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THE SPRITE
CAR CLUB OF
AUSTRALIA



Jan 2022



Sprite Car Club of Australia Inc.

ABN: 62879038-526

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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 (Dec), Ian Jenson, Barry Cockayne, Les payne, Bill McLennan

2019: Eileen Barlow (Dec)

2020: Leah Holden, David Healy

MARQUE MENTORS

MK1 Sprite: Greg Holden and Colin Dodds

MK2 Sprite: Neil Scott

MK3 Sprite: Greg Strange

MK3 Midget: Colin Dodds

1500 Midget: Greg Prunster

S.C.C.A

PO BOX 696 KINGSWOOD NSW 2747

Magazine contributions to:

embaigent@gmail.com

which closes 20th of each month

Monthly meetings: The Hills Club 2-6

Jenner Street Bulkham Hills 2nd

Tuesday of each month starting

at 7:30pm.





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President's Report

Firstly, a big thankyou to David for holding down the Presidents job for the past two years. The opportunity to take the job in Melbourne was a big one and I am sure we wish David and his family all the best in this latest adventure.

Most of Davids time as President was spent working through the issues with what I class as the modern day Black Plague, COVID has had an influence on all our lives over the last two years we have cancelled so many runs and have held countless ZOOM meetings to try and keep the club running. Last year saw a very successful SCCA Supersprint which allowed us all to enjoy the South Circuit at night for the very first time. Runs were few and far between but we managed to pull a few off when the Covid window opened ever so slightly.

I hope tha all our members enjoyed the pre-Christmas gifts that were sent to all, The tea towell has been a hit as well as the BBQ Apron, and we must thank Avis for getting it all underway and Ellise and Avis for packing and sending the all via Australia Post. Talk about an extended family.

I put my hand up at the AGM which was at the Wallacia Hotel, I should have read the tea leaves correctly because the organiser and our Membership Secratery where shot down as either close or casual contacts.

This year kicked off well, with our first meeting being defered to a Zoom catch up and our morning coffee run was postponed to a later date. So within the first two weeks Covid 22 has hit again.

Zoom might be our way to conduct meetings for a little while yet, however I hope we can get out and enjoy our cars a little more over the next twelve months.

We have a strong social program already on the books so please check our web or the magazine for updates.

Over the past 6 weeks or so, we have been going through the regos for club cars and I have spoken to many members that I have not had the pleasure to catch up with before. We have great depth in the mix of cars that are enjoying historic rego through the SCCA and I have actively encourage all members to come on a run with us. I know a few who were looking forward t o our Coffee @ Kurrajong in mid January.

The Holdens have been busy, we had dodged COVID until Christmas which saw family members scatter like buck shot from a sawn off riffle. My work had an outbrake which I avoided for a good spell. Then bango the cat, I was eating Christmas lunch under a gum tree with Leah, sounds romantic, however Leah sat a good 40feet away from me. Following that we got to spend a few days in Jindabyne with the extended family.

We have been working on a stationary engine and Ray Faheys extended knowledge and smarts helped the old girl coff and fart again (Should say hit and miss).

We had a 18month project come to reality mid Decemeber and as some members can testify, the front yard and driveway was a mess, a real mess.

The block wall I have wanted for so long was underway, and boy was I excited. It is still a work in progress but has and will transorm the entry to the family house. Mike did most of the work and we would have cut through 150metres of solid sandstone to lay the foundations.

I have had the pleasure of using his Bobcat and Dumpy over the last few weeks and they are a lot of fun. I would have moved 100 tonne of soil from the front of the





President's Report

house too the dam while in isolation and it has improved three vistas throughout the property. It was fun as well as rewarding.

Leah is as we speak, enjoying the last few days of annual leave until she gets back into the grind and the world will move on for another 12 months. So welcome to 2022, when we have runs this year I would like to see as many new and old members as possible, if you cannot drive you classic, come in your daily driver.

Greg Holden

WANTED
948cc motor.
Complete bottom end if not a complete motor would be well received
Willing to travel to pick up
Please call Greg Holden
0408 777 936

WANTED
Damaged hard top to suit MG midget late model with two clips inside the windscreen
Am trying to set up a hard top for the MG Ute
Any condition considered
Greg Holden
0408 777 936



MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING

Venue: Zoom

Meeting commenced: 7.35pm

Present: Committee members: Graham Wells, Les Payne, Rod Pringle, Greg Holden, Ross Reichardt, Barry Cockayne.

Members: Avis Fowler,

Apologies: Steve Rivett, David Baigent

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Graham Wells circulated the minutes from the previous meeting. Barry Cockayne moved that the minutes of the Committee Meeting of 14th December 2021 as distributed and included in Sprite Torque (December 2021) be confirmed subject to amendments to the items listed below-

i) Delegates Report CMC Meeting -RMS Guidelines re Period Options be noted as now being considered "not relevant" pending the imminent adoption of revised Guidelines by the RMS.

ii) The Committee's appreciation of the editorial work in Sprite Torque by Elly Baigent in 2021 (not 2022) being noted. Seconded Greg Holden. Carried.

Business Arising:

Graham Wells asked about the status of the discussion paper on HDS/CUS registrations. Greg Holden advised that it had been emailed to committee members today.

Treasurer's Report: Les Payne reported.

General Account:

Opening balance	\$31,830.20
Deposits	\$2030.00
Payments transfer to debit acc.	\$3000.00
Fair Trading	\$48.00
Closing balance 31/12	\$30,812.20

Savings Account:

Opening balance	\$46,104.48
Interest	\$0.38
Closing balance 31/12	\$46,104.86

Business Transaction Account:

Opening balance	\$7,843.52
Deposits:	\$1225.00
Payments: Transfer to debit acc.	\$2,500.00
Closing balance 31/12	\$6,568.52



**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING**

Debit Account	
Opening balance	\$1,264.59
Deposits - transfers	\$5,500.00
	\$350.00
	\$85.00
Payments: ST postage	
AJG Insurance	\$69.36
Christmas party	\$559.63
Regalia Postage	\$1,548.00
CMC CUS rego	\$2,706.47
Closing balance 31/12	\$125.00
	\$1,119.13
Total Cash in Bank	\$84,604.84

Moved accepted Rod Pringle, seconded Graham Wells. Carried.

Secretary's Report: Graham Wells reported correspondence:

Incoming:

- Email from Colin Dodds re HVS/CUS/ Club membership
- Magazines: Mascot.

Outgoing:

- M.A., CMC, RMS notified of changes to President & Club Registrar.

Coming Events:

- Les Payne advised proposed Cars & Coffee planned for January 16th deferred until late January or February due to current Covid situation.
- January 28/29th HSRCAs at Wakefield Park
- Saturday, February 5th. Fish & Chip Run to Woy Woy. Avis Fowler advised this may be cancelled due to Covid
- Sunday, February 27th Drive to Grey Gums. Contact Les Payne
- March TBA breakfast Run
- Monday April 11th HSRCAs at SMP
- Saturday, April 23rd. SCCA Supersprint
- April 30th to May 1st. Weekend away. Details TBA
- Sunday, May 15th Picton Run. Contact Paul Barbara.
This is also National Motoring Heritage Day.
- Sunday, 14th August. Shannons Day
- September 9/11 HSRCAs at Wakefield Park
- Sunday, September 11th. All British Display Day.
- December 2/4 HSRCAs at SMP.

Barry Cockayne asked that the HSRCAs events be added to the list. See above.

Motorsport Aust. & CMC: Barry Cockayne advised nothing to report.



MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING

Membership: Ross Reichardt reported 4 new member applications plus 2 carried over from last month & 6 applications from members with lapsed memberships.

New Members:

- Anthony Petrovich from Concord West, Morris 850
- Wayne Baston & Kristy Ellul from Pitt Town, Holden HR Special
- Brendan Moore from Baulkham Hills, 1978 Leyland Mini.
- Anthony Breuer from Watsons Bay, 1956 MG A
- Wendy Carter from Cambewarra, 1958 AH Sprite.
- Anke Malaure from Blaxland, 1967 Morris Minimatic.

Lapsed Members:

- Mark Power from Wentworthville, 1977 MG Midget.
- Damon Smith from Turramurra, BMW 2002
- John Attygalle from Dural, Mercedes 190SL & 1958 MG A
- Ben Solomon from Glenorie, 1978 Holden HZ.
- Victor Sultana from Annangrove, 1970 Ford Ranchero
- Romy Waring from Dural
- Anthony Waring from Dural, Mercedes 190SL, Ferrari Dino, 1966 Daimler 2.5.

Moved that these all be accepted Ross Reichardt, seconded Les Payne. Carried.

Regalia: Avis Fowler reported.

- Three Christmas packages returned. We need to check the address for these members.
- We have some excess packages. Avis will check how many so we can decide what to do with them.

Sprite Torque: Greg Holden advised that we need some input for the magazine. Members are encouraged to write small articles on cars they have owned to add interest.

- Rod Pringle will write an article on Beyond Blue.
- Graham Wells advised he is writing an article.

Web-site: Ross Reichardt advised that Rob Howes asked him to set up the site to follow page hits. This was done two days ago.

Facebook: Harley Pringle advised that we have 775 members. Most input is members restoring cars, selling cars, looking for technical information. Some members are organising personal runs in their local area.

HUS/CUS registration: Greg Holden reported.

- 105 cars processed in December; 6 cars are on CUS and 2 moving to CUS. Of these 38 cars are Sprites or Midgets with 4 on CUS.
- It appears we should have 327 cars on HUS or CUS. To date we have processed 32% of them.
- All of the cars have been processed with Rego details, along with three low resolution photos uploaded into a database.

Most members whose cars were inspected appear to be in agreement with the guidelines we are applying to comply with the regulations.

Greg sent out a draft of the guidelines today for comment by Committee members.



MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING

When we are happy with these they can be circulated to members with the proviso that they may need to be changed from time to time due to regulatory changes. Rod Pringle commented on checking non-marque cars. It will be up to the member to prove that these cars are compliant.

Barry Cockayne noted that HVS item 9 in the guidelines appears in conflict with CVS item 4.

Barry Cockayne moved "That the draft guidelines as submitted, but subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed as above, be adopted in the interim as the Club's conditions related to HVS/ CVS registration, all subject however to any further directions or advice from the CMC or RMS." Seconded Greg Holden. Carried.

Memberships:

There was a discussion on new members coming into the Club, particularly those with non-marque cars. What are their reasons for joining? Do they show/not show any interest in the Club & activities. We need to put something together for next meeting. Committee members to send ideas to Greg Holden by Tuesday 25th.

Barry Cockayne commented that we need to define clear guidelines on non-marque cars.

Ross Reichardt commented that we need to clearly define what is expected of members & when they can drive their cars on HVS/ CVS.

Rod Pringle commented that we need to get more involved in why people want to join the Club & whether they have any association with the Club.

Avis Fowler suggested that maybe we should have a period of membership before new members can put a car on Conditional Registration. There are other clubs that do this.

Renewal of Lapsed Membership:

The Committee considered the sequence of matters related to the membership of Mr Moustaffa Zreika, whose membership had elapsed. The matter had been the subject of enquiry by Email to Committee Members, the result of which the membership had been declined.

The Committee resolved that-

- i) Mr Zreika's membership re-application be approved.
- ii) The Committee in the future, not deal with Membership Applications or re-applications by email and that such matters be referred to the next practical formal Committee Meeting, so as to avoid the potential of the distribution of inadequate information and to ensure that it is received by all Committee Members.

General Business:

-Rod Pringle asked how the BBQ trailer was progressing. Greg Holden gave an update on work to date.

Meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

Next committee meeting is February 8 th, 2022 at 7.30 pm. Venue TBA. Zoom or The Meeting Room, The Hills Club, 2-6 Jenner St. Baulkham Hills





Historic Vehicle Scheme Guidelines

The Club has been benefiting from an extraordinary 30 plus years of administration of the Club's Conditional Registration process by our Sprite/Midget technical guru and Life Member Colin Dodds.

Colin over a year ago, announced his intended retirement from the role, and that retirement duly happened in November 2021.

Accordingly, the responsibility for administering the Conditional Registration process has had to pass to others, and a 'sub-Committee' led by President Greg Holden, with assistance primarily from Les Payne and Avis Fowler took on the responsibility. As part of an overall review of the process and so as to enable all members to have an understanding of it, the sub committee prepared a listing of accessories, options and modifications that were considered pertinent to the process, particularly as they affect our Sprites and Midgets.

That list was considered by the General Committee at its most recent meeting (see meeting Minutes elsewhere in this magazine), and was adopted as the interim conditions for our Club Rego.

That means that the list could change as experience and needs evolve, as the responsible Government Department now Road and Maritime Services (RMS) might direct, or as the Council of Motoring Clubs (CMC) our representative body re such matters, might advise.

As most would be aware, the Club Rego process is subject to amongst other things, the RMS provisions in its documents as follows -

- The*Historic Vehicle Scheme period options, accessories and safety items - see at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/topics/vehicle-registration/how-to/historic-vehicles/period-options-accessories>

That generally refers to the options and accessories that were available 'in the day' (being a 3-year window of the build date) for our cars and relates to the 'Historic Vehicle Scheme (HVS) for vehicles older than 30 years or more.

The CMC has advised that this list of options is to be amended by the RMS in the reasonably near future, and the CMC is lobbying for acceptance of more relevant options.

- And, the 'Vehicle Standards Information' in (VSI) version No 6.

This relates to modifications to ALL light vehicles as defined, irrespective of being specifically 'Historic Vehicles' and which can be viewed at -

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/RMS-13.464-Light-vehicle-modifications-Vehicle-Standards-Information-No-6-November-2013.pdf>

If a vehicle does not comply with the HVS conditions it, subject to the VSI provisions, could be eligible for our Club Rego under the Classic Vehicle Scheme (CVS). That was developed more particularly for modified vehicles eg 'Hot Rods', early Holdens with Small Block Chev V8s, etc.

To be considered for the CVS, the Club requires amongst other things a certification by an Authorised Inspector, ie a 'Blue Slip', at what is considered to be a reasonable 'one off' fee. The vehicle will then be accepted for Club Rego.





Historic Vehicle Scheme Guidelines

The Sub-Committee has interpreted those documents as they relate to our Sprites and Midgets in particular, and by necessity to known cases related to the numerous 'Associate' cars which enjoy our Club Rego scheme.

It is therefore provided as general information for members, and with an invitation for comment on its relevance etc.

The Committee.

Sprite Car Club of Australia and HVS registration - 2022

HVS registration is in general terms for standard vehicles with allowable modifications and period accessories. This is a guide for SCCA HVS or CSU plated cars and can be amended through the agreement of the committee, at any time as rules change or different accessories are encountered.

Allowable accessories on HVS registration,

1. Weber carburettors and SUs of increased size, and tuning kits
2. No greater than 25mm wider rims
3. Modified exhaust including and extractors
4. Period Driving Lights
5. Lowering of up to 25mm but not raised
6. Bolt on shock absorbers fitted to original chassis mounting
7. Motor upgrade up to 20% increase of the same family.

Sprites and Midgets that were produced with a 948 can move to a 1100 engine (20% increase would be 189.6)

Sprites and Midgets that were produced with a 1100 can move to a 1275 engine (20% increase would be 220)

8. Rollover protection bars in open vehicles as long as they do not protrude into passenger space.

9. Replica vehicles ie standard Ford Falcon to look like a GT only if all components are changed.

10. Fitting of a V8 engine when the same make and model was also produced in a 6 cylinder version. The V8 can only be an engine capacity that was available. (E:G 202 Holden to a 253 or 308, it could not be fitted with a 350 Chev, (except where such was an original option, eg HQ,HJ) only if all components are changed.

11. Fitting Sebring or other period fronts and Hard Tops to Midgets and Sprites allowed as long as it is bolt on and off. No cutting or welding.

12. Must have original gearbox

Accessories that move you to CVS registration

1. Wider than 25mm rims
2. Tyre diameter of increase greater than 7%
3. LED spotlights and LED headlamps with original reflectors
4. Full harness seat belts (fitted by a qualified Engineer and certificate supplied)
5. The removal of part or all of the Original windscreen
6. Any change away from the seat fitted to the vehicle when new
7. Modification to firewall to allow carby change
8. Roll bars in sedans and must be certified
9. Any chassis or body modifications to allow fibreglass panels to be fitted. (with the exception of bolt on panels)

This is compiled in conjunction with USI 6 and Transport NSW HVS Period Options Draft Documents
SCCA Effective 11th January, 2022





UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates:

Event Details:

5th Feb

Fish and Chips run to Woy Woy via Wisemans Ferry. Arrive 2pm for 2.30pm Saturday start, from Mcdonalds at McGraths Hill. Plan to arrive at Woy Woy around 4.30pm. For further information contact Rod 0459545956

27th Feb

Drive to Grey gums on the Putty road Start at Mcdonalds at McGraths Hill 9.45 for 10 am start. Note from Colo Heights it is 150 kms return with no fuel stops. Please check your fuel. For further information contact Les Payne 0415826650

Mar

Breakfast Run to Penrith arrive from 9am For further information contact Avis 0412051594

27th Mar

CSCA supersprint Wakefield park organised by the Lotus Club

23rd Apr

CSCA supersprint SMSP south circuit organised by the Sprite Car Club of Australia For further information contact David Baigent 0407137776

30th Apr – 1st May

Weekend to Cowra, travel the back roads to Cowra, organise your own accommodation Start is Lithgow Tourist information 10.30am For further information contact Glenn Palfrey

15th May

Run to Picton area, start at Wallacia 10.30am For further information contact Paul Barbara

25th June

CSCA supersprint Pheasant wood organised by MG Newcastle

13th Aug

CSCA supersprint SMSP Gardner circuit organised by the Morgan Club

27th Aug

CSCA supersprint Pheasants wood organised by MG Sydney

9th – 11th Sept

HSRCA at Wakefield

11th Sept

All British Day

23rd Oct

CSCA supersprint SMSP north circuit organised by the Jaguar club

2nd – 4th Dec

HSRCA at SMP





The Famous Keller Stationary Engine by Greg Holden

Some of you may know the wide and varied interest in anything Engine related by both Leah and Greg

Over the years we have picked up many interesting machines and engines and the last one to be picked up was a Keller Stationary Engine that was build from 1907 through to the start of the First World War. This engine was collected by a very dedicated man who had recently passed away. It had many components that had seized up and a few bits missing. My mate had already started the restoration process by making a new rocker arm to replace the cracked and re-welded one. Now the new one looks just like the old one and is a credit to his workmanship as a boiler maker/ Fitter and turner.

Once this was underway, I undertook to release the sticky valves and bob weights and gears etc. the magneto would not move and almost all components needed attention. While undoing the 4 head bolts, two were stuck and sheared off in the main casting. In short, most bits were rooted. Ray came up while I was shot with COVID, although we did not know I had it at that stage, for two days we toiled with the engine and on Sunday morning at around 7.15am we tried to start the beast and, holly smokes, it hit and farted and let out a massive bang and all the dogs in Wilberforce started howling.

We jumped with excitement at the joy of it firing. Lucky the neighbours are nice, but it did get a quick cup of coffee from Leah who came up to investigate the noise. For the next 5 hours we refined the process and had the old girl running again.

The fruits of our labour were rewarded. Now, what do you do with such a machine. First of all it needed to look right and run like it used too, I called on a fabricator I use for work to make a new fuel tank, but it needed to look right and if you saw it, you would not know it was new, it looks perfect.

We do need to do a little more work to get it running sweetly and put it back to its old working days.

This machine could have pumped water from the Bogan River west of Bourke or cut chaff in Broken Hill, back in the day this mechanical innovation saved many hours of hard work in the field. It could have powered a generator to bring lights to a new homestead West of Collarenebri or Walgett for that matter.

It will, in time have a veranda to live under and from time to time we will kick it in the guts and get it rubbing again. We may even attend a Hit & Miss Rally and wear the old bib and brace and Leah can sit undercover knitting my latest throw rug while Bruce and Scotty walk past mocking Ray and I.

I thank Colin for negotiating the sale and me mate Ray for helping getting it running.

A Mercedes and a Keller, who would have picked it

I made a list of all the cars I have owned or leased over 62 years of driving. I can remember 35 cars ranging in size from a little 850cc Renault Dauphine Gordini to a 289ci Ford Fairmont.

But what was my favourite? I have to confess it was not a Sprite.

On 2-2-1965 Renault homologated the R1134 R8 Gordini. This car was based on the R8 sedan but designed for competition. The engine was 1108 cc with an alloy cross-flow hemi head, a special cam grind, two twin choke 40 mm side draft Solex carburettors & a tuned exhaust system. It was listed as developing 90 bhp at 6,500 rpm and was so well balanced that it would rev freely to 8,000 rpm. It had no rev limiter so you had to be careful or it would spin off the tachometer.

A four speed close ratio gearbox, special springs, a four shock absorber rear end, four wheel power boosted disc brakes and bigger headlights finished the deal. It came in one colour, French Racing Blue. With a weight of just over 700kg, it was possibly the most potent small production sedan available at the time.

Later in 1965, Renault Australia imported 30 cars. Sales were limited to buyers with full competition licences. They were targeting both circuit racing and rallying. A number ended up as rally cars. At the time I was pit crewing for Dave Frazer who was sponsored by Renno Motors & Bernie Breen who had the Sprite that I currently own. Dave managed to get one of the cars and ran it in the 1966 Production Touring Championship.

The only modification we did from factory was to remove the alloy spacer blocks from under the rear springs which dropped the rear about 2cm and gave a few degrees of negative camber. Dyno tuning showed that the factory engine

settings were spot on. We went one range cooler on plugs for sprint races but they were too cold for road running. It was very competitive against Morris Coopers and Lotus Cortinas with Dave recording a number of class wins and setting a number of class lap records.

At the end of 1966, I had finished University & had well-paying job. I decided I wanted a Gordini but I only had a club licence. A friend's father worked for Renault Australia so I sought his help. At the beginning of July 1967, I got a phone call to say an R8 Gordini was being sent to Peter Donnelly at Sentinel Motors, who was racing one, and it had my name on it. I paid \$2,300 for it on 12-6-67. It had engine number 1502 and had few thousand miles on the speedometer. For comparison, in 1967 a Cooper S was \$2,300, a HR Holden Special was \$1,800. I was never told the history of this car but I suspect it was a Renault Australia publicity or test car which was moved on at the end of the financial year.



In 1967 Dave Frazer ran in the Production Touring Championship & competed in the Gallagher 500 with Bernie as co-driver, finishing 5th in class B after a very frustrating week-end with residual pressure not letting the brakes come off fully. We disconnected the power booster during the race. I used my car as transport to race meetings & it was the unofficial backup car.

My Favourite Car

back up car but fortunately we never needed to use any bits from it. I ran my car in a few club events & hill-climbs. My best result was at Amaroo Hill in 1968 where I came second by 0.03 seconds to an experienced race driver in a Cooper S and beat one of the new 1255cc R1135 Gordinis.

The Gordini was a very fast road car. At Bathurst Dave Frazer was timed at 113mph on Conrod Straight. Under fast driving conditions it was not very economical & I recorded as low as 20 mpg at times. Dave and Bernie ran the Sprite in the 1967 Rothmans 12 hour race. With a friend who had raced a Renault, I left Sydney after dinner on Friday night and had breakfast in Surfers Paradise in time to watch practice. Its only problem was in traffic. It needed a few revs and then slip the clutch to get it moving and too long at idle would fuel up the plugs. You had to hope for a gap in the traffic every now and then so you could run it to about 7,000 rpm and clear everything out. If not, the only choice was to stop and change plugs. I always kept a set of warmer plugs in the car for urgent traffic stops.

Early in 1969 I moved to Mosman and I was working at Kensington. The run across the Harbour Bridge and through the City at peak times became a problem and I decided I needed a more traffic friendly car. At this time I had put about 20,000 relatively trouble free miles on the car. A Renault dealer in Miranda wanted the car to put it on display so I swapped him for a 1967, 289ci XR Ford Fairmont. In later years I watched for the car at Renault club days and cars shows but never saw it again. This was a fabulous, rare little car and I certainly wish I still had it today.

Graham Wells

My First Car

Before starting in this story, first I will give a bit of relevant background. Both my parents were children of English migrants who came to Australia around the start of World War 1. My father was born in 1916, my mother in 1919. They grew up during the depression. My father left school at the end of primary school & worked in odd jobs to survive. In the late 1930 he got a job in a service station in Lidcombe & then joined the army when WW2 started.

I was born in 1942 when my father was on overseas duty. During the war my mother & I lived with my Nana in Auburn. When the war ended my father got a job as a printing mechanic with the Sun newspaper & repaired cars in his spare time. This started my interest and I grew up as the helper who cleaned parts and leant a pair of hands on heavy jobs.



We never had much money so from age 14 onwards I had a number of after school and week-end jobs. One of these was with E.S. (Stan) Ross Spare parts in Auburn. I stocked shelves & filled orders for nearby garages and repair shops. Behind E.S. Ross was a Repco engine building shop owned by Barry Rogers. I watched many times as they built Repco reconditioned engines.



My First Car

I leaned to drive in a 1948 Vauxhall 6 owned by my father and got my licence as soon as I turned 17 in 1959. I had gained my Leaving Certificate at the end of 1958. Jobs were scarce but I managed to get a NSW Govt. cadetship to work at Sydney University. Under these cadetships one was allowed to attend University part-time and the University paid my fees. I had saved a bit over 100 pounds from my odd jobs so I decided to buy a car. Cars were a bit scarce in the fifties and relatively expensive. I only earned a few pounds a week.

With my father's help I found a 1948 Morris 8/40 roadster. It had faded pale blue paintwork, torn upholstery and a smoky engine. I paid 90 pounds for it. It was an Australian assembled car and had a 918 cc side valve engine which produced a whopping 29 bhp, a four speed box & 6V Lucas electrics.

Barry Rogers rebored the engine, shaved the head and helped me rebuild the motor. This took most of my savings. We rubbed back the crappy blue paint and as we did not have a spray gun we hand painted it with red acrylic paint, hand cut out all the brush marks and imperfections, then polished it. My mother was a milliner so she made new red vinyl covers for the seats and helped me re-upholster the cars. I re-bushed all the suspension. The Morris 8 had a declared top speed of 58 mph. Downhill with a tailwind it would show 70 mph on the speedo. It was a very reliable little car but it had one quirky problem. The S.U. petrol pump was mounted on the firewall just above the exhaust manifold. When it was hot and going up-hill the pump used to overheat and vapour lock. Opening the driver's door then slamming it shut would sometimes break the lock but most time it

meant stopping and pouring some water from the full container always kept in the car over the pump. Once the pump cooled it would start and proceed happily on its way.

I kept the car for about three years and then traded it in on a Morris Major, Series 2 which I brought up to MG specs and kept for about 6 years.

Graham Wells.

FibreFrog: the MK1 Sprite returns !



Peter Simpson compares and contrasts the original steel-bodied Mk1 Sprite with the Frogeye Car Company's glass-fibre Healey Frogeye.

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Practical Classics, July 1989

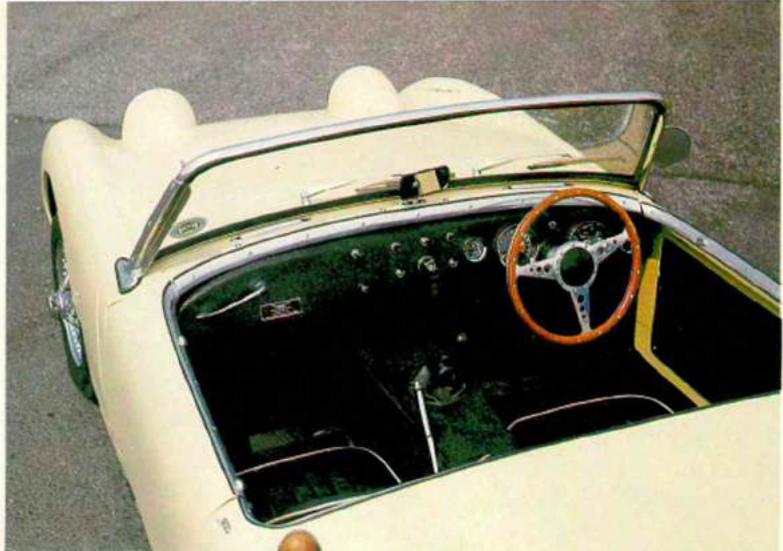
I must admit that initially the idea of a steel chassised, glass fibre bodied Mk1 Sprite 'lookalike', available either in road-ready or, more usually, kit form didn't appeal one bit. I had in my mind the popular image of a kit-car with attendant problems of rough castings, doors and bootlids that don't fit and rattles everywhere. It also seemed a little pointless and somehow dishonest to try to make a car that really wasn't a 'frog' at all look like one.

My interest in the project, however, was stirred when I heard that Geoffrey Healey, Donald's son who worked with Donald on the original Sprites, had given the Frogeye Car Company's product his seal of approval and allowed the completed cars to bear the name Healey. If the Healey family were willing to have their name connected with the car, it had to have something! I decided therefore to try to arrange a test-drive of the new car so I could judge for myself just what it was like. We also thought it would be fun and interesting to compare the 'fibrefrog' with a good example of the original car so that we could see for sure just how much of the character and sheer driving fun that was such a hallmark of the Mk1 Sprite had been passed on.

To help in this awesome task, I called on John Mead, National Concours Secretary and South Western Centre Director of the Austin Healey Club and all-round Frogeye 'nut', to give an expert opinion. Frankly I was expecting John as someone who, in his own words, 'likes to see things correct on Sprites' to be none-too impressed by the idea of a 'replica'. Imagine my surprise then, when I rang Keith Brading at the Frogeye Car Company, to learn that John had already seen and driven the car, been instrumental in gaining the car acceptance by the Austin-Healey Club (separate concours and competition classes have just been set up for Healey Frogeyes) and was to visit the factory the following day! By this stage I was pretty sure that the product must be something rather interesting and certainly worthy of investigation.

Before going on to how the cars compared, a little background to the Frogeye Car Company might be interesting. Keith Brading has been interested and involved with small Healeys for many years and owned one that, like so many, needed extensive body and structural repairs. Five further cars were also obtained, through Keith's motor trade business, all good mechanically but 'sadly lacking' bodily (this was 1981/82 and full restoration was still very uneconomic) for use as spares. Looking at his ragged collection, Keith came up with the idea for a completely new glassfibre bodysell/steel chassis assembly, into which the mechanical components of any (not just Mk1) rusted out Sprite or Midget could be installed. At the same time, a number of improvements over the original could be incorporated into the design. Production of the Sprite Restoration Assembly, as the kit became known, was started in April 1985. At first Keith had a partner, a skilled mould-maker named Donald Finlay, who made the initial moulds but moved on to pastures new soon after production started.

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An all-new steel chassis was designed to fit the existing floorpan so that, once the car was built, the chassis was invisible from on top. The first six shells were built in sections which were then joined together to form the complete unit.

How many steel Sprites can you do this on? Keith Brading demonstrating the shell's strength.



Despite some subtle changes and much more comfortable seats the Healey Frogeye cockpit retains all the Mk1 Sprites' character. Notice the Healey approval plate on the nearside dash.

All the time little improvements were being made to things such as the way in which the door hinges fitted, how the body and floorpan joined, etc. etc., all with the aim of making the final product as good as possible. It's far easier, and cheaper, to remake individual parts of the moulding than the whole lot. Once the design was finalised a further mould was made and the first one-piece shell produced from that.

The first car was tested for about six months. Once the prototype was finally sorted, the company moved to their present premises where a full production set-up was arranged. The complete car idea developed from the restoration assembly. To cut a very long story short, a prototype/demonstration model was built up and, when it was shown to the kit-car press,

Superb access to all things mechanical! What an improvement on the original rear-hinged arrangement.





Regalia



Sprite Car Club Hat



Long Sleeve Sprite Shirt



Sprite Car Club Jersey



Sprite Car Club Polo

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