
February 2024 Official Bulletin of the Sprite Club of SA

I'd like to acknowledge the passing of Paul Doube, long term club member, former President, friend to many and clubbie 'tragic'. This is possibly the least pleasant duty of a Club President; its not the first time and sadly it wont be the last, yet every time it stirs up the same emotion as to how to do justice of the contribution of a member such as Paul had to the Sprite Club. He leaves a legacy with both the ClubbiesSA and Sprite Club that hopefully never will be forgotten. Sadly, all of our times on this mortal coil are limited and we all should make the best of our time here. Paul, faced with an insidious and debilitating condition didn't let it beat him and sit quietly, he met it head on and challenged it to slow him down, fighting it to the very last. An example that we can all do well to follow.

For those who may have missed the announcement, there will be a Celebration of Life for Paul, held at Centennial Park from 1530, Saturday 3 February 24. If you can attend you are encouraged to bring your Sprite, Midget, Clubbie or classic. The celebration and reflection of his time will be lead by our own Gordon Boyce.

Calendar: On a lighter note you may have noticed that we have not yet published the events calendar for the year but rest assured, the Committee has been discussing events over the past weeks and this edition of the Burble will have an extended 2024 calendar of events as we currently know them. I'd encourage people who have a great idea for a run or a gathering to let the Committee know or, indeed, offer to organise one! Your assistance and support will be gratefully appreciated!

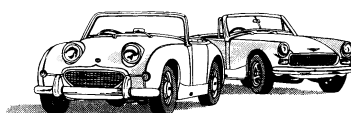
On this note, you will notice a Run pencilled in for February that needs an organiser! I'm going to be away for part of Feb and the 'Ice Cream Run' proved to be very popular (and temperature appropriate) last year. If there is a volunteer to organise a late-Feb run to an Ice Creamery (or perhaps to a Fish and Chip shop) I'm sure it would be another well attended event!

Nationals: As you will know, a group of us are heading across to Wodonga for the Sprite and Midget National Meet/Challenge/Gathering at the end of March. We've been asked to contribute a small number of photos that are reflective and identifiable as our Club, including Motorsport. If you have photos that you'd be happy for me to send over please let me know!

Club Sponsors: Hopefully people reading the 2023 Sprouting Forth (hopefully people read it – let us know if you'd like to see it again in 2024!) would have noticed some new sponsors appearing and those same businesses appearing on the Club Website. As a club we run fairly 'lean' and strive to keep our membership fees as low as we can, so contributions from corporate sponsors play an important part in our overall financial position. I'd really encourage you all to consider these businesses before simply ordering from overseas. Small businesses play a vital role in our economy and if we don't support them then they won't be around when we need them to support us. I don't think any small business owner will deny that at times the cheapness of goods online mean that they simply can't compete (and I'm as guilty as anyone at times when the economics of buying local just don't stack up), but at least reach out to Colin at Sprite Parts or the guys at MiniSport, Michael at Lawless Classic Oils or any of the Club's sponsors, let them know that you are from the Sprite Club, so they know their advertising isn't going to waste, and see if they can help you out!

And I can promise you, you will not find better tasting butter than LardAss or find a better doggo coat than a ToastieWestie coat!

Memberships: I'd like to welcome a raft of new members into the club over the past couple of months. I've managed to meet a couple of you and hope to meet up with all over you over the next month or so! We've been very fortunate to attract new Sprites, Midgets, Clubbies, even another Triumph amongst others. I'd also like to put a call out to members who are yet to renew their membership for 2024 and, if you are driving your classic on Conditional Registration (ie, Historic Rego) that's linked to your Sprite Club membership, please remember you are not registered unless you are financial AND your logbook has been updated for 2024! The Club will have to advise Services SA of non-financial members who have linked Conditional Registration in March so don't get caught out!

**MINISPORT**SPRITE CLUB OF S.A.

Thong Throwing: As always a huge thank you to the Chabrels for hosting the Annual Australia Day Thong Throwing Competition. A number of attendees brought out their cars (I'll admit, I didn't...) and it was lovely to see a collection of Sprites and Midgets, even an MGF, all parked overlooking the Oakbank Racecourse! Its always interesting to watch a club member realise 'hang on, that's my old car' as a new member arrives and then watch as everyone gravitates to have a look. It was also good to see Steven Kent up and about after his surgery and back in his Bugeye. As President its also great to be able to sit down and talk with the likes of Helen King and Gary & Faye Brock and hear about the early years of the club ... and the fun to be had with a Rocker Cover Racer and yes, there is now one in build on my bench at home, hopefully in time for the Nationals (or I'll be looking to beg/borrow/steal one!). Oh, and some bloke won the thong throwing competition, although I can't remember who sorry.



Individually Constructed Vehicles: Hopefully you all saw the email I sent out the other week on ICVs (and the Nationals). Please come and talk to me or anyone in the Committee if you'd like to know more. Hopefully we can have a good discussion about it at the meeting on Monday night. Its an important decision for the Club so if you need to know more please speak up!

Anyway, that's just about enough from me. Following a couple of requests, I've added in the "Peppering the Sprite" article from Sports Car World as it was blurry in Sprouting Forth. Welcome to 2024 and see you out on the road!

Robin Dunk
President, Sprite Club of SA

Technical Tip (#12)

My first tip for 2024 is not to be daunted by something that seems impossible and you don't have the skill. Late last year, new member and new Sprite owner (in fact, first time classic car owner) Matthew Garcia had clutch issues with his new Bugeye Sprite. Undaunted by the fact he is not a mechanic, he got the book, read the processes and applied a logical approach and quickly had the 948 and gearbox out and the clutch replaced. There are times when you need to call in help or just an extra set of hands to help to get something done but if you are keen to learn, then our little cars have a way to teaching us!



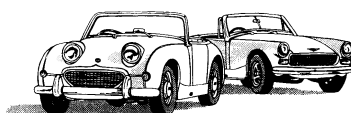
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SPRITE CLUB OF S.A.

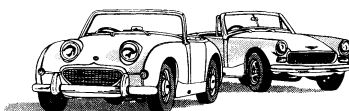
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SPRITE CLUB OF S.A.



SPRITE CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

2024 CALENDAR

January

1st	New Year's Breakfast Run
26th	Australia Day BBQ at the Chabrel's
28th	Glen Ewin Estate Hillclimb Revival

February

3rd	Paul Doube's Celebration of Life
4th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
5th	Monthly General Meeting
18th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
24th	Ice Cream Run (TBC)
25th	MSCA Trophy Day

March

3th	<i>All British Day – Echunga Oval</i>
3th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
3th	MSCA Super Sprint Rd1 (Mallala)
4th	Monthly General Meeting + ICV Vote
15-17th	<i>Adelaide Motor Sport Festival</i>
16th	Sports Car Cruise/F&C Beach Run
17th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
22-26th	Sprite and Midget Nationals (Wodonga)

April

1s	Easter Monday Breakfast Run
6th	SCCSA Collingrove Hillclimb Come and Try
7th	SCCSA Collingrove Challenge Trophy (1)
7th	<i>Aldinga Airshow</i>
7th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
8th	Monthly General Meeting – Theme TBC
14th	<i>McLaren Vale Vintage and Classic Run</i>
21st	SCCSA Ray Pank Hillclimb R1 (Collingrove)
21st	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
26-28	All Historic Race Meeting – Mallala

May

5th	MSCA Peter Hall 6-Hour Regularity Relay
5th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
6th	Monthly General Meeting
15th	Midweek Run
19th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
26th	SCCSA Collingrove Challenge Trophy (2)
26th	Winery Lunch Run (Wirra Wirra or Penny's Hill)

June

2nd	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
3rd	Monthly General Meeting
16th	SCCSA Ray Pank Hillclimb R2 (Collingrove)
	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
19th	Winter Solstice Midweek Run
23rd	MSCA Super Sprint Rd 2 (Malalla)

Colour Coding Legend

Sprite Club Event
ClubbiesSA Event
MSCA/SCC-SA Competition Event
<i>Other events of note</i>

July

1st	Monthly General Meeting (Wine & Cheese)
7th	Winter Warmers Breakfast Run
7th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
7th	SCCSA Collingrove Challenge Trophy (3)
14th	Pub Run!
21st	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
21st	SCCSA Ray Pank Hillclimb R3 (Collingrove)

Aug

4th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
5th	Monthly General Meeting
11th	MSCA Super Sprint Rd 3 (Mallala)
14th	Midweek Run
18th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
24th	Pie and Peas @ Fullarton
24th	SCCSA Collingrove Hillclimb Come and Try
25th	SCCSA Ray Pank Hillclimb (R4, Collingrove)

September

1st	Spring has Sprung Breakfast Run
1st	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
2nd	Monthly General Meeting
8th	MSCA Super Sprint Rd 4 (Mallala)
8th	SCCSA Collingrove Challenge Trophy (4)
6-8th	<i>The Bend Classic</i>
21st	Annual Dinner
22nd	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz

October

6th	SCCSA Historic Hill Climb
6th	Picnic run to Collingrove Historic Hillclimb
6th	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
14th	Monthly General Meeting
20th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
11-13 Oct	SA Hill Climb Championships (Collingrove)
20th	<i>Bay to Birdwood</i>
20th	MSCA Super Sprint Rd 5 (The Bend - East)
27th	Collingrove Season Finale

November

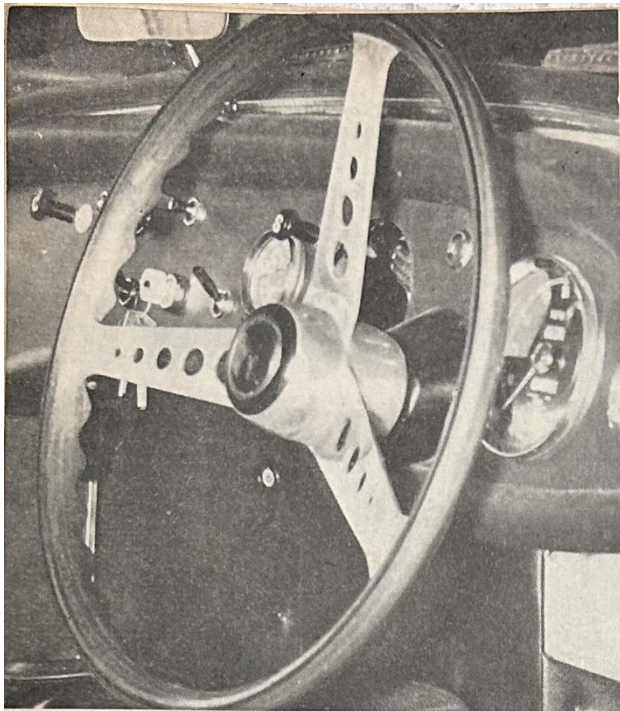
1st	<i>John Bladen's Climb to the Eagle</i>
3rd	Sprite Club Annual Display Day (Wigley Res)
3rd	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
4th	Annual General Meeting
9th	Classic Sports Car Cruise
14-17th	<i>Adelaide 500</i>
17th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday @ The Rezz
28 – 1 Dec	<i>Rally Adelaide</i>

December

1st	One Last Breakfast Run
1st	(ClubbiesSA) 1st Sunday @ Magic Bean Brew
2nd	Christmas BBQ General Meeting
17th	(ClubbiesSA) 3rd Sunday Xmas @ The Rezz
21th	Christmas Fish and Chips Beach Run



SPRITE CLUB OF S.A.



Lightweight wood-rimmed wheel, as well as being decorative, allows quicker response.



**Here's a hot recipe for a 110 mph
Austin Healey Sprite.**

PEPPERING THE SPRITE

By Mike McCarthy

IT'S not difficult to find reasons why the Austin Healey Sprite should be enjoying ever-increasing popularity as a competition car.

Apart from the fact that it is easily adaptable for competition work, the Sprite offers a relatively inexpensive basis for aspiring drivers.

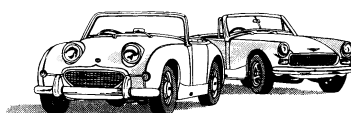
It is perhaps the least expensive way of participating in the production sports car class and marque sports car races which are becoming more and more popular. With early models currently selling around £500 to £550 an enthusiast can have himself a real little goer for less than £1000. By the term goer we mean a car that will top 110 mph, have acceleration to match and flexible enough for city driving.

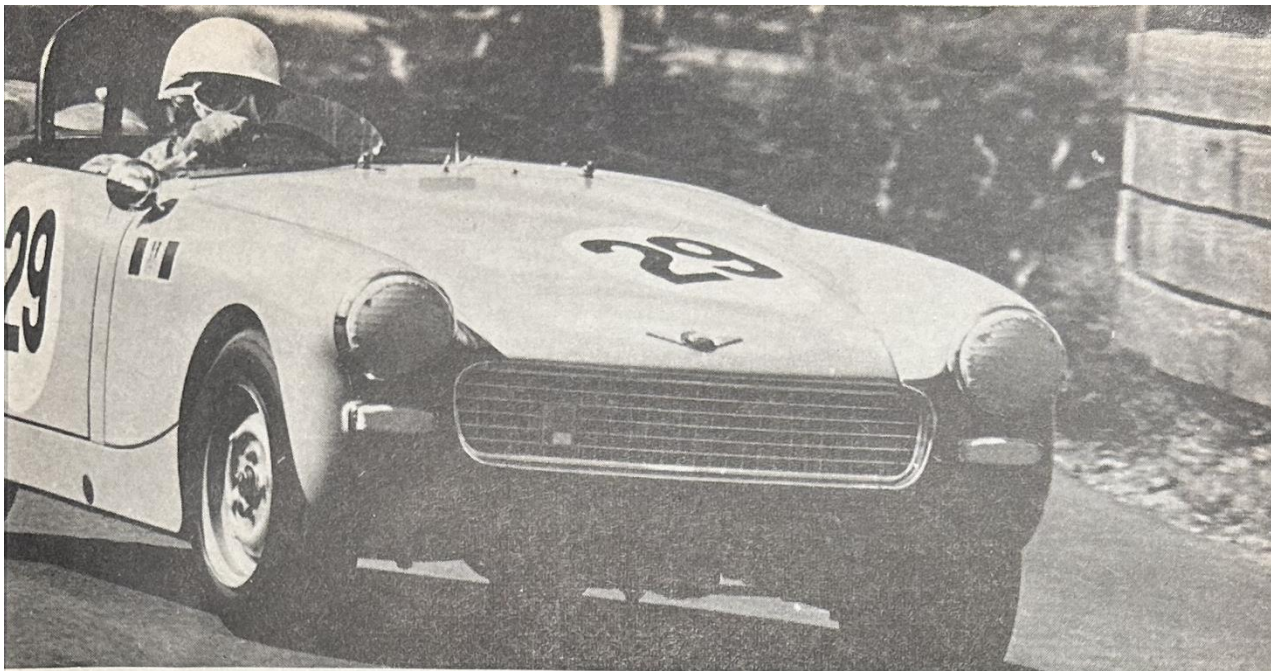
Because they numerically outweigh the later models, most of the information in this article is aimed at the Mark One, but in many cases the material is applicable to the later series. Nor will we specifically differentiate between tuning methods eligible for both production and outright racing classes. Another point to the credit of the Mk One is that it weighs about three-quarters of a cwt less than its successors, a marked advantage where high performance is concerned.

Starting from the ground up, the initial consideration is rubber. Dunlop R5 racing tyres are first choice for the serious entrant, but at almost £30 each they may strain the average budget. Slightly inferior roadholding and cornering power are compensated for by a big reduction in cost if a compromise is made and Dunlop Road Speed's are fitted—at about £40 a set of four.

Unless really radical modifications are made to the engine, there is no need to use tyres larger than the standard 5.20 by 13s. However, if R5s, Road-Speeds or similar tyres are fitted, it is beneficial to replace the standard 3.5 in wide rims with special types measuring 4.5 in between flanges. The wide-based rims improve roadholding noticeably, the conversion costs about £5 per wheel at major speed equipment suppliers.

In addition to Dunlop's contributions there are Pirelli Cinturas at approximately £12 each and the Goodyear Sports Car Special at £18 apiece—the former having dual-purpose road or racing characteristics whereas the Dunlop R5 for instance is exclusively for racing. Unfortunately both the





Cintura and Sports Car Special should ideally be fitted on 4.0 in rims, a size not easily available in this country.

The next stage concerns braking. Effective as the stock drums of the Mk One and Two are for normal driving, inherent deficiencies quickly appear under hard driving. The only way to overcome this (while retaining the basic original components) is to fit competition brake linings at £33.0 a set and liberally drill the backing plates and fit air-scoops.

Although the hard linings increase the brake pedal pressure, the difference is not so great as to warrant servo-assistance. Of course there's no absolute reason why power brakes should not be fitted if braking effort is found to be tiresome.

The IIA's disc front brakes ensure that the car is virtually free from fade and other difficulties

A Sprite in full song. Genuine 110 mph performance can be had by severely modifying the car. Flexibility can be retained for normal road-use.

associated with production drum systems.

Stabiliser bars usually come in two types—normal and heavy duty—the former retailing at £7.10.0 and the competition bar for a mere ten shillings more. These are do-it-yourself items, requiring a couple of holes to be drilled before installation.

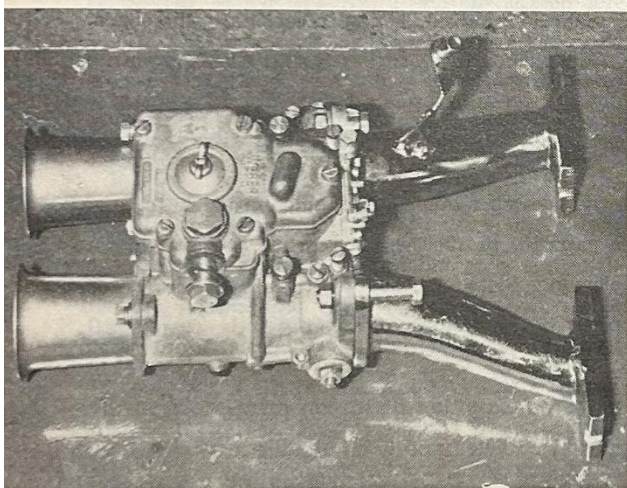
The Sprite's suspension requires only minimal modification, only the hottest of the hot having any changes made to the standard springing. Fewer still are lowered, but most have the damper valves replaced to give a firmer setting.

That almost takes care of everything apart from the engine, gearbox and rear axle—everything except the steering wheel. According to automotive authority Colin Chapman, a light-weight steering wheel will allow faster steering reactions with less effort because of a lower inertia.

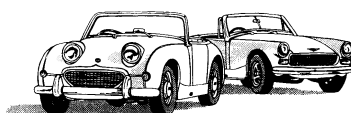
Because of this they can be counted as worthwhile—not just a sporty gimmick. A variety of alloy wood-rimmed wheels are available to suit the Sprite and they cost in the vicinity of £16.

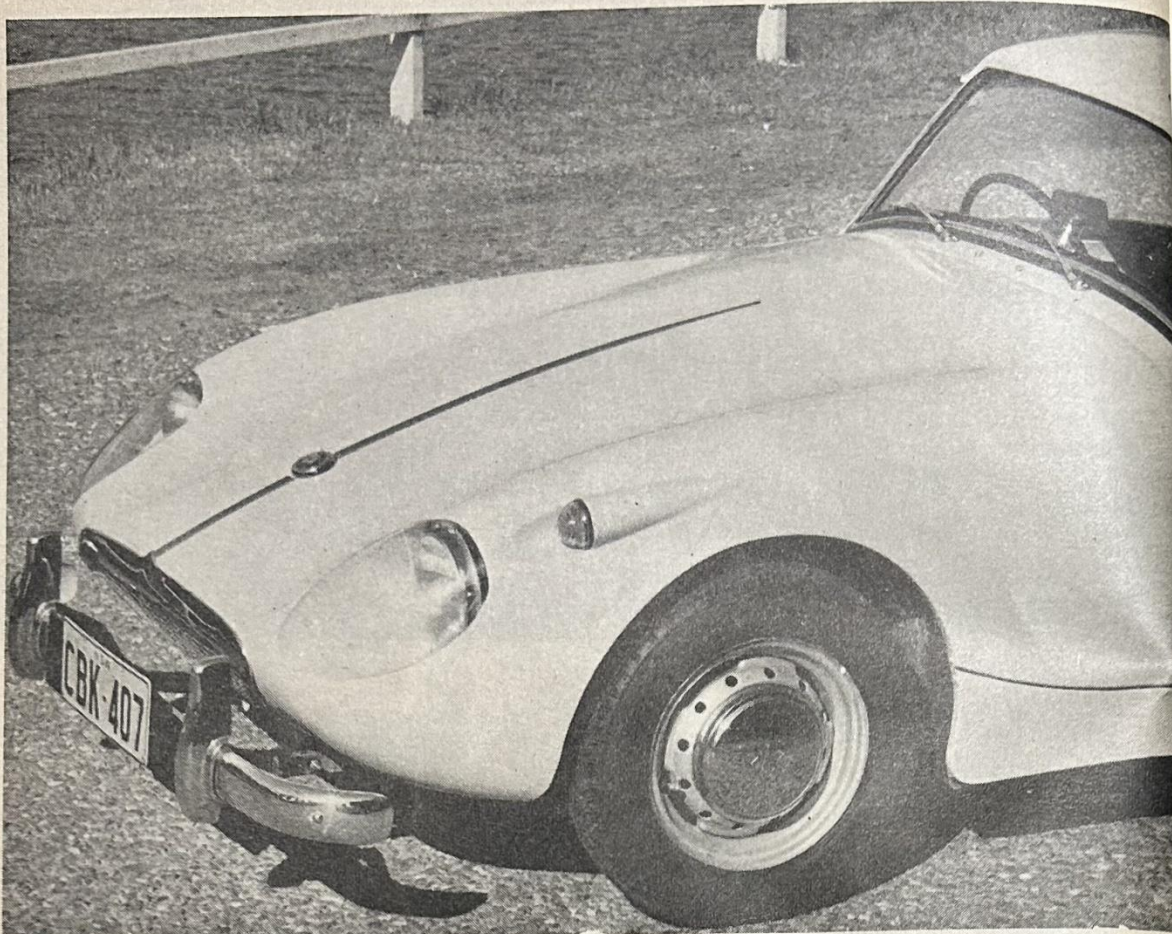
While weight reduction is not permissible for racing production sports cars, this is a point that should not be overlooked by those who want either a fast road car or a machine for outright sports/racing. The easiest means of paring pounds from a Mk One is to replace the original steel bonnet assembly with one of fibreglass. Of the several styles produced some are identical to the original structure whereas others have the headlights placed to the front of the guards. Prices start at £50. Of course there are hardtops too, and efficiently designed models can add measurably to the car's maximum speed.

And now to mechanical matters. An official special tuning manual is available through BMC sports car dealers and it lists five stages of tune that progressively increase the bhp from 43 to 55. This is the upper limit prescribed by the factory, but it is quite moderate by today's standards. Local specialists have the A-series engine deliver-



To add a little Italian flavor to this hot dish, a Weber carburettor and a special inlet manifold can be fitted to the A-series engine.





PEPPERING THE SPRITE ... continued

Fibreglass fronts and tops considerably improve the aerodynamic form of the Mk 1 Sprite and add to the top speed.

ing more than 70 bhp, yet retaining reasonable flexibility.

Before doing anything to the engine, the owner should know in advance what he wants of the car, what quirks he is prepared to tolerate, and how much he is willing to spend.

Power costs money. From here on in we shall assume the engine concerned has covered 30,000 miles, this means it will have to have a comprehensive overhaul if reliability and durability are to be maintained.

The crankshaft is usually regarded as being the most critical part of a hot A-series engine. If it is to be used for fast day to day driving the shaft should be satisfactory as it is. Apart from grinding the journals nothing else should be necessary. If intended for really hard work it should be crack-tested thoroughly for flaws and then polished. Racing activities call for a special factory-built crankshaft that is safe to over 8000 rpm which costs approximately £32. This is for the Mk One as the Mk Two has a strengthened shaft, but the Two A has an entirely different crank altogether.

Connecting rods should also be crack-tested and polished as a precautionary measure. To improve acceleration the flywheel should be lightened by about four pounds. As a guide for do-it-yourself enthusiasts, the Special Tuning booklet has

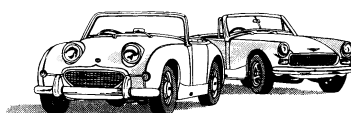
full details of how much and where the metal should be removed. Done professionally the operation costs around £4.

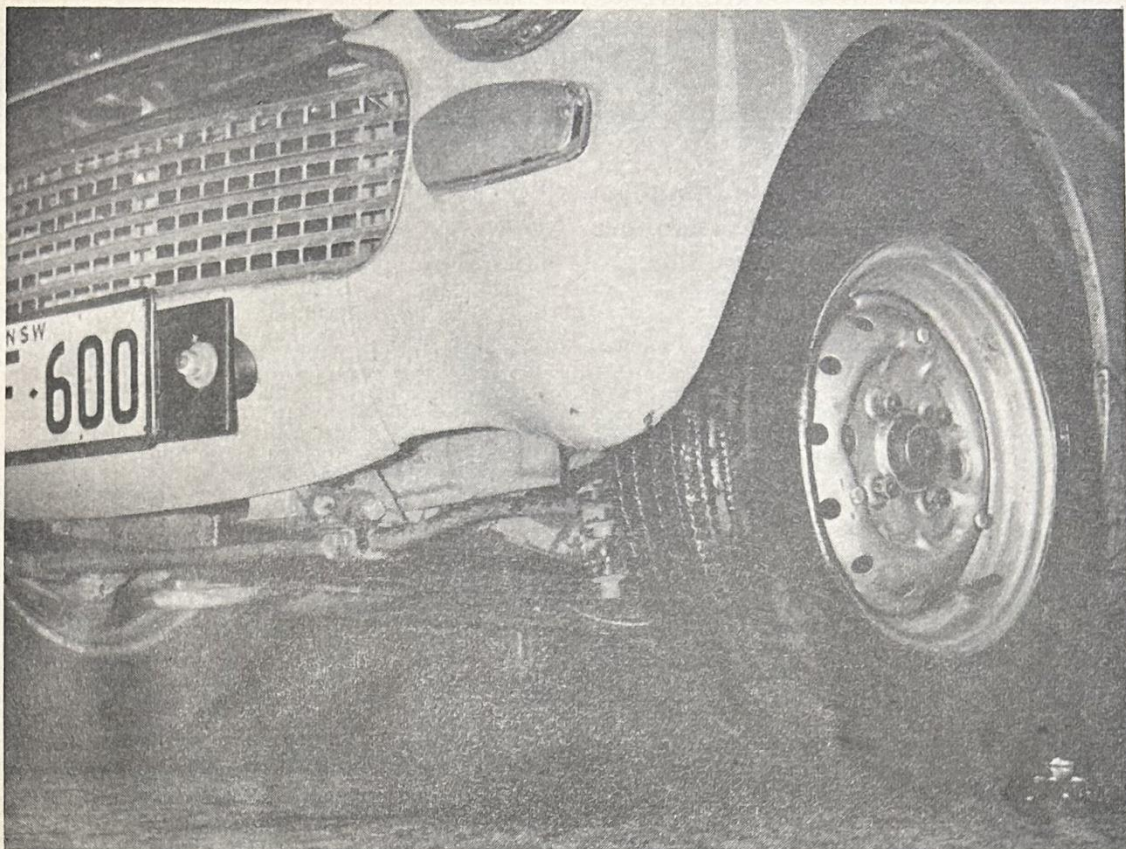
The standard six-spring Sprite clutch pressure plate cannot cope with any great increase in power and to stop excessive slip it is best to purchase BMC's competition nine-spring pressure plate or have the existing unit modified to these specifications for a little less than £8 on an exchange basis from local specialists.

A one-step method of gaining torque is to have the cylinders over-bored to 66.5 mm resulting in a capacity of 1060 cc. This is not a major operation as the cylinders can be bored without resleeving. Pistons to suit, with a 10 to 1 compression ratio, cost nearly £30 a set. Another £15 will pay for the pistons, connecting rods, crankshaft, flywheel and clutch all to be balanced and crack-tested.

That virtually takes care of the block assembly with the exception of the oil pump. For positive lubrication at high rpm a gear type oil pump should be fitted and is obtainable as a spare part from any BMC dealer. To cool the oil at high speed a special radiator is needed. It costs about £14.10.0.

The cylinder head may be either mild or wild depending on the requirement. Malcolm Motors, for example, list four stages of modification start-





ing at £20 for a port and polish, and progressing through stages two and three to stage four costing £50. The latter is a full conversion, modified primarily for Formula Junior or outright racing engines. It has extensively modified combustion chambers and ports, special over-size inlet and exhaust valves, different valve guides, and competition valve springs.

Cylinder heads such as this must be complemented by a suitable camshaft and appropriate inlet and exhaust systems.

All four departments, the cylinder head, camshaft, carburetion and exhaust must be compatible otherwise the engine may well lack its desired characteristics. We emphasise that the unit must be modified as an entirety so that each area can give its best.

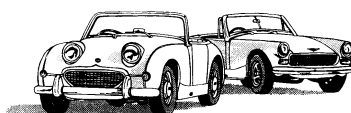
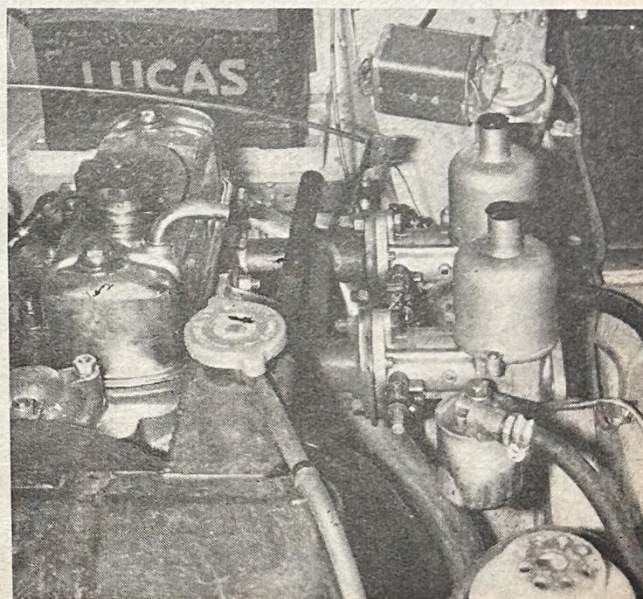
For this reason it is necessary to improve ignition once the engine has been taken beyond the mild stage. An optional distributor can be supplied through BMC dealers, but even this is not wholly satisfactory for hot engines. Better results can usually be obtained by having the original distributor modified to give the required advance-retard. And it's cheaper too—about £3.10.0 for modifications against £9.15.0 for the replacement.

Although some individuals favor Weber carburetors most successful racing Sprites rely on twin $1\frac{1}{2}$ in SU's. The big-bore instruments, complete with manifold and linkages, leave only a little change from £55. When these are installed it is common practice to replace the stock mechanical fuel pump with an electrically operated pump to prevent any likelihood of fuel starvation.

(Continued on page 62)

For really high speed trips, Dunlop Road Speed tyres should be fitted on specially fabricated 4.5 in rims. Note the competition type stabiliser bar.

The full-house Sprite engine with two $1\frac{1}{2}$ in SU's should push the car to more than 110 mph.



For laps on end, in re-enactment of the 1934 drama, Hall and Lewis' Lagonda raced mile by mile, corner by corner, straight by straight, trading the lead more times than either could remember afterwards. Then, at a stage of the duel when the course was in the in-between condition that drivers dread, dry hither and wet yon, Lewis went into a valse triste in Newtownards, ricocheting off the town hall with a cockeyed back wheel. At that there was still plenty of fight in him; he made it to his pit, 10 miles away, changed the wheel and got to grips with the horn-tootin' wool man again. But the deck was stacked against Lewis. Later his sump and reserve oil tank started up-chucking and the party for him, was over.

To complete the illusion that time had stood still for two years, both the Lewis Lagonda and the Hall Bentley were on the same race numbers —1 and 7 respectively—they'd worn in the 1934 TT. The Bentley in fact carried lucky number 7, well, fairly lucky, in all its three TTs.

In the closing laps, Hall's one hope of catching the Dixon/Dodson partnership depended on the Riley faculty continuing to believe Eddie would sooner or later have to stop for a fillup. Actually, the possibility he'd go through nonstop hadn't even occurred to them, but just to make sure it didn't, Mrs Hall made an elaborate any-moment-now play with superfluous funnels and cans. So it wasn't until he went by at 120 to begin his 30th and last lap that the stratagem was uncovered.

It had been a smart move, but nothing could be quite smart enough to gyp the Riley pair, with their handicap start of one lap plus 2:26 of the victory loot. Dodson, taking the final spell on Riley No 26, homed 26 seconds in front of Hall, who in turn beat the third-place man, Fane, on a type 328 BMW, by a mortifying 8 min 45 sec. B35AE's race average, 80.87 mph, was the fastest

ever logged at Ards, and was to survive as an overall TT record, regardless of circuit, until Moss in a C-Jaguar turned 83.55 at Dundrod 15 years and a world war later. This 1951 race was two hours shorter, moreover.

Apart from the TT, B35AE's only other prewar competition appearances were in Britain's top international hillclimb, Shelsley Walsh. There Hall demonstrated the old churn's versatility by winning his class the same three years he was earning the nickname of the Eternal Second at Ards.

Thereafter the Bentley dropped from sight for 14 years, finally turning up at Le Mans in 1950. The march of time had dealt less kindly with the car than with its owner. E. R. Hall still looked fattish, fortyish and perennially buoyant. B35AE, on the other hand, had been transformed by the addition of a most inartistic hard-top and a nondescript cowl over the classic Bentley radiator shell. Nonetheless, the co-makers of the Eternal Second legend certainly didn't disgrace themselves, driving singlehandedly to eighth place overall.

Hall sold B35AE to Briggs Cunningham seven months later, complete with all parts necessary for a reconversion to TT specification and in April of 1951 the Bentley that never quite won a Tourist Trophy took up residence in the classic car heaven at Green Farms. #

PEPPERING THE SPRITE

(Continued from page 21)

Efficient exhaust systems for hot Sprites follow the same general pattern in each case—being fabricated with three header pipes merging into one main outlet—and usually sell between £15 and £17.

A serious hot-up may also include lightened cam followers, at £5.13.0 a set, and rocker spacers at £3.10.0. It is the little things, such as detail attention to seemingly minor points, that spell the difference between the place-getters and the also-rans. Spark plugs for hot road cars are usually Lodge 2HLN or 3HLNs, or KLG FE 80 or FE 100s. The RL47 Lodge and FE 220 KLG plugs are for the most potent plants.

The Mk One's standard gear ratios leave something to be desired for racing purposes, and it is best to fit the same internals as used in the Mk Two's transmission. Here is a comparison of the overall ratios for all three models when fitted with a 4.22 to 1 final drive.

	Mark One	Mark Two	Mark Two A
First	15.3 to 1	13.5 to 1	13.5 to 1
Second	10.01 to 1	8.08 to 1	8.08 to 1
Third	5.95 to 1	5.83 to 1	5.73 to 1

The parts required to obtain the Mk Two's closer ratios cost approximately £42.

Alternative final drive ratios are 4.55 to 1, 4.8 to 1, 3.9 to 1 and 3.72 to 1. The most popular ratio, apart from standard 4.22, is 4.5 because it allows better acceleration and under some conditions higher maximum speed.

Finally, let's tally up and see just how much it costs to put a Sprite in first class racing condition.

Wheels converted and Roadspeed tyres	£60	0	0
Stabiliser bar (heavy duty)	8	0	0
Engine, completely modified	300	0	0
Clutch (nine-spring conversion)	7	10	0
Balancing and crack-testing	15	0	0
Oil cooler	14	10	0
Mark Two Sprite gear set	42	0	0
	£447	0	0

Torque, torque... nothing but torque!

To soup or not to soup... whether tis better to gas-flow or blow? It's a tough job holding up your end of the conversation unless you're an expert: and you can't lay claim to being an expert unless you have a red-hot rocket to be expert about... which is where Sydney Speed Shop roars on to the scene. With S.S.S. speed equipment and advice behind you, you can own the most talked-about car this side of Silverstone, all without overloading your financial bearings. Try it and see.

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