

# The Clubsprint (for want of a better name)

Alex McDonald

With all the interest in the Locost idea of the Lotus 7 I decided to build a low budget car, not a Locost as such as this basically means scrounging around for parts over a fairly long period of time.

As I had made various body parts for the seven for a number of years I decided to put everything together with the chassis frame from Graham Berry and offer it as a basic kit. As I progressed into the building of the car more and more fibreglass panels were made in preference to aluminium. These are not traditional I hear you say, neither is fitting a Japanese Toyota engine I reply. Firstly I find it easier to work in fibreglass and secondly it gives the builder the choice to make his own aluminium panels or buy the fibreglass panels ready to fit.

One of the first tasks was to look for a Mk2 Escort preferably 1600cc. Because time or lack of it was becoming important I ended up buying a 1300cc Escort, it ran quite well but had a smoking engine, you can't expect too much for \$150.

The car was duly stripped of everything I would need and the shell was sent to Pick a Part. The head was taken off and the valves were found to be the worse for wear. I decided that although the engine horsepower was down on the rice pudding skin removal ability, for what I would be using the car for it would be adequate, a bit like Rolls Royce, so I took the head down to Kerry Lindsay to have a \$200 recondition.

The front stub axles and discs used are from a Mk 4 Cortina. A few months ago I decided to have a clean out of the factory and threw out the Cortina parts I had accumulated for the Sabre including stub axles and discs, now I had to go up to Pick a Part to buy some, I also bought a Sierra steering column and a Mitsubishi Mirage master cylinder and booster, these were cleaned up and inspected and worn parts were replaced



*Front view*

with new parts.

Assembly could now commence. The chassis had been powder coated and the aluminium floor and bulkheads were fitted. The fibreglass side panels and rear panel was fitted. As all the fibreglass panels were finished in a yellow gelcoat no painting was required. With the panels fitted the front suspension and steering were fitted then the Escort rear axle. As the chassis came with the brake and clutch pedals fitted, it was a simple job to fit the master cylinder and booster. The petrol tank, brake and petrol lines were put into place. With the reconditioned head fitted the engine and gearbox were fitted. Barnicol engineering made the driveshaft. Fitting the handbrake was a fairly simple job I had the



*Clam shell front guard option*

inner cable shortened and fitted the cable into the back axle right to left, the outer cable and adjuster was held by a drilled plate welded to the rear of the transmission tunnel.

Most of the build up was straightforward. Little problems were the wiring, the plugs of the Escort fit, the Sierra column which was a bit of luck but there was an earth wire missing that took a bit of sorting out. In Ron Champion's book he says to use the Mini windscreen wiper assembly, the motor and gearboxes. What we found was that the assembly from the Mini gave too large a sweep of the wipers, fitting a larger box gave too small a sweep. Finally I found a gearbox which gave about the right sweep. There are at least six different gear wheels that fit the Lucas motor these give a variety of length the wire moves backwards and forwards, this coupled with different size cogs in the wiper box gives a large range of sweeps the wipers can make.

I made some more fibreglass bits to finish off the car these were a centre console, a battery tray, a boot with a recess for the jack and

spanners this fitted in the hole behind the seats and a holder for the headlights and indicators.



*Pedal assembly brackets*

The exercise was to build a car to reasonable budget but this took a knock when I had to buy new tyres and radiator, also I couldn't find a cheap alternative for coil over shocks. These items added up to about \$2000.

All up with the cost of the kit, the fibreglass panels and the windscreen and glass being at the price Almac would sell them for the final cost came to just over \$12,000



*A boot big enough for the shopping*



*Sprint seats*



*Complete kit*