



## For Sprite Lovers

Kevin R. Sharp, Northeast Region

### Roger's Sprite

Most of you will remember the letter from Roger Menadue I published back in the November '96 issue of *CHATTER*. It was a direct reprint of a letter Roger kindly sent to me about some of his experiences working with the Healeys doing what they did best: making great cars. Towards the end of his letter he mentioned the existence of a car very special to Roger and to all Sprite lovers due to its significance, the Falcon bodied Sprite Roger literally created.

If you missed the column, the pertinent paragraphs read:

"Kevin, there is one interesting Sprite in the States that you may be able to uncover. If you have Geoff Healey's book on Sprites entitled *More Healeys: Frogeyes, Sprites, and Midgets*, see pages 97, 144, 146 and

147. This is a prototype that I built with a "Falcon" glass fibre body. It was always referred to at Warwick, and especially by Donald, as "Roger's Sprite." It was a very successful car as well, winning its class at Nassau, Sebring and LeMans. The last I heard of it, it was [in] Columbus, OH...

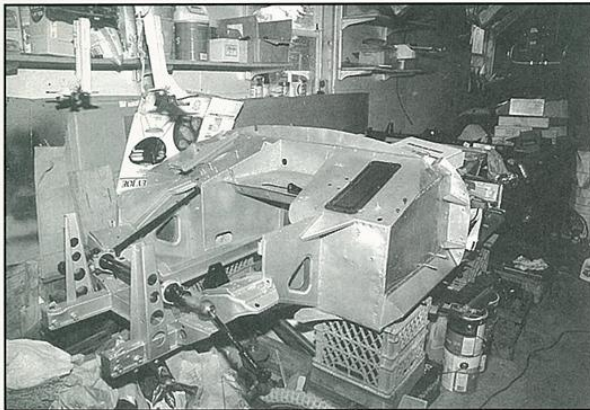
"I always feel it a shame if such an important car remains "buried," as these Specials gave us an awful lot of information that was carried on into the production cars... and were such fun to build!"

I am very happy to report that the car is alive and, although in pieces, doing pretty well in Columbus, OH, in the care of Mr. Roger Sieling, an engineer with what appears to me to be incredible restoration

talent, and a deep interest in the car ... once he finishes a few Lotus vintage racing projects!

Acquiring the car literally from an old farm near Columbus, now a shopping mall, Roger really didn't know what he had until he started dismantling the car. Finding some interesting numbers, and recognizing some Sprite features from his own long experience with Sprites, he knew he had something special. He was right!

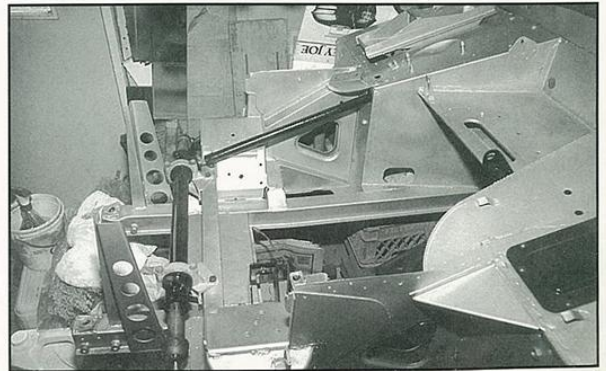
The poor dear's life after racing is not well known, but clearly was not kind. She was rolled during a test drive with a potential customer, the less than perfect repairs of which you can still see in the photos below. Then sadly, and still inexplicably, she ended up parked on an Ohio farm,



**Left:** The tub as it is today. Neglect, corrosion, exposure and a rollover required fabrication of many new parts. **Right:** The rear end of the tub. This ain't no street Sprite!



**Left:** The bonnet placed upon the tub. You can see what the lines looked like! **Right:** Closeup of the front end. The steering rack is gorgeous! Roger had to fabricate the uprights.

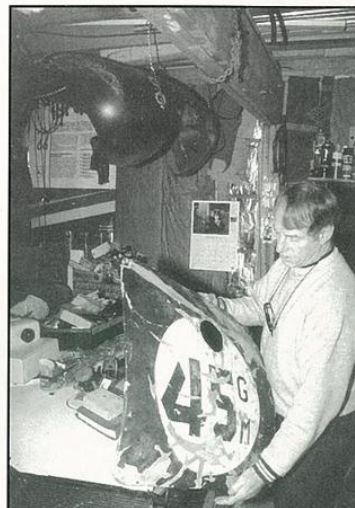


exposed, for far too many years. Roger Sieling literally dragged her out of the ground! [I truly hope to work with Mr. Sieling to develop a column about what he knows about this car. It should make fascinating reading.]

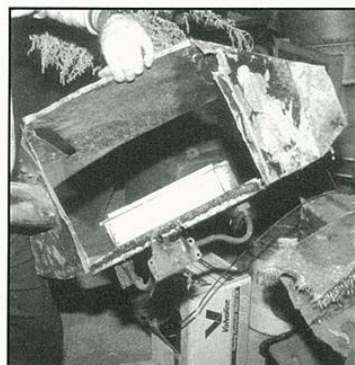
Recently I had occasion to go to Highland Heights, KY, on business, and in the interest of saving my company a lot of money on air fare, I volunteered to spend the weekend out there, only an hour and a half or so from Columbus and Roger's Sprite (BOTH

Rogers!). Hmmm and only an hour from the United States Air Force Museum, where I haven't been in years. No, really! I had my company's best interest at heart, honest!

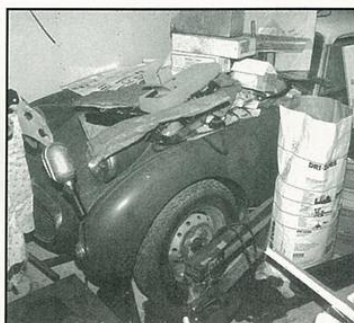
So without further adieu, Roger's Sprite today! ☺



**Left:** Underside of the bonnet, as is. **Center:** Roger Sieling holds the original end panels for the boot/fuel cell structure. The original floor is in the bottom of his fabricated replacement. **Right:** The boot lid, like the bonnet, in its current condition. Above Roger's head is the rear shroud waiting for attention.



**Left:** Original, left, versus newly fabricated, right. Roger's done all the work, and it is simply impeccable. **Center:** The rear end has received the same attention as the body. Roger holds one of the very unique locating clamps, beautifully restored. **Right:** The lofi: that's the original airbox for the car, and it's not in bad shape. Roger also has a complete, disassembled, MG-TD up there.



**Left:** The front shroud, resting and waiting on its custom-built wooden support structure. There's a lot of history these pieces are waiting to tell, and evidence of a LOT of modifications at some point in the car's past. **Right:** This little guy really caught my eye. You wouldn't believe the cars Roger has in his garage. I'm happy to report Mr. Menadue's car is in very caring, capable hands. Watch this space!