

GOBLINS' GAZETTE

The official publication of the
AUSTIN HEALEY SPRITE
DRIVERS' CLUB INC



APRIL 2023



A BUGEYE 65TH BIRTHDAY
BRITISH & EUROPEAN CAR SHOW
JOIN THE MOVE TO SHEPPARTON

Print Post Publication Number 100000434



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AUSTIN HEALEY SPRITE
DRIVERS' CLUB INC



PO Box 248, Box Hill Victoria 3128

www.ahsdc.org



REGULAR CONTENT

Calendar of Events.....	4
Committee 2023.....	4
President's Point.....	5
Team Social MOVE.....	6
Team Social Coming Events.....	9
Round & About.....	11
Competition.....	12
March Club Meeting.....	17
Club Gear.....	22
For Sale or Wanted.....	24
Club Permit Scheme.....	26

FEATURE CONTENT

A Bugeye Birthday.....	5
Kalorama Rally.....	7
British & European Car Show.....	7
Mid Week Drives 2023.....	8
Winton Historics.....	15
Phillip Island Classic.....	16
Snippets.....	17
The Road Less Travelled.....	18
Gordon Murray Loves a Bugeye.....	18
When the Bug Bites.....	20
Insulting in the Best Possible Way.....	23

The AHSDC meets on the first Friday of each month (except January).
The meeting is at the clubrooms at 19-23 Rosalie Street, Springvale (Melway 80 A8).

DEADLINE FOR GOBLINS' GAZETTE IS THE SECOND FRIDAY OF EVERY
MONTH except December - **no mag in January**

Articles and photos can be sent to mandypj@optusnet.com.au

Please send photos as separate files DO NOT embed in word documents

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CALENDAR FOR APRIL & MAY 2023

Date	Event	Organiser
30 Mar- 2 Apr	Australian Grand Prix Albert Park	AGP
14 Apr	AHSDC General Meeting NOTE REVISED DATE 23 Rosalie Street Springvale 6.30pm	AHSDC
15 Apr	MSCA Winton Sprints More information see competition pages	MSCA
16 Apr	Rob Roy Hillclimb More information see competition pages	MGCC
20 Apr	Jack's Drive See page 8 for details	AHSDC
5 May	AHSDC General Meeting 23 Rosalie Street Springvale 6.30pm	AHSDC
7 May	Mallala 6-Hour More information see competition pages	MSCA SA
7 May	MSCA Sandown Sprints More information see competition pages	MSCA
11 May	Jack's Drive See page 8 for details	AHSDC
27-28 May	Winton Histories See pages 5, 14 & 15	Austin 7 AHSDC

Please note dates are subject to change. This calendar is not a comprehensive list of events, there may be other events held on the same dates in other locations. Check out the club's website, it is regularly updated www.ahsdc.org

AHSDC 2023 COMMITTEE

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Bob Lomas 0418 382 299

Motorsport Australia Delegate

Mike Welsh 0416 254 599

Sprite Register & Club Permit Officer

Warren Reid 9870 9442

cpsadmin@ahsdc.org

AOMC Delegate

Bob Lomas 0418 382 299

Webmaster

Dave Wallace 0438 856 353

Club Solicitor

Stratton Langslow
205 William Street, Melbourne.

The AHSDC Inc is affiliated with Motorsport Australia and is a member of the Marque Sports Car Association & the Association of Motoring Clubs.

Well last meeting we had an excellent talk on how to adjust the SU carbys on the Sprite ...add a BMW head and throw the SUs out ...an interesting and captivating idea.

I listened intently and looked under the bonnet, and I spied all these modifications, changes, additions and oddley no gaffer tape holding parts on like on my Sprite?

I thought what's going on? Is this car reliable? We all know how the modern cars break down (well as the say when the chips are down), surprisingly there was a Sprite hiding under the BMW head.

I love it when people get involved and modify, embrace technology and/or simply decide to ignore the old imperative (if it aint broke dont fix it).

Honestly a great talk and great car ...thanks for sharing.

Now I hear that we are off to Shepparton and to visit the restored truck museum. I may try and put a Kenworth engine into the old sprite, what do you think? You're dreaming!

Ok, back to serious matters. My car is on the rotisserie and I have started its restoration project, I can hear the cries of just get me out of the shed and back to the track.

Therefore my car is very similar to my dog who is also keen to get back to the track.

Speaking of tracks, we had a good turnout for Phillip island, what a beautiful day, and some had an opportunity to drive the actual course.

There is a lot of good club activities organised, the more we engage the more we enjoy and as a bonus we make good friends with a common love of our beautiful little cars.

I note that this year the clubrooms we use are celebrating their 30 years with a night in May at the clubrooms to which we have been invited, and as history is important we also note that this year we celebrate the 65th year of our Sprites and realise that the Austin Healey Sprite Drivers' Club was established in 1966 appropriately above a garage. From small starts big things grow... we know that great things come in small packages so we must remember there is a lot to celebrate in our history, our associations and our future as a club.

Understand the Austin Healey Sprite Drivers' Club is made up of the members and a wider Sprite family.

Enough Ramblings come to Winton

*See your wheels in motion soon ...
Regards Jules*

CELEBRATE THE BUGEYE'S 65TH BIRTHDAY AT THE WINTON HISTORICS

This year the 28 May is the 65th anniversary of the Sprite! And, by happy coincidence, it is the Sunday of the Winton Historic race meeting and we would love as many members as possible to make their way to Winton in their Spridgets.

The committee is planning some "celebration catering" at Winton on either the 27th or 28th to celebrate the anniversary!

Please start your engines and your planning (and booking accommodation) and let Scott Benjamin or me know if you'll be there and on which day or days so we can cater accordingly.

Did you know... we have nearly 1400 followers on our Facebook page, many of whom are national and international people, car clubs and associations.



Whether you're on Facebook or not, feel free to contribute to our page either by 'liking', commenting, putting up a post, or sending me photos, stories or anecdotes to share.

Stories about our members' other interests or achievements are also terrific and nothing will be put in a post without the permission of the people concerned.

Every three months I will update our cover photo so please send me any photos you have that you think would

be suitable, old or new. The one of the two Bugeyes facing each other has been very well received... especially by followers in Japan!

It's great to share what members are doing as we are an active club, with interesting members and many great spritely adventures past, present and future! Bragging rights permitted!

Emma Riddington

Team Social

Sprites on the M.O.V.E to Shepparton



Team Social has spent two days in Shepparton recently; organizing what we think will be a perfect weekend away in June.

Our adventure begins with a convoy. Our boys have hithered, thithered, got lost, driven up dead end roads and enthusiastically explored the countryside to ensure that we will all have a pleasant scenic drive from Beasley's Nursery to Shepparton.

On the way we will pause for coffee for those that need their caffeine and a wee for those of us not on incontinence pads.

At approximately 1pm we will arrive in Shepparton, park our cars under cover and head for the Milestone Café, which serves very tasty lunches washed down with your favourite beverage. After lunch we will walk next door to the impressive, new Museum Of Vehicle Evolution, M.O.V.E.

If you were there four years ago, even two years ago, you would have experienced less than a third of what they now have on offer.

The modern extension has been described as "MOVE on steroids", and the exhibitions are much more significant. The Kenworth & Legends of Road Transport exhibition is fascinating and the stories of the drivers make you connect in a much more personal way with the exhibition.

The Fashion exhibition is also extensive and creatively presented. Take a journey through 200 years of Australian fashion with this collection of clothing, jewellery, accessories 7,500 objects, collected over 40 years by Loel Thomson OAM, tell the stories of everyday Australians from Federation up to the present day.

The collection also includes an extensive research library, with books and magazines on every conceivable topic relating to fashion and costume.

Of course, there are cars too, beautifully restored. Three of the top 10 Australian restorers actually live and work in Shepparton and their work is on display in the venue.

M.O.V.E regularly hosts other exhibitions and while we are there the Elfin cars will be displayed which should be a real treat... and speaking of treats, if the above is not to

your taste then you will find an array of shops two minutes walk away.

There's the Chocolate Apple Factory that hands out samples, a collectables shop bursting at the seams and even a nursery selling garden ornaments where you could buy a gnome to match your sprite.

Our accommodation is at the Peppermill Inn, which combines motel and hotel; we book in, park our cars in front of our rooms, meet for Happy Hour, and then stroll across for our evening meal.

The following morning will find us at SAM, the (Shepparton Art Museum) enjoying a private tour of this state of the Arts gallery.

We will then luncheon at the café in the gallery and the formal part of our weekend is over. After that some will gleefully head for the SPC factory sales while others enjoy their leisurely journey home.

Each of us in Team Social has been pleasantly surprised with what Shepparton has to offer. If you wish there are walks around the lake, the Botanical gardens or the look-out, tours of the Silos in the area and even a mapped out street arts tour. Nearby there is Tahbilk and Mitchelson winery or Nagambie Brewery.

It should be a whole lot of fun.

We are hoping that you like what we have packaged and would love it if you would join us. What you need to do now is phone and book your accommodation at:

Peppermill Inn Hotel, 7900 Goulburn Valley Highway, Kialla, 3630 Ph: 03 5823 1800 or email: entertainment@peppermillinn.com.au the cost is \$139. We have booked the ground floor rooms in the name of the AHSDC so all you need to do is advise that you want one of these rooms and you will get the reduced price.

Please advise Team Social that you have taken one of the booked rooms.

*Team Social:
Bib 0412 937 379
Sue 0499 968 472
Trish 0408 109 624*

65th Annual Kalorama Rally

The Kalorama Rally is likely the oldest continually run event of its type in Australia. It is a gathering of Veteran, Vintage, Post Vintage and Post War cars and motor cycles with an emphasis on Pre-war vehicles.

All vehicles manufactured prior to 1990 are eligible for display on the oval. It is expected that around 400 vehicles of all persuasion will be on display.

After taking part in the 'Mystery Tour' to kick off the day, the only Sprite at the 65th Annual Kalorama Rally took refuge for the rest of the day (by invitation) with a bunch of welcoming Austin Sevens.

As usual this event presented a great display of wonderful old motor cars under blue skies in the very best of surroundings.

David & Valerie King



The British & European Motoring Show



The AOMC held the annual British and European Motoring Show this year at a new venue Caribbean Park in Scoresby. In previous years this event has been held at the Yarra Glen Race Course but it was moved to Scoresby to make it more accessible. Caribbean Park is an excellent site easily accommodating hundreds of classic cars and spectators.

The AHSDC had a reserved area with 12 Spridgets on display plus several other members coming along for a chat and a wander around the rows and rows of exotic vehicles. The phrase 'I wish...' was heard many times throughout the day (probably from Graham)!

The Triumph Sports Owners had more than 100 cars; mainly to celebrate 100 years of Triumph cars. The Jaguars won best club display.

Sue Dows



Team Social

Mid Week Drives 2023

Starting 16 March we are off and running for another year. All the drives are on a Thursday starting at 10am sharp from Beasley's Nursery, 195 Heidelberg Warrandyte Road, Warrandyte.

Hospitality is still struggling with staff problems, so please book in before the Monday night prior to the drive.

Please let Jack de Bruijne know if you are coming either by email to jdebrona@gmail.com or phone or SMS to 0403 323 584.

The dates and end venues are as follows, but subject to change.

20 April	The Hill - Berwick
11 May	Dudleys - Olinda
1 June	Home Hotel - Launching Place
22 June	Bridges - Hurstbridge
13 July	Warburton Hotel - Wesburn
3 August	Micawber Tavern - Belgrave
24 August	Alpine Hotel - Warburton
14 September	Grand Hotel - Yarra Glen
19 October	Kinglake Hotel
2 November	Diamond Creek Hotel
16 November	Cunninghams Hotel - Yarra Junction

The drives are approximately 70 miles long with half completed before a morning tea stop, and the other half before lunch.

Lunch normally finishes about 2.30pm and then you make your own way home.

Come along and give your car a run and meet up with the friendly group. The roads are usually fairly quiet on a Thursday too.

Just so you can see how much fun the drives are and that everyone in every car is welcome here are photos from the last Mid Week Drive for 2022 held on 24 November.



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Team Social Coming Events

17 & 18 JUNE IS M.O.V.E MUSEUM AND WONDERFUL ART GALLERY:

This should be a great event in June. The world class MOVE Museum contains cars, motorbikes, trucks, buses and much more.

One of the vehicle exhibitions is the Kenworth Dealer Pavilion which houses trucks and other commercial vehicles of varying ages. This pavilion also features the legends of the local trucking and transport industry, telling the story of their lives and their businesses. It is fascinating.

For those who aren't interested in vehicles there is an extensive Loel Thomson Costume Collection. This collection takes a journey through 200 years of Australian fashion in clothing, jewellery, accessories and more. 7,500 objects, collected over 40 years, tell the stories of everyday Australians from Federation up to the present day. With pieces you've never heard of alongside the familiar, old and new and everything in between, there's something to interest everyone.

If you are interested please contact Bib, Sue or Trish for details.

1 & 2 SEPTEMBER IN APOLLO BAY

We are really looking forward to this leisurely weekend of winding drives, interesting places to visit, and sitting on



the dock of the bay sharing a wine and perhaps some of their famous seafood, which is delicious.

The motel we have chosen is Apollo Bay Best Western, which has all accommodation on the ground floor. This means you just have to alight from your car (or unfold from your Spridget) and take a few steps to your room. Simple! The motel is also very central so we are hoping that most can simply walk to dinner. It should be a lot of fun and we would love you to join us.

Team Social:
Bib 0412 937 379
Sue 0499 968 472
Trish 0408 109 624



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Wedding Anniversaries

Congratulations to all the happy couples who tied the knot years ago.

- *Alex and Garry Neeman celebrated their 20th wedding Anniversary on Anzac Day. "Lest he forget".*
- *Mandy & Simon tied the knot on 26 February 2000, so mathematically challenged Mandy could easily work out how many years.*
- *Bib and Gerry van Oosterom were 50 years married on 17 February and their children took them to the Langham for the weekend the celebrate.*
- *Sue and Mike Dore are still going strong after 55 years of married bliss.*
- *Judy and Barry Payne have also hit the 55 years married, and Barry will have to celebrate with his arm in a sling after having reconstructive surgery on his shoulder.*



*Top left: Gerry & Bib van O.
Next below: Judy & Barry Payne.
Bottom: Mike and Sue Dore.
Top right: Alex Salmon and Garry Neeman.
Bottom right: Simon and Mandy (Simon loctite-ing the ring on)
You can tell those who have been married the longest they have wedding photos in black and white.*

*Mike Dore is also about to become an Octogenarian but his celebration will be a lot more physical as he plans to lead his guests on hikes through the countryside during the day and party at night on a weekend in Sorrento.
DON'T FORGET. If you would like to share, celebrate or acknowledge your or somebody else's news please text or email Team Social to spill the beans.*



Social Night, thanks to Kaz Postill. A Night Under the Stars – listening to Ted Perkins and The Fat Rubber Band and supported by Mia Wray. Great night with Shane and Louise Ambry, Kaz P and Barbara P, and Owen and Chris enjoying the “little bit wet” night at Packer Park, Carnegie.



Happy Birthday to Trish Niemann who celebrated her 80th birthday recently at the Mornington Yacht Club. One little gem that came out of the speeches was the fact that her children called her “Atilla the Mum” because her rules had to be obeyed



Seen at the Conservatory Cafe in Croydon on a sunny Sunday recently: party people celebrating the 80th birthday of Chris Lawson Mk 1 (brother-in-law of Alan Elliot, both founders of the club in 1966); John Gould Mk 2A, who attended the first club meeting and Karen Postill Mk 1, who attended the third meeting. Three Sprite Musketeers 55+ years on!



Jim Dewar has taken up gravel rallying as a navigator in an AU Falcon.

COMPETITION CORNERED

BRYANT PARK KHANACROSS

Sunday, 26 February saw the Gippsland Car Club run their first khanacross for the year at the Bryant Park Hillclimb complex just outside Moe. Their format utilises the large sealed pit area where they can run wide open motorkhana style courses and sections of the hillclimb circuit slowed up with witches hat slaloms.

We had two competitors representing AHSDC being Brendan and Owen Crombie in Owen's 2A. The competition looking at the results was fast and furious and dominated by MX5s.

Interestingly there were no less than eight junior drivers competing from an entry list of 52. Brendan in spite of a few adventures with flags and track limits was able to counter Owen's skill and cunning and both forewent the last run which dropped them down the final order.

Without that impediment they would have finished inside the top 10. So Brendan with 295.71 seconds finished ahead of Owen on 304.50 to open their account in the Drivers' Championship.

THE 'NEW LOOK' ROB ROY

The MG Car Club held the 'Rob Roy Shakedown' on Sunday 5 February to test and tune the Rob Roy Hillclimb track after the recent upgrades. This was not a competition event but over 60 vehicles registered to drive and enthusiastically bedded in the new track surface and tested the layout systems. A huge amount of work has been done at Rob Roy including:

- The entry road to the site has been completely sealed.
- The original track has been resurfaced and is very smooth.
- The return track has been extended down to the pits, is fully sealed and separate from the main hillclimb track. This allows the next run to take place without waiting for the previous car to return to the pits thus making the whole event run faster.
- A new chicane has been installed in the top half of the track, which unfortunately adds an extra 10 seconds to each run.
- New spectator seating has been provided at various locations and two extra rotundas have been built.

There are some ground works still in progress but all the completed upgrades are excellent and will be enjoyed by drivers for many years.

The MG Car Club, and their army of volunteers, are to be congratulated for doing a fantastic job on upgrading the



Rob Roy hillclimb site – well done to all involved!

Graham entered his MGA Coupe for the day and really enjoyed the new smooth surface and easy return to the pits.

Sue Dows



DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES 2023

DRIVER	CAR	P.I. 22 JAN	P.I. REG 22 JAN	Khanacross 26 Feb	TOTAL
Linton Coombs	Honda S2000	10	0	0	10
Tony Hannan	Sprite	0	10	0	10
Brendan Crombie	Sprite	0	0	10	10
Qwen Crombie	Sprite	0	0	9	9
Glenn Coombs	Honda S2000	9	0	0	9
Bryce Rogers	Sprite	8	0	0	8
Rod Vogt	Sprite	7	0	0	7
Iain Johnson	MX5	6	0	0	6
Bob Lomas	Sprite	5	0	0	5
Peter Clarke	MX5	4	0	0	4
Peter Harrison	Sprite	3	0	0	3

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

Designated events for championship points

6	15 APRIL SATURDAY	WINTON SPRINTS / REGULARITY	MSCA
7	16 APRIL SUNDAY	ROB ROY HILLCLIMB	MGCC
8	7 MAY SUNDAY	SANDOWN SPRINTS / REGULARITY	MSCA
9	7 MAY SUNDAY	MALLALA REGULARITY 6 HOUR RELAY	MSCASA
10	13 MAY SATURDAY	ROB ROY MOTORKHANA	MGCC
11	25 JUNE SUNDAY	ROB ROY HILLCLIMB	MGCC
12	16 JULY SUNDAY	METEC MOTORKHANA	MGCC
13	6 AUGUST SUNDAY	MACEDON OST	MGCC
14	13 AUGUST SUNDAY	WINTON SPRINTS	MSCA
15	20 AUGUST SUNDAY	ROB ROY OST	MGCC
16	24 SEPTEMBER SUNDAY	BRYANT PARK HILLCLIMB	GCC
17	14/15 OCTOBER SAT/SUN	WINTON REGULARITY 12 HOUR RELAY	AROCA
18	22 OCTOBER SUNDAY	SANDOWN SPRINTS	MSCA

Regularity scoring: Events run by MSCA are sorted over four laps per run with a starting score of 1000. One (1) point is lost for every 0.50 seconds over the nominated time and two (2) points lost for every 0.50 seconds under the nominated time.

For regularity relays the scoring will be the percentage of bonus laps of total laps driven.

Please refer any queries to Mike Dore (0409 256 564), Bob Lomas (0418 382 299) or Barry Payne (0418 547 903)

COMPETITION CORNERED

COMING MOTORSPORT

AGP 30 MARCH -2 APRIL

We will be able to display our cars at this event, but even though it is not far away the exact format for such a display is not yet clear but all spots are already taken.

If you want to be listed as a possible spare contact Frank Bugeja on 0411 293 984.

MSCA WINTON SPRINTS 15 APRIL

By the time you read this in your inbox or from your letterbox the Avalon motorkhana, MSCA Sandown and ME-TEC motorkhana will have been run and won, but there is more coming. Saturday 15 April is the MSCA Winton Sprints/Regularity

MGCC ROB ROY 16 APRIL

Sunday 16 April is the MGCC Rob Roy hillclimb. This will be on the new track with the resurfacing eliminating the acute change of angle at the end of the dam wall and a new chicane toward the end of the track to moderate speed of the quicker cars. Even if you don't wish to compete its a nice drive to go and spectate. This is an interclub round so lots of cars like ours.

MALLALA 6-HOUR 7 MAY

Sunday 7 May is the Mallala 6-Hour Regularity Relay where we have two teams competing, the Spritely Gentlemen's Racing Team all in Sprites and Team Goblin all in MX5s. If you would like to help on this weekend please talk to Mike Dore or Bob Lomas or Barry Payne at the April meeting.

MSCA SANDOWN 7 MAY

Sunday 7 May is the MSCA Sandown sprints and regularity.

These are all events designated for Drivers Championship points. If you would like to know more about how to compete in these sorts of events please talk to Mike Dore 0409 256 564, Barry Payne 0418 547 903, or Bob Lomas 0418 382 299.

46th HISTORIC WINTON 27-28 MAY 2023

In previous years we have sponsored a race and so also received a number of complimentary tickets which have enabled us to put on an AHSDC display.



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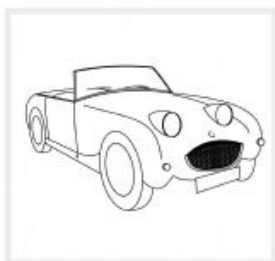
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COMPETITION CORNERED

PHILLIP ISLAND CLASSIC



L-R Warren Reid, Kaz Postill, Max Pegram and Club PR person Emma Riddington.

Sunshine, clouds, sprinkles of rain and gusts of wind for both the 11th and 12th of March! Dennis Varley kindly drove down to PI with the banners on the Friday; Warren Reid made sure that we had a place to park. We weren't expecting to have a tiny spot right next to the toilets, but there was an upside to all that – lots of people stopped to have a look at the cars before entering and exiting!

There were only three of us on Saturday (Warren, John Douthwaite and me) and Sunday – gasp – we had seven of



us; Warren & Wendy, John Douthwaite, Darryl Griffiths, Rod Wells & his son, and me again!

However, there was an excellent turn out of Sprites and Midgets on the track, including the Meyers mob from NSW and Bryce Rogers, as well as Max Pegram in his red Pegram Special and Simon Browning in his Cortina.

Simon was very lucky on Saturday when there was a three car pile up ahead of him and a Mini which he gently grazed. The Mini had no visible marks but Simon's car had some green paint on the side.

The race was red flagged, but he was able to have a good run on Sunday which I watched with a couple trackside. We started talking about this and that and it turned out they were very good friends of Greg and Terri Corbin, so we did a selfie and sent it on its way to Queensland!

As always a good time was had by all and it was good to catch up with members of other car clubs.

Kaz Postill

Snippets

Nigel the Bugeye has a Big brother Basil the BN1. Some final tweaking to be done before Simon is totally happy with his on-road manners. *Mandy PJ*



The April meeting will be a week later than usual, on 14 April, thus avoiding Good Friday.

We will be continuing with the theme of members' Sprites, with Bryce Rogers doing a show and tell (except for the demon tweaks of course) of his mustard historic racing Spridget.

This car has been in development for a while, and he is ably assisted in this endeavour by brother Mitch and father Steve. They also have a Formula Ford, previously driven by a driver to Europe winner, just in case they encounter any spare time!

We intend to stream the evening on YouTube, as we did last month, and that link was still live some days later when it was checked! Being unedited though means there is a rather long blank bit at the start, so do not be deterred!

At the March meeting our raffle prize of the Trydel Up and Go instant puncture repair kit valued at early \$100 was

won by Sue Dore and the prize for wearing club gear or arriving by Spridget was won by Glenys.w.

We had an attendance of 50 members, who managed to bring a total of eight Spridgets along,

The night got started in a timely fashion, and went straight into Mike Trathen's presentation of his long owned Sprite, which early in its career had earned the nickname of Dumbo.

Club business followed, and that in turn was followed by supper which featured chocolate and cheese, as well as bikkies and dips, and of course tea and coffee.

Mention was made of a potential National Challenge in 2024, which for those interested should be followed up with Barry Payne or Bob Lomas.

The evening did not end too late, with your correspondent home for slippers and port in front of the telly by 11pm.

See you again on the 14th, if not before!

Snippets

Chris and Felicity

Crombie travelled to Japan doing a reconnaissance for Jack and Kay who will finally be able to take their long-awaited Japan trip.

Chris and Felicity went far north to Sapporo Hokkaido where they checked out the ice sculptures and enjoyed -1 to -16 degrees weather.



The Road Less Travelled

Having gone through the now lengthy, as well as costly, process of getting my latest car roadworthy, I now find that many of the local roads are not carworthy. As anyone who has driven or ridden in something like a Sprite is aware, they are built very low to the ground.

However, what is not known as much is that local councils have an extreme dislike for Sprites and any car that has a clearance of less than 60cm. It seems that in many localities there are places where you just can't go as local councils appear to be trialling turning the local roads into Extreme Four-Wheel Driving tracks.

Councils, to their credit, have been busy painting lines that indicate to drivers just where dangerous deep potholes are. However, there appears to be more paint than asphalt on some roads. This painting and adding in of more road under repair and detour signs are indications that the days of a quiet drive in the country for sports car clubs are all but over.

It will be just a matter of time before new signs are in place indicating that these sections are only for the sole use of the toughest four-wheel drives.

During local trials, farmers have been making a fortune by hauling out cars out of their paddocks where cars have left the asphalt either in search of a safer route, or because they have bounced off unseen corrugations. There seems to be no safe way through these bitumen minefields. Local mechanics have done well out of repairs to suspensions and tyre repairs too.

It is obvious that councils see enormous potential for bringing in many off-road tourists to the area. This foresight shown by them over the years needs to be acknowledged. By spending very little they have created world class facilities. A few more years and local roads will graduate to become a monster truck exhibition courses.

In some instances, councils have kindly painted car body outlines similar to those used in murder scenes, around the most dangerous and deepest potholes, which no doubt have swallowed many an unsuspecting small car over the years. Is it any wonder that there are so few sports cars on the road anymore?

Given the number of four-wheel drives now in the community, there is no great rush by the council to fill in the potholes. Nor do they offer a proper burial service and erect a memorial for those small cars that have passed; well not actually passed, but come to a sudden stop metres below.

Some of the deep holes are now

used for spelunking and one council is considering charging cavers to explore these subterranean galleries. On good sections of roads, speed humps have been placed to catch the unwary. Small cars can't negotiate them without the use of crampons and a team of Sherpas.

There are solutions of course for dedicated Sprite drivers. One is to put massive shock absorbers and springs on their car, turning it into something that resembles ones on the Dakar Rally. I have considered putting at the bare minimum a tow hook on my car so that less damage is caused retrieving it from the open graves that litter the roads.

I used to say a prayer when trying to start my car, but now the local priest is suggesting that last rites may be more appropriate driving out in the country.

If you contact a local council; once their laughter dies down, they seem surprised that you don't have a four-wheel drive like nearly all of your neighbours. You point out that your neighbours' four-wheel drive cars never go off road because they can gain the same experience by staying on-road, but that doesn't cut any ice. One suggestion from them to me was to just pump up the tyres on my toy car. That would only create more problems, I think. Murph already has an over inflated ego as it is.

Greg Tuck

Gordon Murray Loves a Bugeye

Gordon Murray is an automotive legend who needs no introduction. After enjoying a five-decade career as an excellent car designer, he has significantly contributed to the auto industry.

The South African-born giant started in Formula One, serving as Brabham's F1 technical director, where he designed Nelson Piquet's car and helped him win two F1 world titles.

Later, he moved to the McLaren F1 team as technical director, where they won three consecutive world championships. But he's more famous for designing the iconic McLaren F1, arguably the first hypercar.

But in amongst all those fancy smancy cars one of his very favourites is the 1959 Austin-Healey Sprite, also known as the "Frogeye" or "Bugeye" Sprite.

The small, two-seater sports car produced from 1958 to 1961 as a low-cost sports car that would appeal to a broader market. Under the hood is a 948cc inline-four

engine that produces 43 horsepower.

It doesn't sound like much, but given the car is lightweight, it provides lively performance with agile handling, making it a popular choice for racing and rallying.

Murray loves it for its distinctive styling and claims the Sprite looks how a sports car should look.

Gordon's top 10 cars:

- 10 1963 Abarth 1000 GT Bialbero
- 9 Alpine A110
- 8 Alfaholics Romeo 1600 Junior Zagato
- 7 1980 Ferrari 308 GT4
- 6 1966 De Tomaso Vallelunga
- 5 1970 Lotus Elan S4
- 4 1959 Austin-Healey Sprite
- 3 Lotus Elite
- 2 Porsche 550 Spyder
- 1 Gordon Murray T50s Niki Lauda

This article was first published in HotCars

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Easy to move design

- Manual safety lock release
- Easy to move
- The dual cylinder structure ensures stable raising and lowering
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Products and colours may vary from pictures shown. Errors and omissions excepted.

When the Bug Bites

If you're scooting through Spring Garden, Alabama, on Route 29, you won't be slowed by traffic lights. There aren't any. The population of this hamlet has hovered around 200 for the last couple of decades, so traffic backups don't present a problem.

Businesses are few, but Spring Garden does have its own post office, open from noon until 4pm on weekdays and 7 to 9am on Saturdays. For 30 years, the squat block building, which the USPS shares with the long-closed Santa Fe store, held a secret.

While folks picked up their mail and swapped stories in the front, the back room housed Tim Merrill's old Sprite. "I doubt that many knew it was there," Tim says. And he should know; he owns the building. An unsuspecting enthusiast who stumbled on this prize might well call it a post office find, which evokes more intrigue than barn find, don't you think?

Tim's Bugeye, the 1583rd Sprite built, left BMC's plant in Abington on July 1, 1958, headed for Dusseldorf, Germany, no doubt ordered by a GI stationed there. By the time it joined the Merrill clan in Piedmont, Alabama, a decade later, it had seen its share of hard times and was out of commission with a broken driveline. Its owner, a soldier from Fort McClellan, dragged it to Merrill's Cars and Parts, owned by Tim's dad, Claude.

Claude was an ace mechanic and fabricator, and his 25-acre complex – which offered car sales, a repair shop, a body and paint facility and a salvage yard was known as a haven for "foreign" cars, then somewhat rare and viewed with suspicion in those parts. But Claude's place was known for fixing autos of all kinds, so the Bugeye ended up there.

Cars were a family tradition with the Merrills, and Claude shared his love of things mechanical with all his five kids. Car fever ran in their DNA.

Claude fixed the Bugeye and flipped it to a Jacksonville State student named Fred Windsor. Two years later, Fred drove the Sprite back in, this



time shopping for a ride with more room. Claude offered him \$75 in trade, and Fred happily drove away in a chartreuse 1957 VW van.

Fifty-one years later, that Bugeye is still in the family. Tim, who never throws anything away, still has the 1971 Alabama tag this Sprite wore when it came to his dad's shop.

When his younger brother Zach, then 14 and a budding mechanic, spotted the worn-out roadster, he looked ahead two years and saw the perfect car to launch his legal (he learned to drive at age 9) driving career. Claude gave Zach the Bugeye.

Growing up, the Merrill boys took full advantage of the rolling stock that came through their dad's business, especially the sporty models.

"We drove whatever Daddy had," Tim says, "until a bank note needed paying. Then they got sold."

Zach agrees, "Cars earned their keep at Merrill's. Selling cars paid the bills."

Somehow, this Sprite was to avoid that fate.

Zach immediately tore into the Bugeye. He read his dad's "BMC Special Tuning" book, took notes and roamed the salvage yard. "Every day in that junkyard was like Christmas," he says. "I could use whatever I found."

He pulled the Bugeye's 948cc engine for an overhaul, but before he could begin, he was dismayed to see it leaving the shop in the bed of a truck. Dad had sold it.

"Ah, you'll want a bigger engine anyway," Claude told him. Soon, a wrecked Sprite showing only 19,000

miles yielded its 1275cc engine, rib-case transmission, 3.9:1 differential, disc brakes and suspension. To add a bit of bling, Zach raided the yard for a set of wire wheels and splines.

Feeling the need for more speed, he sent the head out to be milled. Then he hand-ported and port-matched the head and manifolds, performed a valve job and recurved the timing, all heady work for a kid.

He even started on the bodywork. "I did a lot of work on this car," Zach says, "and I learned a lot." But as time passed, his interest waned.

While young Zach was known for his mechanical prowess, for his attention span and commitment, not so much. By the time he turned 16, he had moved up to a '65 Mustang, an EMPI dune buggy, and discovered girls, not in that order.

The unfinished Sprite and its pile of parts languished in the basement of Claude's shop, taking up valuable space. As time passed, the Bugeye was hauled away and stored in a rented henhouse.

Tim, fondly recalling the white Bugeye he enjoyed in college, became its guardian.

The years rolled on. In the early '90s, a storm destroyed the henhouse and dumped water on the Bugeye. Feeling its pain, Tim dragged it out of the rubble and hauled it to his post office building in Spring Garden.

Sometime before this storm event, a grown-up Zach, no longer a stranger to commitment, suffered pangs of guilt over the car.

"I officially gave [Tim] ownership,"



Zach recalls. “I called it a pre-opened Sprite kit. He deserved it. I had taken advantage of his goodwill and generosity long enough. Without Tim, this car would have been long gone. He rescued and preserved this car.”

Younger brothers, right? Could this former teen slacker atone for his neglect?

“I became the head cheerleader on this long-delayed restoration,” Zach says, “My participation was a long-overdue follow-up with a project I started 50 years ago.”

In 2020, Tim, now retired, decided it was time to restore his Sprite.

“I always wanted to do it,” he says, “I just could never find the time.”

He had been busy with life: marriage, taking over his dad’s business, caring for his parents as they aged, and owning a succession of cool cars.

He still owns a pristine rubber-bumper MGB with fewer than 2000 miles on it. Exactly how many cars in his possession? “I have no idea,” he says.

He pulled the Bugeye and its pile of parts out of the post office building and hauled them to his home shop, knowing that he faced a complete resto. The careful work his little brother had started in 1971 had been erased by time. So Tim and a helper pulled the engine, removed all the mechanical bits, the wiring, interior—eventually every nut, bolt and fastener.

When they had reduced the shell

to its bones, they mounted it on a rotisserie. The pair laboriously hand-stripped the layers of crazed and cracked paint and were delighted to find the metal in better shape than Tim had feared.

“We found surprisingly little rust and no real accident damage,” he says, “just a few bumps and dents.” Somehow, this Bugeye survived its years in Germany, a boat trip to the US, hard use and neglect here, and the collapse of a henhouse without significant damage.

Once all was revealed, Tim trailered the shell to Greg Donaldson’s paint and body shop in Piedmont, where it was reinstalled on the rotisserie. Greg is an expert who (naturally) learned his craft years ago at Merrill’s Cars and Parts.

“He’s an old-school paint and body guy,” Tim says. “He uses the same materials and techniques he perfected decades ago. They still work fine.”

Greg is also a stickler for proper panel alignment, and early Bugeyes were not known for their panel fit. Once the metal was repaired and finished, the shell and bonnet were sprayed in dark British Racing Green (the very color Zach chose in 1971), and Greg and Tim spent hours fiddling with panel fit.

Their work paid off. The door and bonnet alignments are a clear improvement over BMC’s efforts in 1958. Just in case anything had gone

missing in half a century of storage and moves, Tim found a Bugeye parts car and hauled it home.

While the body of the finished product remains nearly stock, Tim decided to retain the mechanical upgrades young Zach had made.

“Everything about it is what he put into it when he was 14,” Tim says. Massaged and improved, of course. Tim thought it fitting that his brother should have an opportunity to redeem himself, so Zach got all the greasy bits. Few tinkerers get to evaluate their work after 50 years, right?

So, how did his youthful adventures grade out?

“Most of it looked surprisingly good,” Zach says, “although some of the things I did I’d now classify as ‘it seemed like a good idea at the time.’”

The years of damp storage had seized the engine, but careful treatment freed it without damage to pistons or bores. Once it was cleaned up, the engine received new core plugs, piston rings, bearings, timing components, seals and gaskets. Every part was evaluated and rebuilt or replaced.

This warmed-up 1275cc version has been tweaked to deliver all its 65 horsepower. Tim calls it “a sweetheart of an engine that’s peppy and well behaved.”

The ribcase transmission had suffered water damage and was completely rebuilt. So was the differential. Clutch, brake, and suspension systems received the same treatment.

Over the months, as the stacks of shiny parts grew, it was time for the brothers to join forces.

They hauled everything to Tim’s shop and began the assembly, taking care to avoid inflicting damage on the sparkling Sprite, its new components and themselves. It was summer in Alabama and, despite a 42-inch fan, the temperature in the shop hovered around 92 degrees.

They both admit that wrenching on the tiny car was not nearly as easy as it was 50 years ago, especially when an elderly body is twisted pretzel-like under the dash. Crawling over and under a Bugeye is better suited to 14-year-olds. (*con’t*)

AHSDC CLUB APPAREL



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 •Navy with club logo •Soft-shell stretch garment •Inner thick anti pill polar fleece •Detachable hood with drawstring •Durable zip •High wind collar •Adjustable cuff with Velcro flap



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\$30

LADIES POLO SHIRTS
 •Royal blue white trim embroidered logo •TruDry Mesh 60% cotton, 40% polyester •Breathable mesh panels under arms and on sides •Easy care •Tailored for ladies fit

The Sprite, which had spent most of its life in pieces, was now spread out like a jigsaw puzzle, and it didn't go back together easily. Every individual fastener, washer and clip had been bead-blasted and zinc-plated. Where did they all go? Take your pick.

Weeks passed. The heavily weathered parts car yielded some vital pieces, including, surprisingly, a pristine windshield. Slowly the Bugeye began to resemble a car.

As every restorer knows, firing up the engine is a milestone guaranteed to fray nerves and boost heart rates.

Finally, Tim asked, "When are we

going to try to start it?" Zach replied, "How about now?"

He pulled the choke, turned the key, waited for the SU pump to stop clicking and pulled the starter knob. "It started like it had been running the night before," Tim recalls.

With a heroic push, the brothers Merrill finished the resto days before Tim's 78th birthday. Despite all the challenges, they tell us they enjoyed each other's company, worked well together and are still on speaking terms. The strenuous, sweat-soaked, sometimes tedious build created no family fireworks: no thrown tools,

screamed curses or fits of temper.

"It would have made for very boring car show reality TV," Zach observes.

Did Zach redeem himself? Tim, who has always been willing to cut his kid brother some slack, says he most certainly did.

"I could never have finished this car without him," he says. This time around, the restoration took nearly a year. Or, as Zach puts it, "Depends on how you do the math. After all, it was started 50 years ago."

Words and Photos John Webber taken from Classic Motorsports.com

Insulting in the best possible way

1. "I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; Bring a friend, if you have one." George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill.

"Cannot possibly attend first night, I will attend the second ... If there is one." Winston Churchill, in response.

2. A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows, or of some unspeakable disease. "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

3. "He had delusions of adequacy." Walter Kerr.

4. "I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." Clarence Darrow.

5. "He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).

6. "Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it." Moses Hadas.

7. "I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." Mark Twain.

8. "He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." Oscar Wilde.

9. "I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here." Stephen Bishop.

10. "He is a self-made man and worships his creator." John Bright.

11. "I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial." Irvin S Cobb.

12. "He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others." Samuel Johnson.

13. "He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up." Paul Keating.

14. "In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily." Charles, Count Talleyrand.

15. "He loves nature in spite of what it did to him." Forrest Tucker.

16. "Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?" Mark Twain.

17. "His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork." Mae West.

18. "Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go." Oscar Wilde.

19. "He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts ... For support rather than illumination." Andrew Lang (1844-1912).

20. "He has Van Gogh's ear for music." Billy Wilder.

21. "I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." Groucho Marx.

22. "He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire." Winston Churchill.

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FOR SALE or WANTED

PARTS - SPARES - CARS - ACCESSORIES - GARAGE FILLERS

CLEARING SALE HUNDREDS OF PARTS

The estate of Steve Schmidt – on the property in Warragul (50 minutes from Dandenong), on Sat 29th & Sun 30th April.

This sale contains hundreds of items, new and used, to suit BMC A-series, Mini, Moke and Sprite. The space here does not allow a full listing. There is an extensive list of UK-imported new parts, as well as many used parts Steve kept as

spares for his vehicles. For the full listing, including details of the sale, please contact Ian Maud on 0414 580921 or icfm710@gmail.com

Please note that major items may be sold prior to the clearing sale: an updated list will be sent closer to the sale date to those who requested a listing initially. This sale has not been advertised to the general public – Steve was a member and great supporter of several car clubs, and the family feels it would be appropriate for his goods to be offered to fellow club members. Sample of parts for sale:

Trailer	Home-built, in VGC, ready to use. Built to carry Mini or Sprite, but will carry up to medium-sized vehicle. Tipping tray, electric brakes, single axle (lighter trailer weight), removable stone/bug screen.	\$2,800
Sprite	Sebring-style bonnet c/w catches, hinges-in need of small cosmetic repairs	
Cooper S	race head 12G940, 11-stud, fully reconditioned, with valves	\$2,400
NEW	12G295 Cooper head, bare. (Apparently these are getting harder to find)	\$1,000
1100S	crank, VGC, balanced	\$400
Cooper S	set of NEW pistons, pins & rings, +0.060", one may have casting flaw	\$400
Cooper S	22G1128 gearbox, 4-synchro, rebuilt, c/w diff & housing, roller bearing on <u>mainshaft</u> . Clutch housing with matching bearing housings machined to suit also available** - best as a matched pair.	\$2,400
Cooper S	1275 11-head bolt block, bare but c/w bearing caps, +0.030" bores, sleeved: engine number not visible	\$650
Cooper S	3-synchro straight-cut, close-ratio gear set, shafts, etc- used	\$700
NEW	123 electronic distributor, 16 advance curves, suit any A-series engine without vacuum unit, still in packaging, item C-27H777. Currently sold in UK for \$500 AUD plus freight.	\$380
NEW	Set of four race wheels and tyres: NEW English JBW wheels, 12 x 5in, ET+31, to fit under front mudguard of Mk 1 Cooper S without flares - fitted with NEW Yokohama A048 R-spec tyres 165/55 R12, medium compound.	\$900

FOR SALE: TILTING CAR TAILER

- Suits small to medium cars, eg: Mini, Sprite, Mazda MX-5, Datsun 1600. Width between guards is 1680mm; deck length 2930mm.
 - Tilts to allow access for low ride height vehicles
 - Hand winch fitted
 - Single axle (light, manoeuvrable)
 - Electric brakes
 - Removeable stone/bug guard
 - 12 months' registration
 - Good tyres
- Contact Ian Maud on 0414 580921.



FOR SALE or WANTED

PARTS - SPARES - CARS - ACCESSORIES - GARAGE FILLERS

PLEASE ADVISE THE EDITOR IF YOU HAVE SOLD YOUR ITEM/S

FOR SALE: AUSTIN-HEALEY SPRITE MK1 FROM ESTATE OF STEVE SCHMIDT

PRICE DROP

Completely hand built by Steve – has been successfully campaigned in numerous events over the years; winner of numerous awards for motorsport and concours. Still presents beautifully and ready to use in competition, or very useable as an entertaining and responsive road car. It has a 998cc ‘quick road’ motor; Datsun 5-speed gearbox; 45mm Weber; telescopic shock absorbers; fibreglass bonnet; alloy tank; log booked (exp). It comes complete with factory hardtop, side-screens, soft top, two sets wheels (neg); and first option on collection of spares. Autographed by John Sprinzel. An established, historic, turn-key car for a fraction of current restoration costs. \$30,000 (neg)

Expressions of interest to Ian Maud on 0414 580921.



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Fleetwood Telescopic Suspension for Spridget. Unused – brand new in box. Pick up from Knoxfield. \$1,000

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FOR SALE or WANTED

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LOG BOOK CLUB PERMIT SCHEME

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO AHSDC MEMBERS REGARDING THE CLUB PERMIT SCHEME

Recent changes to the scheme mean that when signing new club permit applications, club safety officers/scrutineers are required to complete a Vehicle Eligibility and Standards Declaration form declaring that the vehicle is eligible, safe for use on the road, and that it meets the applicable requirements for the category of vehicle for which the club permit is sought.

This implies that when signing renewals of Permits we have the same responsibility to see that the vehicle for which the renewal is sought is in fact the same car in the same condition still meeting the Vehicle Eligibility & Standards.

We would expect that this is a mere formality however, to be seen to be administering in the spirit of the scheme and to protect our members privileges under the scheme as best we can we must see the vehicle concerned before we

sign a Club Permit Application or a Permit Renewal.

Your Committee has passed the following resolution:

From 1 May 2016, AHSDC members wishing to use the Club Permit Scheme must attend a minimum of ONE club meeting/club event/event at which the club has a group representation, each year – and have the relevant car sighted by one of the Club Permit Scheme Signatories before the club signs the Club Permit Renewal for that year. If you have genuine hardship meeting this requirement due to your country location please speak to the Club Signatories to make alternative sighting arrangements.

For some of you we do understand that this might require a little bit of planning and you might see it as onerous however, in reality it is part of our joint (club/member) responsibility under the scheme and it is really very little to ask of ourselves for the privilege of driving our cars on public roads for hundreds of dollars less than if it were on a full registration.

Club Permit Application Requirements

At the end of January 2015 the new club permit requirements came into play. For those people with an existing AHSDC club permit, nothing changes with regard to the renewal that you receive from VICROADS each year (this still has to be signed off by a club signatory when the permit is due for renewal).

However, remember that you need to be a financial member of the Austin Healey Sprite Drivers' Club Inc. This means rejoining each year by 1 January of the forthcoming year if you have an ongoing Club permit.

If your membership lapses your permit/s are considered to be invalid.

You also need to fill in the AHSDC acknowledgment form at the start of each year whereby you agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the scheme. This will either be sent out towards the end of each year, or can be obtained from Warren Reid. Remember when using your car on a Club Permit the log book must be filled in otherwise severe penalties will be imposed.

New Club Permit Application Requirements

If you have a new car to put on the club permit system or are transferring a car from another club or from another member then the following requirements apply:

1. You need to download or obtain from VICROADS and fill in the "Club Permit Application" and the "Vehicle Eligibility and Standards Declaration" forms. Both these forms then need to be signed by the club permit officer (Warren Reid). If Warren Reid is unavailable, then other signatories listed below can also sign.
2. Any signatory signing off the "Vehicle Eligibility and Standards Declaration" must sight the vehicle for which the Club Permit is being sought and assess the extent (if any) of modifications.
3. You must obtain a current Victorian Roadworthy Certificate for the vehicle and supply a copy to the club signatory.
4. You must supply six (6) time stamped photos covering front, back, driver side, open driver's door, chassis number, engine number – to Warren Reid. Preference is for electronic versions of photos.
5. Once items 1 to 5 have been addressed then you take the signed club signatory forms along with the RWC to a VICROADS office and pay for either a 45 or 90 day permit and receive the plates to place on the car.

Club Signatories:

Warren Reid (Club Permit Officer) 9 Giana Court, Ringwood North 3134. Mob: 0432604076
email: cpsadmin@ahsdc.org, club scrutineers for new applications and car inspections – Warren Reid, Owen Crombie and Mike Welsh. Renewals - Warren Reid, Garry Neeman, Owen Crombie and Mike Welsh.
More information on the requirements of the scheme and the relevant forms can be found on the VICROADS website www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/publications-and-forms?&searchtext=club%20permit

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