

# October November 24

## **SPRITE ON**

### The newsletter of the Sprite Car Club of Qld Inc



The Sprite Car Club of Queensland Inc is open to and welcomes owners & drivers of all vehicles. Our marque is Austin Healey Sprites, MG Midgets and all of their derivatives.



**Terry Burton with his People's Choice Sprite and raffle goodies**

# Club Information

## Website

webadmin@spritecarclub.com  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1737942263157816/7>

## Correspondence

All correspondence is to be address to The Secretary: By mail:  
Sprite Car Club of Qld Inc,  
PO Box 82  
Morningside. Qld. 4170  
By email: [secretary@spritecarclub.com](mailto:secretary@spritecarclub.com)

## Meetings

Meetings are held the second Friday of each month 8pm, normally at The Mustang Rooms, Jean Howie Drive, Morningside. and other locations as scheduled. Check the calendar for exact dates and locations.  
<https://www.spritecarclub.com/about-us/>

## Membership

### Joining Fee:

New members pay a joining fee of \$100.00 paid pro rata depending on the date of joining. This fee includes the joining fee, annual membership fee for all family members residing at the same address up to May, and 2 name badges.

### Types of membership -

Full membership is for current owners of Sprites &/or Midgets.

Associate membership is for all others.

### Annual membership:

Continuing members pay an annual membership fee which is currently \$72.00 and is payable in May of each year. This fee includes all family members who reside at the same address.

## Club Banking

Details for direct deposits for membership fees, payments for events, purchase of regalia, etc: BSB: 034 002

Account Number: 613033

Account name: Sprite Car Club of Qld Inc

NOTE: Please use your surname, initial and reason for payment as the reference when making a payment.

## Advertising

Members may place "For Sale" or "Wanted" ads in the Classifieds section at no charge. Classified ads will be removed automatically after a 3-month period, unless the editor is notified to either delete or extend the advertising period. Ads should be emailed to the newsletter editor. Contact the newsletter editor for further information. For paid commercial advertising please contact the Treasurer.

## Newsletter contributions

The cut-off date for contributions for the next newsletter is the 6th of each second month, starting December 2023, but check with the Editor for late inclusion possibilities. **Please send articles in Word**

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**PRESIDENT**

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**VICE PRESIDENT**

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**TREASURER**

Matt Creagh  
Club email: treasurer@spritecarclub.com  
Home phone: 3053 2350



**SECRETARY**

David Chapman  
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Mobile: 0418 887 199



**Club Captain (Temporary)**

David Chapman  
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**Membership Managers**

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**Facebook and Email Manager**

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**Gold Coast Chapter Representative**

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**Sunshine Coast Chapter Representative**

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# President's Report

Hello Members,

Hope you are all well. In the last couple of months we had some major events in our Club calendar. Sprite Expo 2024 in August and All British Day 2024 in September. I hope the members that went along to these events had a great time. Thank you for supporting the Club

We have now reached that exciting time of our yearly Club calendar where some big decisions will need to be made at our Club AGM. I would like to encourage all members to come along to make this a successful night in appointing a new Committee for our Club. All of the current Committee members will be stepping down from their roles and several positions will be available for new nomination. Any members that have thought about becoming a Committee member now will be a good opportunity to come forward and offer fresh ideas for the 2025 Club year.

The last major Club event for the 2024 year will be the annual Club Christmas Party. The event has been booked for Sunday 8th December for a Christmas lunch at the Tingalpa Hotel. We have used this venue before with a good response from members that attended the 50th Club dinner. More details will be sent out regarding the event in the next couple of months.

This will be my last President report for the Club Newsletter. I will be stepping down from my role as Club President at the Club AGM and I am not sure, at this point, if I will be renominating for the position. The role of President can be a very thankless volunteer position at times. In the last 3 years of being in the role I can say I have had some of the highest of highs and lowest of lows. I have always tried to do the right thing by The Sprite Club of QLD and it's members. Unfortunately, there have been a very small amount of members and Committee members that I feel have had no respect for me while I have been in the President's role and have undermined my decision making at every opportunity they get, these same members have also felt that they can do what ever they want and not follow direction or simple rules set out by myself and the Club Committee. There are so many things that go on behind the scenes of the Club that members sometimes are not aware of.

There are members that give a lot of time, effort and financial support to make sure that the Club runs and events are successful as possible. They do this with minimal thanks because they actually care about The Sprite Car Club of QLD and want it to remain successful. I like to describe these members as givers and not takers from the Club. If I decide not to nominate for the President's role, I would like to wish the next member to step into the President's role all the best in taking the Club forward and making sure it continues to be successful. Lastly I would like to thank the Club Committee and the members that have supported and believed in me the last 3 years, I would not have got through without your full support.

This month's general meeting/AGM is back at the Mustang Room club house, there will be no food available before the meeting but there will be coffee and nibbles/cake available after the meeting for members. All members are invited to come along.

I look forward to catching up with you there or at the next Club event.

Thanks  
**Mark Gillman**  
**Club President**



# AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

<b>Meeting:</b>	Sprite Car Club of Qld Mustang Club Room – Jean Howie Drive	<b>Date:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Mark Gillman	<b>Minute Taker:</b>	David Chapman
<b>Present:</b>	As per Attendance Book – 13 total members attended – Michael Dix left meeting sick leaving 12 members		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Neville M, Walter W, Michael O, Chris and Kim B, Alec R		
<b>Next Meeting Date:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2024		
<b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b>	No matters arising. Minutes for January meeting accepted by Karen Gordon		

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>By whom</b>
<b>President's Report</b>	Mark welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He discussed the Expo under General Business	Mark G
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	Matt went to see the auditor and had a complete audit 2 days later. Matt has already picked up the information and handed copies to the President and Secretary and copies will be available at the AGM on 11 <sup>th</sup> October. The main expenses for the month was for purchase of caps for regalia and cost of PO box at Morning-side and bank charges.  If anyone requires any information regarding the club's financial position, please contact the treasurer.  Accepted by Miles	Matt C
<b>Secretary's Report</b>	Mail received: 3 x Bank Statements 2 x Goblin magazines 1 x return to sender of membership card – Terry Burton 1 x Motorsport 50 <sup>th</sup> Year certificate celebration for the Sprite Club 1 x email from Moreton Shire Council confirming Pelican Park for Sprite expo.	David C

Topic	Information	By whom
<b>Membership</b>	<p>Keith advised there were 105 members and there are still 4 members still yet to pay and 3 have paid twice. There are 5 new members since the last meeting:-</p> <p>Paul &amp; Natalie Gyetvay John &amp; Donna Hardy Fin &amp; Jodie Lordan Reece &amp; Amie Moir Wayne &amp; Dina Streathfield</p> <p>John attended our meeting. His car has been sitting for a number of years, but he has now got it going. Unfortunately, the head gasket went on it the other day.</p>	Keith G
<b>Club Captain Report</b>	Not applicable	
<b>Sunshine Coast Chapter</b>	The meeting was at the Beerwah Tavern. It was a good night. 18 members attended. Next meeting Beachmere Hotel.	Karen
<b>Gold Coast Chapter</b>	Meeting held at the Hope Island Tavern. 8 members attended. Next meeting at Nerang Hotel next week. Deb has a run on Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> August. Breakfast run at Mt Tamborine starting at Yatala Pies at 7.15am. Information available from Karen on email.	Mark
<b>Facebook / Email</b>	No change. All good	Karen
<b>Website</b>	<p>All okay from Mike. New computers all good except with the one with Keith. Mike to check it out as both computers are the same. Keith cannot create email account and it won't open photos.</p> <p>David suggested we get Geeks 2 U out to rectify the problem.</p>	Mike D
<b>Regalia</b>	Bought new caps as there were only 3 left in stock. Purchase price has increased and new caps will be sold for \$28.	Karen G
<b>Newsletter</b>	All good. Expo results will be in the next newsletter	Carole C



## GENERAL BUSINESS

<b>General Business</b>	<p><b>Sprite Expo – Pelican Park Clontarf:</b> Commence at 8.30 am. Clive Coffee van will be there around 7.30am. Matt needs 4 volunteers to help with raffle tickets, regalia, the gate and the BBQ. Gates open at 7.00am. Matt has 8 bottles of wine as prizes as well as donations by Gary (Gold Coast) and Mark Gillman.</p> <p><b>All British Day – September:</b> Club to pay \$20 entry fee. Mark Gillman unavailable and we need a volunteer to co-ordinate the meeting point and payment.</p> <p><b>Annual General Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> October:</b> It will be good to see as many members as possible at this meeting. All positions are up for nomination.</p>	Mark G
<b>Raffle Drawn</b>	No Raffles	<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> Certain financial information has not been disclosed as this newsletter is accessible to the public via the website. This information can be provided to club members by request to the treasurer.</p>
<b>Meeting Closed</b>	8.04 pm	

“I have sighted this document and believe it is a true and accurate record of the meeting”.

Signed:



## Midweek Run - July 29

Lovely day for a midweek run: coffee first then up to Rod's place to check out the '28 Chev (nice shed by the way). Then off to Dayboro for lunch. Great company and lots of conversation. Thank you Mike Millard for organising this run.





# Sprite Expo 2024 - August 11

This was held at Pelican Park, Clontarf on August 11. The weather was good this time. A great day with prizes given and a very large raffle held. Thank you to all who donated for the raffle. Results are printed but the photos come first.







<b>Class</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Rego..</b>	<b>Owner.....</b>	<b>Comments.....</b>
<b>Morris Minors &amp; Majors</b>	Green	S16851	Neville Jesman	Morris Major (1 of 3 present). + 4 Morris Minors
<b>Mini</b>	Blue	MK1 01	Peter Poulton	Mini Cooper. (1 of 5 early cars & 3 modern cars present)
<b>Big Healeys</b>				No cars in attendance, but Expo date was not published in their magazine. Try again in 2025.
<b>Invited Cars</b>				None in attendance, but there was a nice Escort in the carpark near us.
<b>Competition cars</b>	Blue	ATR46	Alex Robertson	Mk 3 Midget. (1 of 2 cars present)
<b>Spridgets under restoration</b>				None in attendance.
<b>Mk 4 Sprites/ Mk 3 Midgets. (Including all later models)</b>	Red	OMG 73	Shirley Hopcraft	Round arch Midget. (1 of 5 cars present)
<b>Mk 3 Sprites/ Mk 2 Midgets</b>	Red	OMY673	Alan Goode	Mk 3A Sprite. (1 of 2 cars present)
<b>Mk 2 Sprites/ Mk 1 Midgets</b>	White	MG 1962	Carole Cooke	Mk 1 Midget. (1 of 4 cars present) 1 MG & 3 Sprite
<b>Mk 1 Sprites</b>	Red	AHS 60	Anita Parkin	Bugeye. (1 of 5 cars present)
<b>President's choice</b>	Red	SPR 02	Andrew & Jane Felton	Mk2A Sprite.
<b>Peoples' choice</b>	Red	AHS 062	Terry Burton	(Spridgets only eligible in this category)
<b>Ladies' choice</b>	White	772 IF 8	Tony Harris	Morris Major. (1 of 2 cars present)

**Numbers of Sprite Club cars in attendance.**

Bugeyes 5

Mk 2 Sprite/ Mk 1 Midget 4

Mk 3 Sprite/ Mk 2 Midget 2

Mk 4 Sprite/ Mk 3 Midget 5

TOTAL

16

**Invited cars present.**

Morris cars

7

Mini cars

8

Total number of judged cars

31



**LET'S MAKE SPRITE EXPO GREAT AGAIN!!!**

As a united group of Club members, let us all aim high for at least 50 Sprite Club cars and 25 or more invited cars to be at our 2025 Sprite Expo. Let's build some excitement for the premier event in our calendar again and make a personal commitment to be there next year! Should we consider a venue change with better access to toilets? It is great to see the constantly higher standards of presentation & restoration of our cars each year.

***Yours Spritely, Alex Robertson.***





# Gold Coast Chapter Run - August 25

This run was organised by Debbie and Don and we met at Yatala Pies before a run to the Tamborine Diner for breakfast. At the Diner we met up with new members Finn & Jodie Lordon, who were in their Sprite, with the white stripe it was a match to Gary Stevens Lenham MG Midget. Also on the Run were Mark, Jeanette and Sephora Gillman and Carole Cooke. We all enjoyed our breakfast there.

Thank you Debbie and Don



## Coming Events

11th Club Meeting and AGM, Mustang club room, Jean Howie Drive Morningside  
15th Sunshine Coast Dinner, 6pm Burpengary Tavern  
16th Gold Coast Dinner, Helensvale Tavern  
23rd Midweek Run, details to follow. (Mike Millard organizer)

### NOVEMBER

5th Wide Bay Monthly Meet up - Contact Alex Robertson for details  
8th Club Dinner, venue to be advised  
13th Gold Coast Dinner, Hope Island Tavern  
19th Sunshine Coast Dinner, 6pm Glasshouse Tavern

### DECEMBER

3rd Wide Bay Monthly Meet up - Contact Alex Robertson for details  
8th Club Christmas Party, Tingalpa Hotel, details to come  
13th Club Meeting, Mustang Room, Jean Howie Drive Morningside  
10th Sunshine Coast Dinner, 6pm Sundowner Hotel



# All British Day - September 9





# Ningi Classic Car Speed Shop

The test bench has many advantages

- Uneven firing can be identified indicating any significant areas of concern.
- Dwell angle can be set more accurately
- Actual advance curve can be graphed and modified.
- Vacuum advance can be tested.

It can handle 4, 6 or 8 cylinder distributors, with either positive or negative earth.

**Stuart Cutting** ABN 63923624160

0418547140, 8 Snowgum Crt, Ningi  
stuart.sjcutting@bigpond.com

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Distributor test bench for analysing distributor performance.

## Sprite Parts

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- Sprite Parts supplies parts to enthusiast's world wide
- Sprite Parts is, and wants to remain, a small specialist business
- Sprite Parts gives personal first-hand assistance and advice.

Contact me by phone or email me at any time for assistance with parts, prices, or technical information. You will receive a prompt reply.



We believe Sprite Parts is the only 5-Star spares supplier: ☆ Low overheads ☆ No discounts - everyone gets the same low trade price. ☆ No fancy facilities - just a compact workshop where you and your car are sure to get personal attention. ☆ Fast, friendly and efficient service. ☆ Open from 7am to 7pm, 7 days per week. Happy Spridgeting, and Avagoodyday  
Colin Dodds  
2 Parklea Close, Dural NSW 2158  
Ph 0414 789 263 Fax: 02 9651 6703  
Email - [Colin@SpriteParts.com.au](mailto:Colin@SpriteParts.com.au)



## Matt and Bron's Sprite Windscreen Woes

Bron and I drove down 1500 klms to the Victorian Sprite Nationals in mid March towing my red 1965 Sprite on a trailer borrowed from Nev Mansfield. We were attending the 4 day Pre - National event at Yackandandah 30 klms South of Wodonga. Got the car off the trailer and it was missing badly so I bought a set of spark plugs and as I was fitting them the real cause emerged - the lead from the distributor to the coil had come loose!

On the second day on my way for a 280 klm group tour I drove the Sprite 7 klms out of town and a passing car threw a stone to hit my "safety glass" windscreen making it hard to see through.

On driving back 7 k's I parked the car and when everyone arrived back in the afternoon I was put on to Bob Lomas who lived just out of town. I picked up a windscreen inside a frame which were both a bit damaged. So back at the motel it was discussed that I had Shannons Comprehensive Insurance and you can get a free windscreen yearly at no cost. So I took the Lomas' screen back to him. The fellow Victorians said to me that you will get the screen on insurance but not the windscreen rubbers (4 items).

I phoned Colin Dodds from Sprite Parts and he agreed to bring the new rubbers to the main event at Wodonga - which he did. The car sat on the trailer during the whole 4 day event and eventually the 1500 klm trip home. When I got home I phoned Shannons to register my damage. They said "go to O'Briens". I said I was going to another place called Moran Motor Glass nearby at Wakerley. They said "OK , You pay the bill and we will reimburse you (if it's not exorbitant)".

I phoned Moran and they said their autoclave oven was broken and would not be fixed for another 6 weeks. They make windscreens and the oven is the last process. So after 5 weeks I took the frame for them to fit the screen with my new rubbers. To visit the factory I drove down a laneway with tall grass growing out of pallets and other junkscattered about. I stopped at a door where the pallets had 100 broken windscreens as a result of their oven overheating at Christmas. Steptoe and Son come to mind.

The call came the next day that the screen was fitted in the frame and I went to pick it up and paid cash \$395. I asked Geoff to write on the invoice "paid cash" - which he did. He also said that O'Briens would have charged \$800. So I took it home and fitted the screen carefully by packing up the brackets completely with no gaps before tightening the 4 bolts. No cracked bottom corner of the windscreen the next day - success!

I had paid Sprite Parts \$171 by EFT after I got home from Victoria and \$395 cash for the screen. I emailed the 2 invoices to Shannons and a few days later they asked me to phone them. The operator asked if I had proof of payment. I said yes as the invoice said "paid cash". I went round and round 3 times and got a bit frustrated with the Indian. I asked to speak to his supervisor and got another Indian. He spoke better English and I said that he should phone Geoff at Moran and confirm the cash payment. He said to wait on hold while he phoned Moran. Two minutes later he confirmed that the claim would be paid so long as I had proof of paying Sprite Parts (which I did). It seems a common fraud attempt on insurance companies is to get a quote and then claim the one windscreen per year.

The windscreen is new, the car is running well and the lesson learned is that to pay cash and then claim on insurance can cause difficulties.



**Matt Creagh**

# Gold Coast Chapter Report

## August Dinner Meeting - August 14

Nine club members attended our August dinner including new member John Hardy. Welcome to the Club John. We thought of trying another new venue for this month and the Nerang RSL was selected for a first time visit. A couple of us have been before and with my RSL membership card we all received a members discount on the meals and drinks. This certainly helps a little with the cost of keeping a Sprite on the road these days !! Unknown to me as the organiser, the Club is under going a building expansion which reduced the car park capacity but attendees found some space in the shopping centre car park across the road. It just happened to be a wet and dark night for those unfamiliar with the area. We will make another night there when the extensions are completed to give it our tick of approval.

## September Meeting -September 18

After a couple of GC members had visited the Helensvale Tavern we all decided to give it a go for our September meeting. It is a fairly central location for members north and south of the coast and this was our first group meeting there. Eleven members attended with absences and apologies from Peter and Jo Fellows and Bruce and Sandra Roberts. Peter is still in recovery mode after a knee replacement but hopes to be back with us for the October meeting. Unfortunately Sandra has injured her leg ( two fractures to her lower leg) and was in the John Flynn hospital. We wish them both a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing them at our future dinners and outings. The food was a good standard and the prices also very reasonable but the wait time for the meals was a little too long. They apparently had a cook/chef call in sick at the last moment resulting in the delays. I guess we can't judge too hastily after only one visit. Our next meeting is scheduled to be at the Hope Island Tavern but as it has been closed for several months for renovations we are not sure if this will be available...we will wait and see.



Gary.



# GILLBERT SPARES

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## Specialising in A' Series

MARK: 0411 053 861  
PHIL: 0408 183 432

*SPRITE • MIDGET • MORRIS • AUSTIN*



**For Sale - Spridgets & Parts.**

Location : Hervey Bay.

Contact: **Kevin Sly 0410 124579.**

**For Sale: AH Sprite sized enclosed car trailer**

**PRICE REDUCTION: NOW JUST \$2K**

**Features:**

- tandem axle
- electric brakes
- seven pin round connector with seven pin flat adaptor
- 200AH AGM battery dated 10/6/21
- tyres dated 16th week, 2022
- 4000kg electric winch
- interior and exterior LED lights.
- registered

**Specs:**

- Tare: 800kg
- GVM: 1990kg
- car space dimensions:  
3360mm long x 1555mm wide x 1335mm high

Condition is suitable for immediate use. Last service including new bearings in 2022, less than 1,000km covered since then.

**Contact: Nick on 0411077155**



The MG Car Club Midget Register December Car of the Month will be my '62 Midget (Annie)



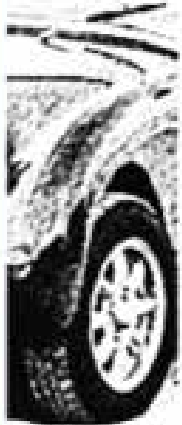


## Lionel Otto Instruments

124 Evans Rd., P.O. Box 9, Salisbury, 4107

P: 3277 3888 F: 3277 8520

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• We also service instruments from to-day vehicles



## Classic Car Clinic

Service. Restoration. Sales



### CLASSIC CAR CLINIC IS NOW OPEN

Classic Car Clinic is now open with all new facilities more space and of course our continued affection for all things classic Sprite. You'll be welcomed by some new faces and familiar ones too.

Should it help in getting back from the new location, courtesy transport can be provided and we can also offer a pick-up service

for your car too. We continue to operate during these times and we welcome your business and support. Please like us on Facebook and keep an eye on our feed for updates and invites to future events. Call us or email to make a booking and we look forward to seeing you and your car here soon.



37 Lemana Lane, Burleigh Heads, 4220

Our new phone number is 5659 1455

[info@classiccarclinic.com.au](mailto:info@classiccarclinic.com.au)

# Regalia



MENS POLO SHIRTS \$45 Sizes S – 5XL  
LADIES POLO SHIRTS \$45  
Sizes 8 - 18



UNISEX LONG SLEEVE POLO SHIRTS \$45  
SIZES SMALL TO 5XL  
COLORS – BLACK, YELLOW, NAVY, RED AND WHITE  
SUN PROTECTION SHIRT – UPF 50

MENS OUTDOOR LONG SLEEVE SHIRT \$85  
SIZE XXS-7XL  
LADIES OUTDOOR LONG SLEEVE SHIRT \$85 SIZE 8-24  
AVAILABLE IN GREEN, BLUE, SAND, NAVY AND BLACK  
UPF 50



BUCKET HATS \$25  
SIZES M/L AND L/XL

FLAT CAPS \$28.00



CAPS \$28.00 AVAILABLE IN BLACK OR MAROON AND GOLD



BEANIES \$15

KEY RINGS \$15



CAR FLAG \$20



GRILL  
BADGE \$35



CLOTH SEW ON BADGE \$10 AVAILABLE BLACK OR WHITE



50 YEAR GRILLE BADGE  
\$20



50 YEAR  
CLOTH GRILLE BADGE \$15

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE ANY REGALIA,  
PLEASE EMAIL ME AT [regalia@spritecarclub.com](mailto:regalia@spritecarclub.com)**



## Cars & Coffee Events - held monthly

View or bring your own muscle, classic, vintage, exotic, historic, rare and/or race cars and bikes. It is a great opportunity for like-minded enthusiasts to meet and enjoy a delicious cup of coffee and talk about all things motoring related. All types of cars and bikes are encouraged and welcome to join these family orientated events.

### BRISBANE

Coorparoo: 1st Saturday of each month, from 7:30am, Samios Foods, 37 Turbo Drive Coorparoo  
Taigum: 3rd Saturday of each month, from 6:30am, Taigum Square, 217 Beams Rd, Taigum.  
<https://www.carsandcoffeebrisbane.com/>

### BRISBANE NORTH & NORTH WEST

North Lakes: 3rd Saturday of each month, 7-9am 21 Torres Cres North Lakes <https://motoringdiary.com.au/event/cars-and-coffee-north-lakes/>  
Samford: 2nd Sunday of each month, from 7:30am, Shop 14, 19 Main Street, Samford Village  
<https://www.bgsclassiccars.com.au/carsandcoffee>

### SUNSHINE COAST

Coolum: 1st Saturday of each month, 7-10am at the German Bakehouse, 54 Junction Rd, Coolum Beach. (Also open next door for a \$5 entry fee is the private car collection of Frank Carroll and the Sir Henry Royce Foundation.) <https://www.facebook.com/carsandcoffeesunshinecoast/> <https://www.facebook.com/german-bakehousecoolumcafe/>

### GOLD COAST

**Monthly coffee catch is back at Ormeau on the LAST SUNDAY of the month.** Plenty of carparking and a great coffee kiosk right there in the carpark in the middle of it all. The cafe has gone through a complete renovation with plenty of seating and shaded areas.

Currumbin: 1st Sunday of each month, 8-11am, 639 Currumbin Creek Rd, Currumbin <https://cartorque.co/car-shows/cars-and-coffee-currumbin-valley-qld-3535>

### NORTHERN NSW

Byron Bay: 2nd Sunday of each month, 8:30-11:30, The Farm at Byron Bay, 11 Ewingsdale Rd, Ewingsdale (approx. 5 minutes drive from Byron Bay). There is a \$2 donation per car to cover costs. <http://byronbayspeedshop.com/cars-and-coffee-byron-bay/>

NOTE: Always check with the Club Website and/or Facebook page for any last-minute changes to the events or any new events which may not be included here. COVID 19 may have affected these events

**BEST BUY**

Jon Pressnell throws back the canvas on Britain's favourite, cheap, fun sports car

# Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget

**I**f you want a small British sports car, the choice (unless you stray to the outer edges of freakery) is a simple one – MG Midget/Austin-Healey Sprite or Spitfire. If you appreciate a roomier cockpit and less spartan trim, the Triumph may be more your thing. But if snappy handling and honest simplicity is your bag, think Spridget.

But which Spridget? There are 13 versions of post-Frogeye Sprite and Midget (hence 'Spridget'), and a surprisingly big difference between a '61 Sprite and a '79 Midget 1500.

The sliding-sidescreen cars – Sprite MkII and Midget MkI – are the rarest. They have the crudity of the removable sidescreens, but in return have the most spacious cockpit, because of their hollowed-out doors. They also

have the Frogeye's quarter-elliptic rear suspension, which means a tendency to oversteer *in extremis*. There's less 'fat' on the handling than the more benign semi-elliptic cars and more instant responses.

Those relatively few survivors are almost certain to have been bodged or be in poor condition; additionally, the early 1098cc engine is known for its weak bottom

end. As a result most will have been replaced by a later 1098cc unit or given a 1275cc engine.

You might also feel that an early car is less usable. With the lower windscreen and the sliding sidescreens, visibility is less good, while performance will be relatively leisurely. The build-it-yourself hood is another demerit.

Bridging the gap between the sidescreen



PHOTOGRAPHY:  
JAMES MANN



Only the badge and certain cosmetic differences separate a Sprite from a Midget of the same era



Spridgets and the 1275 is the Sprite MkIII/Midget MkII duo. These have a deeper screen and wind-up windows but the pay-off is restricted elbow room and the loss of the capacious door pockets. There is also semi-elliptic rear springing, which gives more secure handling and a slightly less abrupt ride. The fiddly separately-framed hood remains, however, though many find the flat rear deck more pleasing than that of the 1275-on versions, with their integral hood.

The 1275cc Spridgets are the best for general use. The engine is a honey and adequately fast, and the hood is a definite leap forward. But which 1275 should you choose?

The model everyone guns for is the 'round-arch' Midget. Sure it looks better, with those opened-out arches, but apart from that it's just another BL-facelift Spridget, with matt-black tart-up and its cheapened trim and fittings. Unless you're really sold on the looks, you might as well buy an earlier square-arch car.

And if you're going to do this, the best buy, in our opinion, is a pre-facelift Sprite or Midget, with its BMC-style trim, chrome interior handles, and refreshing absence of matt black. The only downside is that the big chrome bumpers look a tad clumsy in comparison with the slimline blades of the facelift cars.

The 1500? For a long time regarded as the runt in the litter, this uglified Midget suffers from short engine life and less accurate handling, but offers improved performance and a more durable gearbox with synchronised first gear. It's not to be discounted.



Fast, friendly responses make it entertaining (and entertainingly quick) on tight roads

## Behind the wheel

**D**riving a Spridget is a blast – it makes an MGB seem like a blunderbuss. But first you have to be able to fit the car: if you're a big bloke you'll find things a little tight. It's a small car and even smallish people will find themselves driving with a bent-arm position and (in cars with wind-up windows) their elbows slightly constrained.

The flipside is that a Spridget behaves as a small sports car should. On twin carburettors even the slowest of the early cars feels zippy and responsive, and the key controls have a delicious precision. In particular, the steering is light and quick, the gearchange rife-bolt accurate. A firm ride reinforces the message – though at the price of some abruptness on quarter-elliptic cars. On twisty

roads, a Spridget can prove surprisingly fast, its quick responses allowing it to be pushed hard in comparative safety. If you do get it out of shape, you won't suffer any of the nastiness displayed by early Spitfires, either: the leaf-sprung rear doesn't give huge levels of grip, but the car always remains predictable and the tail is quite easy to catch. The disc/drum brakes used on all but 948cc cars are fine, especially if braided hoses are fitted.

The 1500cc model has more performance – in standard form it's the sole 100mph Spridget – and is more lazily torquy than A-series cars. The notchy gearchange is less instant, however, and the handling more ponderous – there's more roll and sudden direction changes unsettle the car. This loss of handling crispness can be restored by quite straightforward suspension tweaks.

As far as performance goes, a 948cc Spridget will just about hit 85mph, while a 1275 has a maximum speed about 10mph higher.

That's not a huge amount of oomph, but it's more accessible than on some modern 16-valve cars: a decent Spridget will pull strongly without your having to rev its head off.

This pleasant flexibility is allied to keen fuel consumption: even the author's tuned 1293cc Midget gives up to 36mpg.

Last of all, a Spridget is surprisingly practical. The boot space isn't vast, but at the expense of aesthetics you could add a rack – and there's a good amount of space behind the seats, especially on cars with the removable hood. Lift out the passenger seat cushion, arm yourself with a few bungy straps, and it's amazing what you can transport around.







## Body style and interior

**J**ust because it's a cute little sports car, don't be seduced by a shiny Spridget. In fact, be even more alert: there are plenty of cars that glimmer only to deceive.

The good news is that you can get a pretty reasonable idea of a car's condition without having to grovel underneath it. We'll assume the car looks smart, though you'll want to check it isn't full of filler by quietly running a magnet over sills, wings, door bottoms,

A-posts and all other obvious trouble spots. Then start a point-by-point top-decks examination, detailed below.

If the results are encouraging, you can follow this with an underside inspection – being careful where you put any axle stands. But even before going this far, be suspicious of a car that has a lavishly



Black-crackle dash was unchanged except in detail from 1964 until the end of production

undersealed chassis. It's far better to be able to see where honest repairs have been carried out – and there's nothing wrong with patch repairs if they've been done properly.

Your main underside preoccupations should be with the sills and the area around the front hangers for the rear springs. Replacing the inner and outer sills is likely to involve knock-

on work on the A-posts and could easily cost you £900 a side. Repairing the boxes in which the front of the rear springs sit isn't going to give you any change from £700 the pair. Dial in close to £500 if both floorpans need replacing, and you'll appreciate the need to take your time over the bodywork inspection.

As well as corrosion problems, look also for

**Bubbling or rot on the rear wing** forward of the wheelarch is not a good sign: the adjacent sill is likely to be rotten as well. In the same area, feel inside the arch and see if the end of the sill is holed. Evidence of serious rust or poor repairs here signals that the area close to the all-important front spring hanger may be weak. The bottom of the rear wing and the wheelarch lip can also rot out.

**If the boot floor** outboard of the reinforcing diaphragm is holed, the rear spring mounts are in peril. Now feel up the inside of the wing: if there's a line of weld you'll know the wing has had a repair panel let in. Still in the boot, the join between the boot floor and the rear panel often rots.

**Door gaps** should be even from side to side but more importantly from top to bottom. If they are tight at the top and wider at the bottom either the sill has weakened and the car is folding in the middle, or the car has been poorly supported during sill replacement – which could equally have resulted in wide gaps at the top and narrow gaps at the bottom. Ideally, the door should also shut flush against the adjoining panels, but to achieve this requires a degree of finesse that few owners achieve.

**Open a door** and pull it up and down. If there's movement that cannot be attributed to worn hinges, then the A-post – which is often rusty and stuffed with filler – is almost certainly corroded. Inspect the post carefully while the door is open, and also check to see if the door bottom is holed. If the door doesn't shut without a good slam, then it's probably not fitting the aperture correctly, again suggesting that there are problems with the sill which might be expensive to rectify.



Pre-1970 cars lack the black sills of later cars; wires were optional





Spare in boot encourages inventive packing

accident damage. A common giveaway is a kink in the chassis between the end of the front chassis rail and the beginning of the seat runner. More banal, but still a potential cause of outlay, is a holed petrol tank. These tend to rust along their top edge and will set you back £70.

The state of the interior and weather gear is far less of a worry than the bodywork. Everything is available at reasonable prices, and there is plenty of scope for improving the trim of your Spridget. The bigger specialists offer leather seats, for instance, and the MG Owners' Club accessory catalogue is particularly strong on interior dress-up items such as seats, luxury trim panels, and even (if you must) wood dashboard trim. With ready-to-go trim kits and ready-made seat covers, re-trimming a Spridget yourself is dead easy – just don't underestimate how the expenses can mount up.

## WHICH IS WHICH

**Sprite MkII (HAN6)/Midget MkI (GAN1).** Interior and mechanicals much as Frogeye; 948cc giving 46.5bhp; quarter-elliptic rear springs; drum brakes. Flat leathercloth-covered dash. Midget has more piping on seats, carpet on bottom of backrests, padded dash-top, better calibration of instruments; waistline and bonnet strips. Current 1961-62.

**Sprite MkIII (HAN7)/Midget MkI (GAN2).** First of 1098cc Spridgets, with 'small mains' 55bhp unit; also more robust (baulk-ring) gearbox and front disc brakes. Horseshoe-pattern seat piping on both models; padded roll to top and bottom of dash. Wires optional on all but very first cars. Current 1962-64.

**Sprite MkIII (HAN8)/Midget MkII (GAN3).** Improved 1098cc engine (59bhp); winding windows; semi-elliptic rear. Both cars share new black-crackle dashboard and Midget-style white-on-black dials, plus wire-spoke steering wheel. New design of hardtop with rear quarter-windows. Current 1964-66.

**Sprite MkIV (HAN9)/Midget MkIII (GAN4).** Gains 1275cc engine (65bhp) and integral convertible hood. Interior as before, until horizontally fluted reclining seats introduced in December 1968 – at which time MG loses bonnet strip. Current 1966-69.

**Sprite MkIV (HAN10)/Midget MkIII (GAN5).** Facelifted 'British Leyland' models, both identical but for badges; mechanically unchanged. Heat-

embossed ladder-pattern seats; new alloy-spoked steering wheel. Matt-black grille; steel Rostyle wheels; slimline bumpers with split rear bumper; matt-black sills with chrome finisher; square-cut light clusters. Current 1969-71 (Sprite 1969-70).

**Sprite MkIV (AAN10).** Short-lived 'Austin Sprite', made following termination of agreement with Healey company. Only 1022 built. Current January-July 1971.

**Midget MkII (GAN5).** The 'round-arch' car, with new style of Rostyle wheel. Mechanically unchanged, until Triumph steering rack replaces Minor unit in January 1972; front anti-roll bar standard from August 1973 on UK cars. Rocker switches and plastic door-pull straps only internal changes. Current 1971-74.

**Midget 1500 (GAN6).** The 'rubber bumper' Midget. Spitfire 1500 Triumph engine with Marina/Dolomite/Toledo corporate BL gearbox – meaning synchronised first gear. Wire wheels no longer UK-available after 1976. Last 500 home-market cars painted black. Current 1974-79.

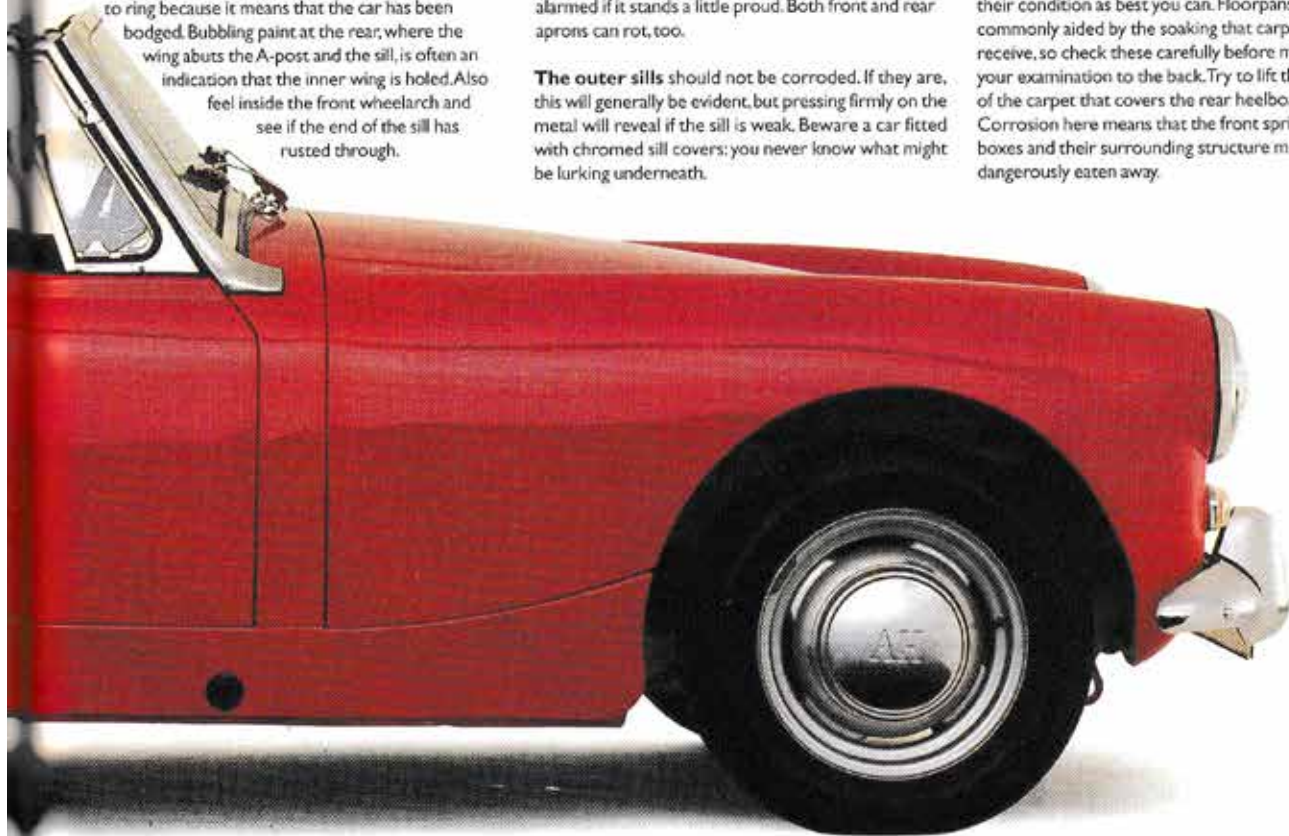


**The join between front wing and sill, and wing and A-post, should be open to allow water to drain away.** If these joins have been filled, alarm bells should start to ring because it means that the car has been bodged. Bubbling paint at the rear, where the wing abuts the A-post and the sill, is often an indication that the inner wing is holed. Also feel inside the front wheelarch and see if the end of the sill has rusted through.

**The front of the bonnet rusts through:** this is unsightly but not serious, as repair sections are available. The bootlid never fits well, so don't be alarmed if it stands a little proud. Both front and rear aprons can rot, too.

**The outer sills should not be corroded.** If they are, this will generally be evident, but pressing firmly on the metal will reveal if the sill is weak. Beware a car fitted with chromed sill covers: you never know what might be lurking underneath.

**Lift the carpets and check the sill-to-floor joint** because this is often rusted through. The front inner wings are hidden by trim panels, but try to gauge their condition as best you can. Floorpans rust, commonly aided by the soaking that carpets often receive, so check these carefully before moving your examination to the back. Try to lift the bottom of the carpet that covers the rear heelboard. Corrosion here means that the front spring hanger boxes and their surrounding structure may be dangerously eaten away.







## Technical and mechanics

**T**he Spridget is a simple car built using well-tried components from BMC/BL saloon cars. Not least of those is the A-series engine, used in all except the Triumph-powered 1500. The coil and wishbone front suspension comes from the Austin A30/A35, as does the rear axle (essentially shared with the Minor), and the steering is by Minor rack until 1972 and by a Triumph Herald/Spitfire unit thereafter.

With its leaf-sprung rear end – quarter-elliptics until 1964, semi-elliptics afterwards – there's nothing fancy about the car, and this translates into low-cost maintenance, easy DIY and low parts prices. Commonality with other cars helps: it's good to be able to buy a rear wheel cylinder for a tenner across the counter at Halfords, because it's shared with the Mini or the Metro.

Simplicity doesn't mean freedom from faults, though. In particular, the front suspension is a notoriously horrible piece of design, good for



A-series mildly tuned: good performance and fuel economy

maybe three years of use before needing full replacement. To problems of premature wear you can add a dose of washed-out handling if your lever-arm dampers are tired. As reconditioned dampers are likely to have been 'overhauled' (whatever that means) perhaps up to 10 times in their life, you're better off splashing out on new units or going over to a telescopic conversion from Frontline Spridget.

Turning to engines, the Sprite MkII/Midget MkI 1098cc units (those with small 1 3/4in main bearings and the engine number prefix '10 CG') have a weaker bottom end. Most of these engines, however, have now been replaced by later units with 2in mains.

These other A-series engines are sturdy units good for at least 100,000 miles between overhauls – oil leaks from the rear main bearing seal are the only common problem. The Triumph engine in the 1500, by contrast, is lucky to live much beyond 50,000 miles. When the car is sitting, the oil drains out of the filter, and constant starting with no oil pressure soon knocks out the big ends. A bad rattle on start-up indicates an imminent engine rebuild.

These points apart, it's good news all the way. No classic cars in the world have better specialist support than the MGB and the Spridget, and everything from a washer to a new Heritage bodysell is available. There are also countless specialists. The biggest is Moss International, which has eight UK branches. Moss director Graham Paddy knows more about Spridgets than most people could ever hope to accumulate, and his help was invaluable in compiling this feature.

Because of the muscle of such firms, virtually everything is now being remanufactured. Panels, part-panels and repair sections look after the bodywork side, virtually all gearbox internals are now being made, and you can buy crown wheel and pinion sets on exchange.

A further bonus is the wide range of tuning and uprating gear available. With a fully balanced and gently tuned 1275 you'll give any MGB a good run for its money, while still turning in good mpg figures – and with the wide availability of unleaded-compatible heads you need have no worries about the impending demise of four-star.



Sidelights were lowered 1in at the end of 1968



'Smooth' lamps became squared off for 1970



Sprite MkIV, built in May 1969

### SPECIALISTS

Moss London Richmond, Surrey (0181 948 6666); PETR  
 Moss Bristol Bristol, Avon (0117 923 2523); PE  
 Brown & Gammons Baldock, Herts (01462 490049); PETS  
 MGB Hive Wisbech, Cambs (01945 700500); PER  
 Ron Hopkinson Parts Centre Derby (01332 756056); PE  
 M&G International Birkenhead (0151 666 1666); PE  
 Bromsgrove MG Centre Bromsgrove, Worcs (01527 879909); PETS  
 Nottingham MG Centre Colwick, Nottingham (0115 961 5283); PETS  
 MechSpec Workshop, Notts (01909 482775); P  
 Moto-Build Hounslow, Middlesex (0181 572 8733); PETS  
 Motorspeed Selsey, West Sussex (01243 607666); R  
 Sussex Classic Car Parts Partridge Green, West Sussex (01403 711551); P  
 This is a very selective list of countless MG parts, restoration and sales specialists.

Key: P - parts; M - machining; E - exchange engines; T - trim; S - sales; R - restoration

*A24 to working through TL Next L.T. to P.G. L. after Parting of Road 2nd of 1970 with Half way*

### PARTS PRICES

Wishbone & kingpin assembly (pr)*	£143
Dampers, front (new)	£72
Rear telescopic conversion	£126
Front telescopic conversion	£326
Rear springs (pr)	£76
Steering rack (late)*	£56
Engine, 1275/1500 (unleaded)*	£685
Gearbox*	£464
Clutch kit (three-piece)	£69
Master cylinder	£42
Trim kit	£105
Seat covers (pair)	£128
Carpet set	£70
Hood with header rail	£203
Rear bumpers, slimline (pair)	£78
Radiator, new	£76
Front wing	£229
Rear wing lower half	£53
A-post cover assembly	£16
Heritage bodysell	£2185

\* Exchange reconditioned units

Prices from Moss London (0181 948 6666) and include VAT  
 Engine price from EMS (01909 482649) and includes VAT





## TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Gearboxes** on A-series Minis don't last long. People crash the unsynchronised first, and the debris from ground gears eventually knocks out the 'box. So beware of excessive noise in first gear, as this hints at future trouble. The 1500's gearbox is more robust, and with synchro on first it doesn't fall prey to the problems of the A-series 'box.

**The carbon clutch release bearing** on A-series Spridgets has a relatively short life. Limited pedal travel is a sign of problems. The roller-bearing release on the 1500 is much better.

**The back axle** is often noisy but rarely fails. An exception is the higher-ratio 3.7:1 differential fitted to 1500s from August 1977 (from car number GAN6-200001): this is made of thinner metal and it's common for teeth to rip off the pinion. Halfshafts are fine in normal use, but won't take silly abuse, and there are stories of sub-standard 'pattern' shafts breaking. A clicking when you take up drive suggests worn propshaft UJs. Finally, rear springs are prone to sag.

**Brakes** are straightforward – and there's no servo to go wrong. A long handbrake travel may be caused by worn clevises: if each joint in the lever system is worn, free movement will build up. The handbrake can also come undone at the transmission tunnel, and the mounting plate can break. The lever should not have any sideways movement.

**The front suspension** is the Spridget's Achilles heel, and lasts for about 20,000 miles. The main problem is that grease does not adequately travel along the threaded lower fulcrum pin. Dried out, this then wears the thread in the wishbone pan. Putting a new fulcrum pin in an old wishbone pan achieves nothing, and you might as well replace the kingpins while you're about it, as they will probably also be worn. While on the job, you might as well replace the front dampers. The lesson for buyers? If the car hasn't had a recent full suspension overhaul, budget for one.

**Wire wheels** suffer from worn splines and loose spokes. A clicking noise on acceleration and deceleration hints at worn splines, though a spot of grease may be all that's needed. Frankly you're better advised not to bother with wires, but if you really want them you can buy conversion kits for cars with bolt-on wheels.

**In-and-out movement at the steering wheel** on a car with a collapsible column is likely to be a result of fractured shear-pins on the column UJs – a common cause is someone walloping the steering wheel in an effort to remove it. Additionally, at the rack the splines and the column-securing pinch bolt can wear. Up-and-down movement at the wheel suggests worn bushes in the rack, while a floating rack on Minor-steered cars (those made before January 1972) could well mean that the alloy rack clamps need re-shimming with new paper gaskets.

