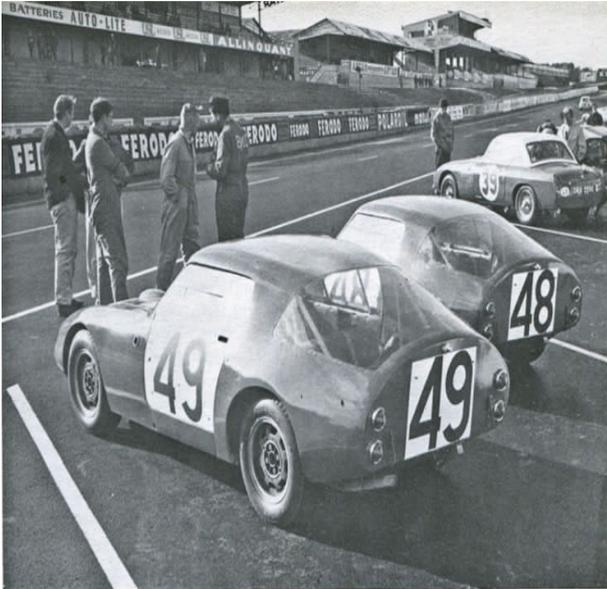
In reply to Ross Reichardt's question. The 2016 Constitution for Incorporated Associations contains a Clause 22 that allows electronic Committee Meetings. It is not dependant on COVID-19. This is why I put it on the agenda for the meeting to include the clause in our Constitution.

#### **Size of Committee**

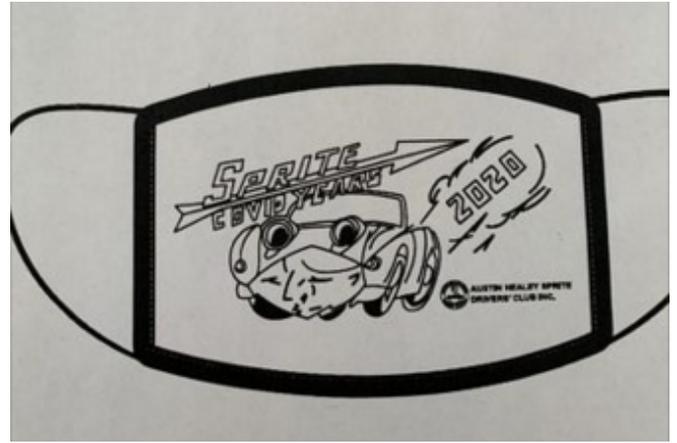
In reply to Rod Pringle. The quorum for a committee meeting is 50% of the members of the committee. There is no requirement for the four executive members to be present. We had two non-quorums in the last three years. In August 2019 three of the executive members were present. Last meeting two of the executive members wanted to be present but could not get the dial-in to work.

#### **General Business:**

In reply to Anne Smith. In 2005 the committee decided to combine the AGM and Christmas Party to try and get better member involvement in the AGM. It was an instant success and we went from 28 in 2003 to 60 in 2005. For the next five years we had 40-50 present. It has only fallen below 30 twice since (2011 and 2018).



*Le Mans 1965: two Sprites and one MGB ready for first practice. In the group are Derek Ross, Clive Hendrie, Jim Cashmore and Tommy Wellman.*



Keep Covid safe! Wear a Bugeye mask???



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## MG Midget

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MG MIDGET

Published: 11th May 2016 0 Comments Be the first, contribute now!

If an MX5 sounds too smooth and sensible, then consider going back in time and opting for a Spridget or Spitfire to savour the thrills of real classic motoring

The term 'starter classics' can do a good many cars a grave disservice as it brackets them as little more than a foot in the classic car door and merely a stepping stone for something better.

Two of our greatest little sports cars suffer this slur, the Triumph Spitfire and the Austin-Healey Sprite as well as MG Midget, which for the sake of this feature we'll call them Spridgets. Granted, while they aren't the last word in image or sports car performance, they offer, in their own way, as much fun and owner satisfaction as a 911 or Etype plus at the same time are so low cost to own they'll have you laughing all the way to the bank.

Even though they were part of the same company (British Leyland) when contemporary, the Spitfire and Spridget were fierce rivals in the showrooms and this spread to their owners whose allegiance to their badges verged on the tribal; it was City vs United, Mods and the Rockers but on four wheels.

Happily, such sibling rivalry is in the past – we're all friendly, classic fans now – well, aren't we? Oh well, where should your loyalties lie, Abingdon or Canley? Let us be the referee...

### WHICH ONE TO BUY?

#### BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Both cars are thoroughly well proven offshoots of frumpy family ferriers and that's a good thing because their simplicity makes for low cost ownership. A Herald in drag the Spitfire may well be, but the transition from family to sports car was as neat as it was clever. Out of the five generations most folks reckon the Mk3 is the best of the bunch for a variety of reasons, not least it being the quickest of the range in standard tune. That said, the Stagtailed MkIV is more common, is by far the most rounded and best handling with the last of the line bigger engined 1500 the easiest to live with on modern roads. If you don't particularly want a droptop, the Spitfire was available as a semi-permanent fixedhead coupé where the hood could be installed later as an optional extra.

For this twin test, we'll ignore the Frog-eye Sprite because this model, while mechanically similar to the Midget, is now a separate classic in its own right. Midgets and Sprites are the same in all but name, so much of our comments apply to the Austin-Healey. Both were built at Abingdon but, to date, the rarity of the Sprite, which was dropped in 1972, doesn't translate into higher values but we think it will.

Like the Spitfire, the 'midlife' models, in this case the 1275cc versions, preferably with rounded wheel arches, are the most desired. In tandem with the MGB, the Midget suffered from US safety bumper legislation changes in 1974, resulting in increased suspension height and rubber fenders, although in fairness the smaller sportster wasn't affected as badly.

The Midget's biggest change was the fitment of the Triumph Spitfire 1500 engine to the MG. Some Midget fans regarded this as sacrilege not least because it changed the character of the car and, in common with the Spitfire 1500, aren't as well liked as the earlier versions – even among folk who have never even driven one! However, the flipside to all this prejudice is much cheaper prices and so better value for money. Try one!

When in the showrooms, the Spitfire was saddled with a hairdressers' image due to its petite looks and the Spridget the more manly choice. However, sales figures don't back this up and the Triumph is just as much a sports car as well as being the more comfortable and civilised. The 1500 is the best seller with some 96,000 made and the Spitfire's best sales year was, astonishingly, as late as 1978.

### WHAT'S THE BEST TO DRIVE?

#### SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

Before we detail the pair, it's essential that we warn newcomers to classics what they



### What The Experts Say...

Gary Lazarus is editor of Mascot, the magazine of the Sprite and Midget Club which has 1000 members and rising. He's unusual insofar that he has also owned the deadly arch rival Triumph Spitfire (Mk3), and comes from a Triumph owning family. Gary is a Spurs fan yet lives a stone's throw away from the Arsenal ground... Lazarus says the Spitfire feels more quality but the Spridget is the better driver although the Triumph the nicer tourer. The once disliked Triumph powered MG is now coming into its own, especially with older enthusiasts, although the pick is always the shortlived 'round arch' 1275. Early sliding windows Sprites and Midgets next up. Prices? The ten grand Spridget isn't far away Gary predicts and far from being starter classics, both are now liked for what they are.



should expect. If it's the feel-at-home comfort of an MX5 you're after then buy the Mazda because these Brits are from another era. Both cars are small; the Midget lives up to its name the most and larger, taller owners may find it too tight a squeeze – think Jeremy Clarkson and the Sprite he bought at auction to use on a rally! You'll feel more comfortable in the Triumph but the severely offset pedals need getting used to.

Conversely, it's the lack of refinement and Spartan cabin of a Spridget that gives it a Caterham-like character and this extends to car's gokart handling along with a bucking bronco ride. What it lacks in speed and sophistication the one of the same Austin-Healey and MG makes up for in sheer back-to-basics fun that easily surpasses the larger MGB's character.

The Spitfire feels not dissimilar but definitely less rudimentary, thanks to a more luxurious-feeling cockpit that offers a welcome, added cabin space and more saloon-like fittings.

Performance is broadly equal – brisk but hardly quick – although the Spridget's A Series engine is lustier for its given capacity. Where the Triumph triumphs is standard fitment of an all-synchromesh gearbox the availability of overdrive, something the later Triumph-powered MG Midget was never offered. Overdrive really transforms the Spitfire from a noisy sports car into a decent tourer with a surprising stride for such a small engine. It cuts down engine noise but the Spitfire isn't MX5 quiet plus you have to ignore the creaks and squeaks that are a consequence of its chassis construction. They came like it out of the showroom so expect a veritable cacophony after all those years and miles!

Sports cars are all about driving thrills and this pair serve it up in different ways. Spitfires have always suffered from that Herald rear suspension layout, which caused the rear wheels to 'tuck in' during hearty cornering – pretty nasty if you're not familiar with this trait or fast with corrective steering lock. The earlier the car, the more pronounced it was, but from the MKIV onwards this was quite well controlled, best of all after March 1973 when the rear track was increased by two inches. So long as you don't push it too hard the Spitfire won't bite back under a closed throttle, plus there are enough upgrades to make a Spitfire handle go, stop and brake better, should you require. There's no shortage of improvements you can make to the Sprite or Midget which can be made quite brilliantly although the rubber bumper models did suffer from the same fate as the MGB with a higher ride height that, even though it affected the smaller Midget less, needs addressing unless you find the added inches beneficial for getting in and out.

On all, the 1500cc versions aren't particularly liked so much because it's not especially sharp performing or nice to rev although it did result in the first 100mph Midget and one with a silent, smooth gearbox as well! Apart from the engine's character, feeling more at home in the Dolomite saloon it originated from, another reason for such dislike stems from this engine's weakness to run hot (the smaller sports car grille area not helping) and also the short service life of its crankshaft bearings and shells. If it's a '1500' that you particularly want we'd go for the Spitfire over a Midget where it feels more at home.

#### OWNING AND RUNNING

#### THERE'S NOTHING IN IT

This is where these spendthrift sports cars come into their own, because few rival classics are as simple or low cost to own and maintain. Their simplistic make up means the DIY is both possible and a pleasure, more so in the case of the Spitfire, which offers unbeatable access to the engine and front suspension, care of its forward-hinged bonnet.

Parts supply on either car is superb and complete nut-and-bolt restorations are possible if you feel so inclined. BMH offers brand new bodysells for MGs, while every panel along with new chassis frames are obtainable for the Spitfire. There's a raft of well-proven improvements for both cars and the only limiting factor is your imagination and budget. Most respond very well to a few selected mods to make them more agreeable for today's roads but without sully their back-to-basics character.

Perhaps it's due to their bigger brothers continually grabbing the limelight that Midget and Spitfire values have, until lately, remained pretty static. That's changing for the best examples, which is all the more reason to buy now if you want one.

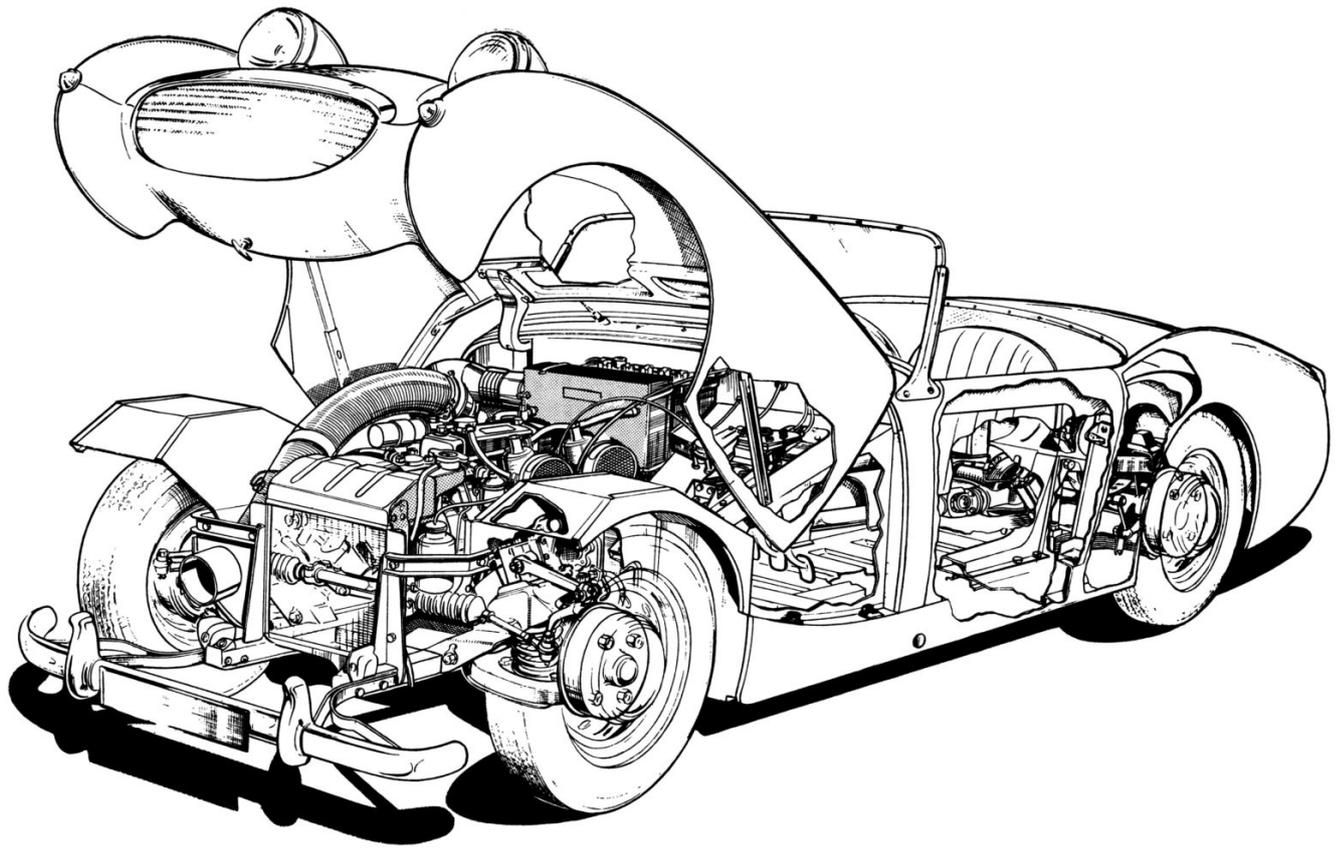
Projects can start from £1000 or so, while pretty decent cars hover around the £5000 mark, with the best of the best costing under £8000. However, their low values mean restos are hard to justify and so many are bodged instead. The earlier the car, then the more valuable it will be, especially Spitfire Mk3s which are the most wanted.

Best bargains come 1493cc-powered, especially the MG. Like-for-like a 1500 can be a handsome £2000 less than an earlier chrome-bumper Midget. As we said at the start, the rarer Austin-Healey Sprites don't command a great price advantage – a few hundred at most, but we can see this significantly altering over the years due to their more prestigious badge?

#### *And The Winner Is...*

Excuse our splinters as we sit on the fence... but we'll call it a draw. The Spitfire is the nicer, less basic bet and the overdrive certainly makes this Triumph a quieter, more relaxing cruiser, further helped by their more inviting interiors. But the Spridget promotes a larger grin thanks to its Caterham-like character. It depends what you want but don't dismiss either as merely starter classics – they are well worth hanging on to.





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## 2020 Weekend Drives Provisional

Month	Date	Event Details
JULY	Sunday 19th	<p>This Weekend Drive will only go ahead if Covid-19 restrictions permit and if it is approved by SCCA Committee. Contact David Baigent 0407 137 776 a day or two before the run to see if it is going ahead.</p> <p><u>Mystery Run</u></p> <p>Meet at 10.0am – McDonalds, McGraths Hill– depart at 10.15am sharp.</p> <p>Run Leader: Les Payne. Mobile 0415 826 650</p>
AUG	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p>This Weekend Drive will only go ahead if Covid-19 restrictions permit and if it is approved by SCCA Committee. Contact David Baigent 0407 137 776 a day or two before the run to see if it is going ahead.</p> <p><u>Drive and lunch at Figtree on the South Coast</u></p> <p>Meet at 9.30am – McDonalds Heathcote – depart at 10.15am sharp.</p> <p>Run Leader: Barry Cockayne. Mobile 0427066 878</p>
SEP	Sunday 13th	<p><u>No Weekend Drive this month – AllBritish Day Kings School</u></p>
OCT	Sunday 11th	<p>This Weekend Drive will only go ahead if Covid-19 restrictions permit and if it is approved by SCCA Committee. Contact David Baigent 0407 137776 a day or two before the run to see if it is going ahead.</p> <p><u>Mystery Tour to the Q Station – Manly – taster for next year’s 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday celebration</u></p> <p>Meet at 9.30am – McDonalds Parramatta– depart at 10.15am sharp.</p> <p>Run Leaders: Carol &amp; Colin Dodds. Mobile 0414 789 263</p>
NOV	Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<p>This Weekend Drive will only go ahead if Covid-19 restrictions permit and if it is approved by SCCA Committee. Contact David Baigent 0407 137776 a day or two before the run to see if it is going ahead.</p> <p><u>Cruise to beautiful Leura in the Blue Mountains</u></p> <p>Meet at 9.30am – McDonalds Penrith Panthers – depart at 10.15am sharp.</p> <p>Run Leaders: Anne &amp; Peter Smith. Mobile 0419 620 034</p>

