



# WESSEX VEHICLE PRESERVATION CLUB

FOUNDED 1971

[www.wvpc.org.uk](http://www.wvpc.org.uk)



## 'WESSEX WAYS' JUNE 2018

### VEHICLE OF THE MONTH



The **Austin Healey Sprite** - the small British sports car that made a huge impact 60 years ago. On May 20 in 1958, Longbridge's PR department made the following highly immodest proclamation – "Today the Austin Motor Company makes motoring history with the announcement of a completely new small and inexpensive sports car". The Austin-Healey Sprite promised "full size performance" but was small enough for a chap to "keep in his bike shed" while an advertising film featuring Roy Salvadori and John Bolster at Silverstone had thousands of motorists reaching for their cheque books, cravats and flat caps – see the video of Salvadori testing the car on YouTube.

The Sprite was famously the result of a 1956 meeting between Leonard Lord, the managing director of the British Motor Corporation, and Donald Healey. Both parties identified the demand for a compact two-seater along the lines of the pre-war Austin Seven Nippy, one that would hopefully see its owners graduating to a MGA or an Austin-Healey 100/6 within a few years. The new sports car would employ as many existing components as possible – the 4-speed gearbox, front suspension and rear axle were from the Austin A35, the rack and pinion steering from the Morris Minor and power would be from the familiar 948cc A-series engine augmented with twin SU carburetors. The Sprite was also to be the world's first mass-produced sports car to employ unitary construction techniques and it was originally intended to be equipped with retractable headlamps. These were ultimately judged to be too expensive to manufacture and the result was the immediately recognisable "Frogeye" profile. The official PR announcement made much of the Sprite following in the tradition of the marque – "With the introduction of the Sprite, Austins are opening a new era in the sports car field, as not since 1938 has a small sports car been made by the Company" – and none of the other "Big Five" of British car manufacturers offered a comparable model.

“The most exciting car on the road for £668 17s, tax paid” (about £11,200 today allowing for inflation) was within the financial reach of those enthusiasts whose previous set of wheels was a home-built Ford 100E-powered kit car or a second-hand Singer Roadster. The latest Austin-Healey was a contemporary design with a top speed of more than 80mph that still retained many of the trappings of a “traditional” British sports car, from the detachable side-screens and the lack of exterior door handles and locks.

The Sprite was produced on the cheap, using as many parts from existing cars as possible. Note the lack of exterior door handles and locks. BMC further boasted that “a wide range of extra equipment is available including heater and demister, windscreen washer, rev-counter, tonneau cover and laminated windscreen”. A further extra was the front bumper on home-market cars, while the non-adjustable passenger seat made travel for the very tall an interesting challenge, but this was all par for the course for a 1958-vintage sports car buyer. The Sprite also lacked a boot lid – this was due to the rear panel being stressed – which proved a considerable nuisance when attempting to change a wheel or packing a suitcase!

The press raved about the Sprite; *Motor Sport* concluded that “at the price this latest product of Donald Healey and the Austin Motor Company is a vehicle of many merits and no vices” and *Autosport* thought “every credit is due to the manufacturers for instigating what will undoubtedly prove to be a new era in the popularity of small-capacity, open car motoring”. On the other side of the Atlantic, *Road & Track* thought that the Sprite “offers more fun per dollar than anything we have driven for a long time”.



The “Frogeye” was replaced by the slightly more conventional looking Mk2 in the spring of 1961, and by that time the Austin-Healey had revolutionised the British sports car market. For the price of a Morris Minor or a Ford Anglia, a driver could enjoy truly exuberant motoring that cars cost twice or three times the amount might struggle to match. For the sheer joy of driving – and being able to afford it – it’s the Sprite that’s a delight wherever you go” claimed the advertisements in 1959. And for once this was not mere sales hyperbole. The basics – the Mark 1 was produced from 1958 to 1961, 948cc 4-cylinder engine, twin carburettors, 4-speed gearbox, length 1’5”, 0 to 60mph in 20.5 seconds.

### **A MESSAGE FROM SOMEONE WHO IS NO LONGER THE CHAIRMAN, BUT WHO LIKES TO KEEP IN TOUCH!**

**MAY CLUB NIGHT** – I should say that I thought the last meeting was quite entertaining, with an interesting talk by Mathew Whitney, auctioneer at the local Charterhouse Auction House, referring to bygone motoring bits and pieces. I was pleased to hear that my old Corker Crash Helmet that cost 19/6p is now worth about £100! I also saw his eyes popping out of his head as he went around the room giving you all his estimates. His words to me at the end of the evening were this must be the wealthiest bunch of motorists in Dorset! Doug.

**WEST-MOORS FUN DAY – Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup> – Fryer Field Recreation Ground, Bond Avenue, West Moors, Ferndown BH22 0LJ**

Just to remind you all that we have been asked if we could provide a few cars for this local event. I have been to the playing field venue and seen the layout, and I can confirm that the event is easily reached and does not entail driving miles across the grass. There will be just 2 clubs showing cars, that is us and the Bournemouth and Poole club, so I am hoping for a good turnout and lots of support. If you are thinking of coming along could you please be there by 10am. I look forward to your support and will see you there. There will of course be no charge for vehicle displays. This is also a request to all of you BIKERS to also come along and put on a good display of your pride and joys, and to support this local event. There is plenty of room to make a real nice display of bikes, so would you please support us on the day if you can. I look forward to seeing some of you, and could you be there by 10am. Doug.

## **BROADSTONE FAMILY FUN DAY - Sunday 1st July 2018**

**Classic/Premium Vehicle Display Broadstone Recreation Ground, Lower Blandford Road, BH18 8NZ**

<http://broadstonefieldsintrust.org.uk/> Our Dorset area has a wealth of Classic, Exotic, Prestige and Interesting cars, bikes and other vehicles tucked away in garages. We are looking to get as many as we can to display to the public. There is no charge for entry to the vehicle display.

### **CLASSIC CAR ARTICLE - 1951 MG YA Saloon – By Ian Curry**



Of all the vices a man can have, car collecting isn't a bad one to be burdened with. That's not to say it can't lead to problems of course. Maintaining classic vehicles is time consuming and often expensive, and storing them safely is a constant headache. And once you've got the collecting bug, there's every chance you'll crumble to temptation when the next appealing classified advertisement is spotted.

Frank Carroll has amassed an impressive haul in recent years, favouring the elegance of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley brands, but he hasn't been able to resist the graceful charms of another British export. This is his recently acquired 1951 MG YA saloon (sedan), spotted in a club magazine looking the bit worse for wear, which now joins his Rolls Royce collection including a 1927 Phantom 1, 1979 Silver Shadow II, 1987 Silver Spur and colossal 2007 Phantom Pearl.



1951 MG YA.

"I was attracted by the MG's appearance in the photos; it has lovely proportions and exudes style," the Sunshine Coast solicitor said. "I'd not really considered an MG up to buying this, but am now considering more MGs of this series."

Frank paid \$5500 Australian (£3,120) for the 65-year-old four-door sedan earlier this year, saying it was in neglected but running condition. He reckons he's spent about the same again tidying the MG up and bringing it to roadworthy standard, but Frank's a known perfectionist who spots even the most minor of blemishes, so it's certain there's more work in the pipeline.

As it is, the 1951 YA presents beautifully. Its striking black paintwork with subtle red detailing is tastefully set against re-chromed body parts, all done locally on the Sunshine Coast. "The parts I've sourced locally and overseas," Frank said. "They're easy to get hold of, and up to now I've fitted a new radiator, new front wheel bearings, hoses, pipes, water pump, battery and front and rear indicators."

Ever the enthusiast historian, Frank has also researched the story behind his MG. It was exported to Melbourne in the year of its build, was constantly registered and on the road, and underwent restoration in 1998. A previous owner sourced an original owner's handbook, maintenance manual, sales brochure and tool kit, before it became a daily driver in Brisbane from 2006 for the most recent past owner.

The cabin is certainly a squeeze for front seat passengers, but it is delightfully appointed in red leather with wooden dashboard, burr walnut for window and screen surrounds, and MG-specific octagonal dials. There are some quirky touches too. The windscreen opens at its base, it has a rear window blind, while rare for the period are a sliding steel sunroof and adjustable telescopic steering column. It also features lovely old "trafficators" - illuminated signals popping out from the door frame which served as indicators back in the day.



Powering the classic MG is a 1250cc four-cylinder engine with single carburettor, meaning progress is tardy. The YA sedan model was more of a cruiser than sports car however - hence the well-appointed cabin - and Frank said it's a very simple and comfortable old thing to steer. "It drives really nicely thanks to the synchro gearbox and rack and pinion steering, while the suspension is good and it doesn't pitch or roll."

Motoring for pleasure is what a car like this is all about, and in his short ownership Frank has already completed some lengthy trips, including a lunch jaunt with four adults inside. "The engine is nice and tight, it sits at about 90kmh (56mph) and I just love driving it," he said. "I'm keen to drive it at least once a week locally, and I've already got my eye on another MG, probably a tourer."

The comparatively small MG is clearly flavour of the month in Frank's garage, and even though his first affection will remain for his Rolls-Royces, the elegant post-war YA is proving a delight. If nothing else, it's a lot easier to park than its giant stablemates.

**Vital statistics - Model:** MG YA Saloon. 6,158 four door sedans produced in England between 1947 and 1953. **Engine:** 1250cc in-line pushrod four-cylinder with single SU 1W carburettor.

**Transmission:** Four-speed manual with synchro on 2nd, 3rd and top. **Performance:** 0-60mph (97kmh) in 29.3 seconds.

**Did you know?** To help wheel changes and maintenance these cars featured a Smiths "Jackall" four-wheel hydraulic jacking system where four jacks could be lowered at each corner at the same time to support the car completely off the ground.

### **WVPC COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chairman – Vacant, club to be run on a 'Team Management' basis.

Secretary – Janet Palmer – [familypalmer29@hotmail.com](mailto:familypalmer29@hotmail.com)

Treasurer – Val Baker.

Website Co-ordinator - Dennis Stranack – [wvpcweb@gmail.com](mailto:wvpcweb@gmail.com) and [alpinecruising@gmail.com](mailto:alpinecruising@gmail.com)

Motorcycle Section – Colin Baker - [bikes@wvpc.org.uk](mailto:bikes@wvpc.org.uk)

Committee members - Christine Fletcher, Mo Cronk, Doug Cronk.

### **PRELIMINARY CALENDER OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup>** - Cream Tea Run.

**Tuesday July 10<sup>th</sup>** - An insight into the infamous A6 murder by ex-policeman Paul Stickler.

**Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup>** - Lymington Classic Car Show – contact Lymington Rotary website.

**Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup>** - Another Bingo by popular demand.

**Tuesday September 11<sup>th</sup>** - A quiz night with prizes.

**Tuesday October 9<sup>th</sup>** - Baked Spud Night, a bit earlier this year as last year was too close to Christmas.

**Tuesday November 13<sup>th</sup>** - The ever popular AGM.

**Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup>** - To be decided.

### **CREAM TEA RUN – Sunday June 24th.**

Hi, Just to let everyone know that there will be a cream tea run this year, but it will not be held in the same place as last year due to the drastic increase in the cost which was put down to the increase in the rental of the hall, so I have shopped around and managed to find an alternative; so if you feel you would like to come along then here are the details:-

The run will be on Sunday June 24th and will start at the Cobham Sports and Social Club. Ideally, you should arrive around 1.15pm and leave at 1.45pm sharp, followed by a drive around the countryside of Dorset arriving at the Courtyard, at Lytchett Minster, at around 3.00pm where tea will be served in the large hall. As always, I am looking for your support. The cost of the teas are £5.50 per person. Doug.

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#### **CREAM TEA RUN.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ VEHICLE REG \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CREAM TEAS AT £5.50 £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay by cash if you see me or post cheque to me made payable to WVPC Ltd. The cut-off date is Monday 18th June so any received after this will be unlucky. Please post to 91, Pinehurst Park, West-Moors, Dorset, BH22 0BP. Thank you in advance for your continued support. Doug.

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### **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS – 2018**

As I am sure most of our members are aware, these new regulations are now in force, and it is important that the club makes sure that they are complying. On the next page is a letter from the secretary Janet Palmer, explain the situation. Every member should read this carefully, then sign it in the appropriate position at the end. You can either cut out/copy the letter and hand it in at a club meeting, post it to the secretary, or you could copy it on your computer, sign it, and send it as an attachment to [familypalmer29@hotmail.com](mailto:familypalmer29@hotmail.com)

May 2018

Janet Palmer  
Secretary  
Wessex Vehicle Preservation Club Ltd  
c/o 52 Anstey Road  
Bournemouth  
BH11 9HG

Dear WVPC Member

Subject: General Data Protection Regulations – 2018

**PLEASE RETURN TO:**  
the above address  
**(OR HAND IT IN)**

**IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ**

You may be aware that the above legislation comes into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and replaces the Data Protection Act of 1998. It affects any organisation that collects and stores personal data. It therefore applies to our club and we need to take action in order that we comply with its provisions.

Our procedures will therefore be amended as follows:

- (1) We will request specific consent from you to store your data,
- (2) We will undertake to delete your data when you leave the club,
- (3) You can request to see the data held on you.

The data will only be used for the purposes of routine club management – ie communication with you, issuing newsletters and sending details of future events etc. The information is used in the administration of the Club and allows confirmation of current membership. We confirm that we do not pass on the membership details to third parties for marketing or other purposes. If we receive a specific request for information on a particular member, we will contact that member and advise them of the request- rather than just passing on the information. The database is not stored on-line and is only accessible by Committee members on private personal computers.

**We therefore need to gain your specific consent to allow retention of your information on the basis of the provisions set out in this letter. Please therefore sign and return this letter (or a copy) immediately. Unfortunately, without this consent we will be unable to continue your membership and unused subscription will be refunded to you. You should also be aware that if you do not renew your membership within two months of the renewal time, your record will be deleted and you will have to re-join as a new member (if required).**

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer  
WVPC Ltd Secretary

PLEASE STATE YOUR FULL NAME AND MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:-

NAME.....MEMB. NO.....

I,..... confirm that I have read the above and agree to the use of my data for these purposes.

CONTINUE MEMBERSHIP
Signed: _____
Date: _____

**OR:** I,.....confirm that I have read the above and request that my **membership is cancelled and that my data is erased.**

CEASE MEMBERSHIP
Signed: _____
Date: _____