

MX-5 TRIA

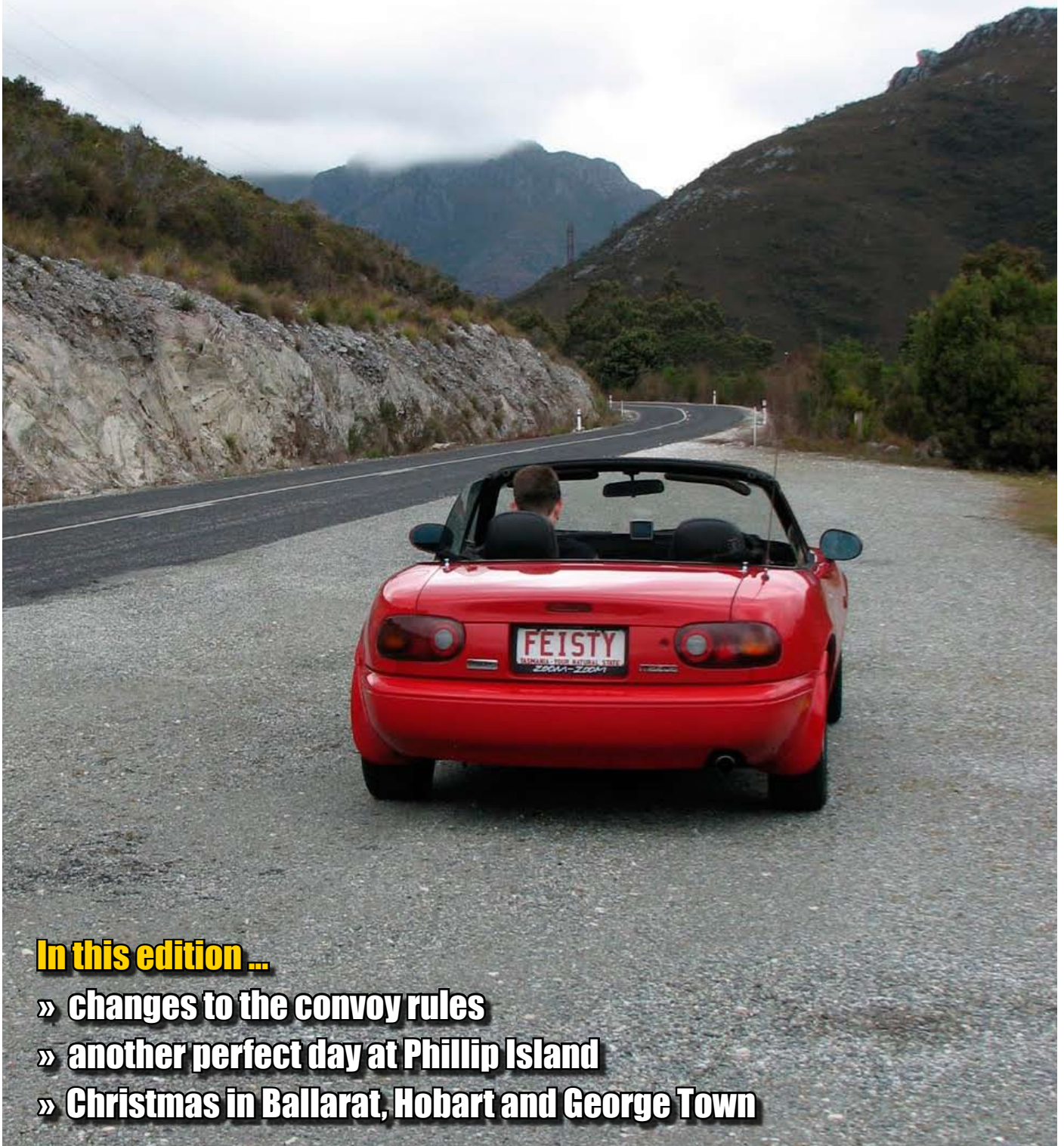
The monthly magazine of the
Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc.

JANUARY 2010

www.mx5vic.org.au



Happy new year!



In this edition ...

- » changes to the convoy rules
- » another perfect day at Phillip Island
- » Christmas in Ballarat, Hobart and George Town



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Cover image:

Beauty and the beast: near Strathgordon in Tasmania's south-west wilderness. Photo: John Waldock

See MX-TRA on-screen: go to < www.mx5vic.org.au/mx-tra_0110.asp >

MX-TRA is the monthly newsletter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc (#A0021659A)
PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193. Registered for Print Post: PP381712/2306

All contributions welcome: please send articles and photos to the editor, Don Nicoll:

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Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President

Happy new year to everyone!

There's a story that the engineer who designed Tasmania's road system was paid one shilling for every bend he managed to include.

That story was told to me about 35 years ago by a Tassie bus driver who had to drive a very old bus on some very old roads, and he wasn't happy!

As an MX-5 driver, though, I hope the story is true and that the engineer died a very rich man. I doubt there's more than about 2km of straight road anywhere on the island!

I've been to Tassie a few times, but last month was the first time I'd had the privilege of driving some of those roads in an MX-5. They were made for each other!

I was there representing the Club at the Christmas break-ups of both the Hobart and Northern Tasmanian Chapters,

And, despite a summer cold, I had a wonderful time. Thanks to both Chapters for their hospitality and particularly to Allen Sewell for the loan of his precious MX-5 for two days. Allen's not even a Club member – how's that for generosity?!

Apart from the excellent company, the highlights for me were definitely those roads ... a run southwest to the shores of Lake Pedder on the Saturday and an early-morning Sunday run up the centre and over to Poatina (I think we saw two other cars!) before heading on to Launceston and George Town.

If you haven't yet, add an MX-5 drive in Tasmania to your "bucket list" ... the Tassie Club members will welcome you with open arms.

The Saturday run to Lake Pedder was the day of the international protests that coincided with the climate summit in Copenhagen, and I was more than a little surprised when our convoy ran smack into a huge protest in the middle of nowhere.

Lining a narrow road, more than 100km from Hobart, we came across literally hundreds of cars, 4WDs, mini-buses and even full-size buses which had transported hundreds of protesters into the pristine wilderness to send a message to somebody about how we are bugging up the planet.



I don't know if global warming is man-made or not, but I'm certain we can't keep pumping whatever we like (including car fumes) into the atmosphere unhindered and have no effect.

The protesters are entitled to their opinion, of course. But how many tonnes of black balloons did that exercise add to the atmosphere? And what did they achieve that they could not have done by gathering on the steps of parliament house in Hobart?

Clearly I'm getting grumpier ...

Updated convoy rules

Following feedback from members, and a recent spate of people getting lost on our convoy runs, the committee has updated the existing rules to try to improve the enjoyment of everyone involved.

The main changes are that overtaking will now be allowed (where safe and legal), coupled with (if possible) *even more emphasis* on the need for participants to wait at intersections so that slower cars can see where the convoy has gone.

There's also a much greater onus on each participant to follow the run notes, not the car in front.

Other state clubs have shown that this sort of approach leads naturally to the formation of sub-groups where everyone drives to their own comfort level, meeting up during the run at pre-set regrouping points. No-one's pushed and no-one's held back so (hopefully) everyone's happy. Full details are on pages 8 and 9, and your comments (once we've tried them) are welcome.

20th anniversary

Finally, 2009-2010 is our 20th anniversary year, and celebration plans are afoot. More details will follow.

Until next time, **look up, stay back!**

Murray

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details



February

- 6 AROCA driver training day, Winton
- 7 President's run
- 7 Ballarat group coastal run
- 7 09/10 Championship Rd 5: Sprints, Winton
- 13-14 Tassie Chapters' combined weekender
- 21 Ladies' Day
- 21-22 North Tassie Chapter weekend run to Strahan

March

- 14 09/10 Championship Rd 6: Twilight Sprints, Calder
- 14 Reefton run

April 2-6



NatMeet 2010 McLaren Vale, SA – fully booked

see www.mx5.com.au/natmeet2010 for all the details.

- 4 Daylight saving ends (3am)
- 11 09/10 Championship Rd 7: Sprints, Phillip Island

May

- 2 Founders' run (TBC)
- 9 Mother's Day
- 30 09/10 Championship Rd 8: Sprints, Sandown

July

- 3 09/10 Championship Rd 9: Sprints, Phillip Island

Separated at birth ... ?



Albus Dumbledore



Tyrone Dark



Motor Sport Report



■ James Saunders – Club Captain - Motor Sport

Well, 2010 is upon us.

It's going to be a busy and exciting year on the motor sport calendar.

But I'm starting the year off in a very relaxed fashion. I'm writing this column in a little beach house in Coledale, on the coast of NSW, just across the road from Sharkey's Beach. It's a beautiful sunny day, about 30 degrees. Unfortunately I will be driving home to Melbourne tomorrow but I have had a very enjoyable stay here, it really is a lovely location.

Well enough of that; let's jump straight into it and have a look at the upcoming year.

Our first event is at Winton in February, hosted by the Alfa Club (AROCA). I often receive enquiries from new members who are interested in giving motor sport a try, and they usually ask what circuit is best suited as a first event. **The answer is always Winton**, as it really highlights the wonderful handling characteristics of our cars. It is also a relatively low-speed circuit when compared to many of the others that we regularly run on, with plenty of run off.

The Alfa Club are also holding a driver training session at the circuit, the day before the event. This is not an MX-5 Club event, but the Alfa guys have generously extended an invitation to all our members, so it could be the perfect way to dip your toe into motor sport ... make a weekend of it! As usual, the Club is happy to help out new participants with the loan of a helmet and fire extinguisher – just contact me at captain@mx5vic.org.au to arrange it.

The following event is at Calder in March, this time with the WRX Club. This is notable for two reasons, as we haven't had a run at Calder in some time, and it's been even longer since we've run with the WRX Club. I'll talk further about this event in next month's column.

The season is then rounded out with events at Sandown and two at Phillip Island. I'm very keen to get back to the Island as we had an absolute ball there in December – see my article later in the mag.

That gives us nine events for the 2009-2010 season. Our Championship rules state that the Championship will be made up of eight to 10 rounds, however in recent years we have managed to do

2009 -2010 Club Motor Sport Championship

February	6	AROCA driver training/circuit training day	Winton
	7	Round 5	Sprints, Winton (AROCA)
March	14	Round 6	Twilight Sprints, Calder (WRX Club)
April	11	Round 7	Sprints, Phillip Island (WRX Club)
May	30	Round 8	Sprints, Sandown (AROCA)
July	3	Round 9	Sprints, Phillip Island (AROCA)

2010 -2011 Club Motor Sport Championship

August	8	Round 1	Sprints, Winton (AROCA)
	22	Round 2	Hillclimb, Haunted Hills (WRX Club)
September	TBC	Round 3	Sprints, Sandown (AROCA)
October	23-24	2010 AROCA Winton 6-Hour regularity (AROCA) ... non-Championship Club event <i>Spectators and helpers welcome</i>	
November	TBC	Round 4	[event TBC]
December	12	Round 5	Sprints, Phillip Island (AROCA)

the full 10 rounds. So we're still looking at the possibility of adding another event in to the first half of the year. One option is a trip to South Australia for an interstate challenge with the SA Club; I've been in contact with the guys over there but we're only at the early stages of planning at the moment (*and they're hosting NatMeet in April, so they have a bit on their plate!*).

Of course as soon as anything is added (be it SA or anything else) I will publish the details, so keep an eye on this column and the Club website. I also have a motor sport e-mail list; if you aren't on it and would like to keep up to date with all the latest developments, please shoot me an e-mail to captain@mx5vic.org.au and I will add you to the list.

The second half of the year has plenty of action as well. Of note is a hillclimb event at Haunted Hills. Everyone who has been there has really enjoyed it, so I'm looking forward to trying it out for myself.

That about wraps it up for this month, and I haven't even had a chance to reflect on what a ripping year we had in 2009.

New apparel regs: One thing I would like to mention though is that it's been brought to my attention (thanks Bruce) that there has been a slight amendment to the CAMS requirements relating to apparel – to compete at a sprint meet, your shoes must have a leather upper.

I'll sign off now – see you all at Winton!

James

Farewell Phil

We would also like to thank Phil Munnings, who has been an integral member of the motor sport group and has been a great help in compiling event results and lap records.

Unfortunately (for us) Phil has moved to NSW ... our loss will be the NSW Club's gain.

Best of luck for the future, Phil. Just don't try too hard on those NSW-Vic Interstate Challenges!



Membership Report

■ Bill Campbell – Membership Officer

The Christmas-New Year season is usually fairly quiet for new memberships, but we can boast 13 new members for the period!

Current membership count:

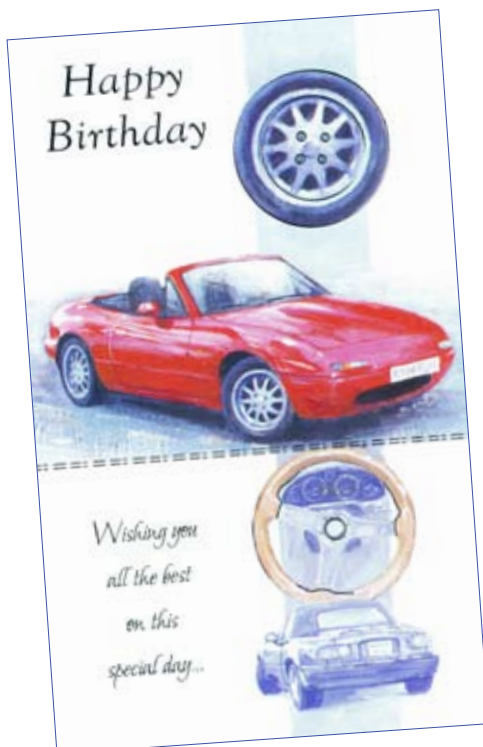
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I would like to welcome the following motoring connoisseurs and wish them all the best for a long and happy association with the Club. They are:

» Robert, Margaret, Jessica de Bont	2001 Crystal Blue NB
» Ron Elisha	2009 Metropolitan Grey NC
» Douglas Gill	1998 Black NB
» John and Shirley Hartnett	2002 Crystal Blue NB
» John Hines	1989 Yellow NA
» Anthony Latino	2004 Titanium Silver NB
» Nigel and Jennifer Whawell	2008 Galaxy Gray NC
» Leon Wilson	1990 Classic Red NA
» John Myers	1991 Grace Green NA

It was my birthday a few days back and I received a number of cards from well-wishers.

Not surprisingly, because of my interest in motoring, several of them contained images of sports cars. No big deal there, but I was particularly impressed with one card which actually featured an MX-5!



Heaven knows where the card was found, but it was refreshing to see one not featuring a Lamborghini, an E-Type, or some other exotic marque!

I wonder if you read a recent piece in the Saturday Age on contemporary vehicles that are set to become legends. No real surprises in the list which includes the “new” Monaro, the BMW M3, the early Subaru WRX and the Nissan 200SX. Of course, the original MX-5 was also listed!

To quote David Morley, the author of the piece, “...the fundamentals of what made the great sports cars great is also what the original Mazda MX-5 had going for it. In spades. Light weight, a flexible, willing engine and superb handling and steering are all attributes of the first MX-5 as the 1980s gasped their last.

“These days, it’s generally agreed that the first car was the sweetest and, while later versions were faster and better equipped, none could match the first for purity of line and function. The covered headlights, chunky alloy wheels and pert dimensions haven’t been bettered by subsequent efforts, nor has the foolproof steering or the sweeter-than-your-first-kiss 1.6-litre engine. Find a good one and it’s definitely worth hanging on to. And driving.” Quite a wrap.

See you out and about ...

Bill

Find us on ...



In an effort to make the Club still more accessible, we have set up our own page on Facebook

It’s a pretty simple page, aiming to provide another list of Club events and issue event invitations to members who might prefer this sort of communication.

So if you’re already on Facebook, become a member and you’ll be alerted to upcoming events.

The group name is: “Official Group of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc”.

Faulty fire extinguishers in cars

How many of us assume that a fire extinguisher will work because the yellow needle is sitting firmly in the green area of the dial? Perfectly acceptable assumption?

Not so. Club Treasurer John Todd found the following advice for a company who carry powder type fire extinguishers in their trucks:

If the extinguisher has been lying in its cradle untouched for an extended period of time, the powder can pack down causing the extinguisher to fail when activated.

The solution is to remove the extinguisher from its cradle once a week and give it a good shake.

For our motor sport members, maybe you should be giving the extinguisher a good shake as part of your pre-race preparations. For those of us who regularly carry an extinguisher as part of our safety kit, maybe it’s a good idea to give it a quick shake at the same time that we check the tyre pressures (assuming that we do that as regularly as we should!).

MX-TRA Editor retires ...

■ Words: Don Nicoll



Yes, Alistair Dennis has retired (but only as Editor of the Club magazine)

Since the March 2006 issue of MX-TRA, when he added the role of Editor to his Vice Presidential duties, young Al has been chasing people to contribute articles for this magazine. It is therefore with some sadness that we accept Al's decision to step back from the role. We are sure that all who read these pages will join the Committee in saying a big thank you to Al for his efforts over nearly four years.

When you have been reading the Club magazine over this time, it is easy to assume that the numerous articles just miraculously appeared on the Editor's table, only to be sorted and sent to Alyssa and Murray for publishing.

The reality is a little different. Extracting articles from some of us can be a bit like the proverbial blood from a stone exercise. But Al has persevered with enthusiasm and good humour. As a result there are many articles he has penned himself when the table was bare.

He has been a constant source of new ideas for Club activities which have ended up in the pages of the magazine. In fact it's a good job he's staying on the Committee so that we don't lose the gems.

There have been comparos which recorded opinions on different models of MX-5 as well as different models of Mazdas. There was also the comparo (which turned out to

be no comparo) with Toyota's two-seater, titled "*Toyota's Mr misses*".

There's been some interesting editorial on experiences from weekends away as well as lots of cryptic captions to articles and photographs (eg, the car with the number plate ONDDOLE and the caption "*your taxes at work*".) Al wasn't too sure that was his but who's counting? In amongst the good humour and bad taste (how about the title: "*Never mind the bollocks*"), there has also been a serious side, "*Vale Mel Kelly*" being one special article that comes to mind. There have been the occasional bloopers, the most memorable perhaps when, following a big Club Grill introduction to the first ever double grill (of Ken and Joan Read), only Ken turned up (or was that the publisher?).

But probably for Al the most memorable would have to be the 15th anniversary photo shoot. A major undertaking that involved a lot of persuading to end up with that magic photograph. In Al's words, "it took only one person not to show, or the weather to turn pear-shaped and we could have all gone home with nothing to show for all the effort."

So, thanks Al for keeping us informed and entertained. You have set a very high editorial benchmark for new Editor Don Nicoll (right) to match.

Let's see if he is up to the task!



An article from the December 2009 issue of the Forest Hill and Vermont Neighbourhood Watch newsletter ...

WARNING!!!!

Just last weekend on Friday night we parked in a public car park. As we drove away I noticed a sticker on the rear window of the car. When I took it off after I got home, it was a receipt for petrol. Luckily my friend told me not to stop as it could be someone waiting for me to get out of the car. Then we received this email yesterday:

Warning from Police

This applies to both women and men

Beware of paper on the back window of your vehicle – new way to do carjackings

(Not a Joke)

Heads up everyone! Please keep this circulating. You walk across the car park, unlock your car and get inside. You start the engine and put it into reverse.

When you look in the rearview mirror to back out of your space, you notice a piece of paper stuck to the middle of the rear window. So, you stop and jump out of your car to remove the paper (or whatever it is) that is obstructing your view. When you reach the back of your car, that is when the carjackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off. They practically run you over as they speed off in your car.

And guess what, ladies? I bet your purse is still in the car. So now the carjackers have your car, your home address, your money and your keys. Your home and your whole identity are now compromised!

Beware of this new scam that is now being used.

If you see a piece of paper stuck to your back window, lock your doors and just drive away. Remove the paper later and be thankful that you read this message.

Changes to the Convoy Rules ...

■ Words: Murray Finlay and Don Nicoll

We all drive our MX-5s differently.

For some of us it's about the car's (and driver's) performance on the road; for some it's the destination; for others it's about the journey.

Some of us like to barrel along as fast as the posted speed limit permits, taking the corners at full noise and getting from A to B as quickly as possible.

Others prefer a more leisurely pace, enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of the scenery as only a convertible allows.

Trying to accommodate all the different driving styles and driver aspirations into one convoy on a run has always been a challenge for the Club.

We regularly receive complaints that the convoy is going too slow, or too fast, or that the convoy became fragmented as each of us tries to drive to our individual level of comfort.

It's easy to see all sides of the argument.

Slower drivers often believe the faster drivers are speeding, and do not like either the perceived pressure to have to keep up with the front of the convoy, or of a faster driver behind them filling their mirrors.

Conversely, faster drivers "stuck" back in the convoy feel frustrated that, because they are not allowed to pass, they cannot enjoy the day's drive as they would like.

Slower drivers feel they are being pushed or pulled out of their comfort zone and it detracts from their enjoyment of the day's outing. And that's not why they came on the run.

Faster drivers feel they are being help up ... and that's not fair on them either.

And trying to keep the car behind you "in sight at all times" is just plain impractical ... and can be dangerous. Keeping a constant eye on the car behind, whilst you're watching the road ahead and dealing with everything else adds an unwanted dimension. It forces the car in front to drive at the speed of the car behind, bringing the faster drivers back to the pack and creating a hazard if you're holding up a line of non-convoy cars for no apparent reason (ie, so that you can keep sight of a slower car that might have fallen well behind).

These complaints have been with us since the beginnings of the Club. Particularly on several recent runs, though, the problem of people getting lost or being left behind has become more of an issue, especially as the club continues to grow and convoys become larger..

Our convoy rules have tried to address these challenges, but they are focussed on trying to keep a convoy together as much as possible. We recognise now that, inadvertently, the convoy rules themselves have been contributing to the problem.

At the December 2009 meeting the Committee reviewed the convoy rules and agreed to make some changes.

The major contributor to our problem appeared to be Convoy Rule #6 which stated "**No passing** whilst you're in convoy". The Committee unanimously agreed to change this rule to allow passing of a slower driver where road rules and conditions allow.

Similarly, if you're in the convoy and feel you're holding up the driver behind, you're free to wave that driver through to overtake you ... again, where road rules and conditions allow.

Convoy rule #9 ("Keep the car behind in

sight **at all times**") has also been altered as it contradicted the point of the new rule #6.

Rule #9 now allows you to drive off and leave a slower car to enjoy the scenery, but stresses that you **must wait at every turn** to be sure that the car behind has seen you change direction.

By changing rule #9 the Committee recognises that *this places even greater importance on each of us to ensure that the car behind is in sight when turning at an intersection or where the direction taken by the convoy may be unclear to the car behind you*. Run organisers will be asked to highlight this important message at future runs.

Of course, we have stressed this point in the drivers' briefing at every run since day dot, and still people ignore or forget this request.

Therefore, we have also amended the preamble by adding that it is your responsibility to follow the run notes, and not just follow the car in front. They may well be paying more attention to what's on their stereo than what's in the run notes, and may be leading you astray.

Whilst we ask (*and ask*) that convoy participants wait at corners to ensure those following know where the convoy is going, *we know it can't be enforced*. So it's your job to keep an eye on the run notes and not blindly follow the car in front.

We did consider, as some state Clubs have done, dropping the convoy rules altogether, but we still feel the convoy is a great part of the enjoyment of a Club run and we plan to persevere with them for the foreseeable future.

Future run notes will clearly identify regrouping points along the course of the convoy run, and all drivers will be asked to

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wait at these points to allow the convoy to come back together.

Other states have found that allowing all drivers to go at their own comfortable pace in convoys leads to the natural formation of smaller groups of drivers of similar capabilities or interests who travel at roughly the same speed, and that all groups tend to arrive at the regrouping points within a few minutes of each other.

In the WA club's experience, it means that *"all participants drive within their limits in company with others driving at about the same speed. Everyone enjoys the cruise and everyone arrives at the destination with 10 to 15 minutes of each other."*

"No looking back, no frustrating too slow or too fast driving, no obligation to look after somebody else, and everyone's happy in the group that their speed naturally puts them into."

So, in the interests of helping everyone to enjoy their MX-5 in their own way, we'll give these new convoy rules a go.

We propose to keep these new convoy rules in place for a period to see how they work. Comments and suggestions for improvements from all Club members are always welcome, particularly those comments resulting from experiences in convoys operating under the new rules. Please send these comments and suggestions to editor@mx5vic.org.au

Whilst reviewing the Convoy rules the Committee also took the opportunity to incorporate some legal advice we had received on the responsibilities and liabilities that we each accept when attending Club events. We have now included a paragraph about the Club's disclaimer in the membership application form as well as in the Convoy rules.

The 'new' Convoy Rules

We should always remember that when we are in convoy we represent our Club. As such, if we behave like idiots, we will get a reputation as idiots.

These convoy rules are simple and common sense ... but we ask that you read them, understand them and, above all, obey them!

Typically, faster drivers tend to go towards the front of our convoys and slower drivers, or those wanting to take a more leisurely pace, are more comfortable towards the back. It's best to start towards the back until you find your comfort level.

It is your responsibility to follow the run notes and not always rely on the car in front (it may be lost!). If you are new to the Club or plan to drive solo on an unknown route, please ask to use one of the club radios.

1. **Common sense applies at all times!**
2. **All road rules** are to be stringently followed.
3. **All other road users** are to be extended **every courtesy** at all times.
4. **Indicate early**; ie: 30 metres before changing lane or direction.
5. **The leader is not to be passed** at any time.
6. **Passing** other convoy members is only encouraged where road rules and conditions allow. If you feel that you are holding up the car behind, please wave them through when it is safe and legal.
7. **At traffic lights**, use more than one lane, if available, to allow more of our cars to get through on each sequence. Once through the lights, assume any position back in the convoy as long as you're behind the leader.
8. **Keep a 2-3 second safety margin** between all cars;
ie: your required braking distance at 100km/h.
9. As long as it's safe to do so, **please wait at intersections** or where the direction taken by the convoy may be unclear to the car behind you. *If it's unsafe to wait at the corner, please wait in a visible position around the corner.*

If you are unfortunate enough to become lost and have no means of communicating with the lead or tail cars, then proceed directly to the next regrouping point on the run notes.
10. The run organiser may use his/her discretion to break the convoy into smaller groups to enable better management of a large group of cars.
11. The run organiser will nominate at least one car to follow the convoy and ensure no-one is left behind.

Please remember, when adding your name to the event attendance sheet you are confirming that the Club will not be liable for any damage, injury or loss caused directly or indirectly by you whether to yourself, or to any other party and you will fully indemnify and hold the Club harmless in connection with all claims arising from such damage, injury or loss.



Chasing Tweetie?

■ Words: Ben Sale ■ Photos: Ben Sale, Jennifer Lele

■ Run organiser: Jeff Brown

What a lovely day for a drive! Melbourne really turned out a stunner for this, the first run of summer.



Firstly I would like to congratulate Jeff and Jennifer for their fantastic choice of meeting

point, all of two minutes from my house! Having enjoyed my sleep in, it was great to arrive and admire the other lovely MX-5s present. I also particularly enjoyed the efforts Jeff and Jennifer went to in their choice of clothing for the day; both wearing bright yellow tops which matched the hue of their MX-5 'Tweety' perfectly!

However, my enjoyment levels were somewhat altered when it came to deciding who was going to write this report you are all reading now. You see, Jeff in his infinite wisdom decided to print all but one of the day's run notes in black and white. When it came to the point in the morning where all attending took a step back and a looked at their shoes, my possession of the colour run

note sheet resulted in me writing this passage ... thanks Jeff!

So off we went, the colourful cavalcade of MX-5s making their way down the Mornington Peninsula. The drive itself was not without incident. It seemed that every slow-moving object on the roads decided to descend into our path, up to and including being stuck behind a tractor for a period of time!

Despite the abundance of traffic and relative lack of challenging roads I had a great time. This run highlighted one of the great attributes of the MX-5: you don't necessarily have to drive hard on windy twisty roads (as fun as it is!) to have a good time. Cruising along nice open country roads, the sun shining and the roof down is a great way to enjoy yourself.

The great mix of people that the Club brings together also makes any run an



enjoyable experience. It was also good to discover areas of the Mornington Peninsula I hadn't seen before; it is such a beautiful part of the state.

Thanks for the great day Jeff and Jennifer, it was great to see everyone again and meet a few Club members who I hadn't met before too.



Scene about ...



Yet another day in motor sport paradise ...

■ Words: James Saunders ■ Photos: Ben Sale

Phillip Island Sprints 13 December, 2009 2009-10 Championship – Round 4



Another day of motor sport at one of the best circuits in the world ... how lucky are we to have this track so close to Melbourne?

As usual, getting ready for one of these events takes a little bit of preparation. It's a good idea to make sure you give yourself plenty of time, so you're not rushing around at the last minute ...

Of course I knew all this, but left it to the day before to start getting ready. Ordinarily this would not be a problem, but I had a couple of extra jobs I wanted to do, as I'd decided to install a seat belt harness and replace the accelerator pedal bushes. Should be a pretty quick job.

Not having all the tools needed, I had to drive to a friend's house to make use of his workshop and his expertise. The first task was to install the harness, which bolts to the rollbar. I still had a bit of carpet and remnants of sound deadening underlay beneath the rear support of the rollbar, and we decided that this had to go, in order to make the job easier ... so we'd need to remove the rollbar. Then I thought, since the bar is out, we might as well replace the parcel shelf tray, as a previous owner had hacked two bloody great holes in it to install some speakers. I had a new tray at home so I drove home to collect it. All this had taken a couple of hours, and we hadn't even touched the harness yet ... and of course re-installing things like rollbars always takes longer than removing them!

We needed to drill holes in the new shelf, re-align the bar, get the bolts to line up etc, and then finally we could get to work on the harness, which of course also presented its fair share of unforeseen challenges. So we finally finished early in the evening, and not only has most of my day gone, but I've also ruined my mate's plan for the day of driving to a park to take the dogs for walk!

Upon arriving home, I set to work on replacing the accelerator pedal bushes. The reason for doing this job was that my pedal had become very wobbly, with lots of side to side

movement. Upon inspection I had found that the bushes on the pedal were well past their use by date ... completely worn through in some sections. Again, this should have been a simple job but to remove the pedal, you first have to remove a very fiddly circlip. I finally got the job done but I must have spent an hour fiddling with that bloody circlip alone!!

Then I went to work on all the "normal" preparation – check oil and water, take the road wheels and tyres off, put my track wheels and tyres on, pack the helmet, fire extinguisher, toolkit etc etc.

It was after midnight by the time I got to bed, certainly not an ideal situation given that I had a very early start and a busy day ahead of me. The moral of the story is pretty clear: be prepared and don't leave things to the last minute. Start a few days out, to give yourself time to deal with any unforeseen problems. One club member I know even has a checklist which he prints off and works through before each event, ticking things off as he goes.

I awoke the next morning a bit bleary eyed, and hit the road. I was already running late as I had slept in a bit due to the late night. The drive down was wet and miserable and it seemed like we were in for a cold, wet and windy day at the track. Unfortunately our last visit to Phillip Island was in these conditions as well.

After completing all the formalities of check in, scrutineering (being one of the last in line due to my slightly late arrival) and driver briefing, I finally had a chance to relax and take a look around. It was another great turnout of MX-5s and it was a good mix of new faces, regulars, and it was especially good to see the return of a few old regulars who had been MIA for a while.

The rain was easing off a bit by the time practice sessions started, and after a couple of sessions there was a dry line starting to appear on some sections of the track. By the time my group made it on to the track, it was still raining lightly, just enough to need the windscreen wipers. It was a bit slippery and you had to take it easy. Driving in the wet like this can



be a bit daunting but it teaches you a lot about how to control your car and keep it pointing in the right direction, as there is a lot less grip and you have to learn to sort of “slide” through corners. It is a great learning experience, as these skills can then be applied to driving faster in the dry. After a lap or two the rain stopped completely, the wipers were switched off and the track started to dry out very quickly. Suddenly there was a lot more grip and by the last lap I was able to push the car a lot harder through the corners, and brake later into the corners. I just hoped that the rain would stay away for the rest of the day as the track was feeling really good now.

After a few more sessions the track had become completely dry and the sun was starting to poke its head out from behind the clouds. The temperature was warming up and the action on the track was starting to warm up, too! By this stage the track was really in excellent condition and people were starting to record some very impressive lap times.

I had not driven at the Island for some time, so I was re-learning the track. I was also re-learning how to drive the car as it was my first time here *sans turbo*. With its long straight and fast sweeping corners, Phillip Island is a circuit that rewards high-powered cars, so I had a lot of work to do to get anywhere near my previous lap times. It took me a couple of sessions to get to a point where I felt comfortable and confident, but once I was there I really enjoyed myself. It is very rewarding to push the little 1.6 litre engine to its limits, although to be honest, as I was slowly crawling down the long front straight, I was feeling a little nostalgic for the old days when I had bags full of torque to really push the car along at warp speed! I didn't miss the turbo lag in the corners though ... the “new” car was much easier and enjoyable to drive there.

Everybody else seemed to be on song and a quick scan of the lap times every now and again confirmed how well everyone was driving. Once again, there were plenty of PBs and new club records ... which is a familiar story this season; the guys are really on it this year! The weather continued to improve too, and in fact by the end of the day many of us were showing the signs of too much sun exposure. *Ouch!* Despite the large number of cars entered the day ran smoothly as usual, thanks largely to our main man

Greg Savage, and all the other volunteers. I can't recall any major incidents, breakdowns, or mishaps amongst the MX-5 crew so I think everybody went home happy.

Many of us finished the day with a get-together at Peter and Pam's home on the Island, as there was an open invitation extended to all Club members. We shared some great food, a few drinks and a few stories. Cooky and Teruo kept us all well entertained with their banter ... those two certainly seem to enjoy niggling each other and it kept the rest of us laughing along with (at?) them! It was a lovely end to the day and on behalf of everyone who attended, I say a big thanks to our hosts Pete and Pam. It was a good example of the camaraderie of the motor sport crew, who are a very friendly bunch of people and very welcoming.

Reflecting on the two changes I mentioned earlier in the article (the harness and pedal bushes) is interesting because neither of these can be considered as “performance” modifications. However, I feel that they both contributed a fair bit to the ease of which I was able to drive the car on the day, compared to previous visits to the track. The harness has an obvious safety benefit over the standard lap-sash seatbelt, as it holds you very securely into the seat. It also makes your job as a driver much easier, as you aren't sliding around all over the place in corners, hanging on to the steering wheel for dear life as the G-forces try to shoot you into the passenger seat! Instead, you sit nice and snug and secure in your seat, with a relaxed grip on the steering wheel, and you can actually use the wheel for what it was designed for (steering the car), rather than using it to brace yourself. A very worthwhile addition to the car.

The pedal bushes restored the ability to heel-and-toe into corners. With the old worn out bushes, previously the pedal just moved sideways out of the way, not enabling me to blip the throttle ... compression lock-ups at 100+ kmh are not fun! The new bushes provided a much smoother transition through the gears while braking. It's simple little maintenance items like this, to keep your car in tip-top condition, that can make all the difference. It really makes driving the car much easier, and you feel a stronger connection between yourself and the car as it responds more willingly to your commands.

I think Mazda call it ... *Jinba Ittai*.



Paradise Island (ctd)



Results - Round 3	1st		2nd		3rd	
Standard NA	Teruo Delacroix	» 2:09.856 ¹	Robert Downes	» 2:09.898	Brendan Beavis	» 2:11.380
Standard NB	Max Lloyd	» 2:09.573	John McGregor	» 2:09.732		
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 2:05.902	Ray Monik	» 2:05.952	Dylan Jacobs	» 2:08.585
Modified	Russell Garner	» 1:57.294 ¹	Sam Gumina	» 2:02.262	Craig Healy	» 2:03.100
Restricted Open	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 2:00.646	Mike Kirby	» 2:02.020	Andrew Shenouda	» 2:09.687
Open	Darrin Morice	» 1:53.894	Michael Ruck	» 1:56.181	Colin Ruck	» 1:58.218

¹ New Club motor sport group lap record

Championship standings after Round 4

	1st		2nd		3rd	
Overall Champion	Russell Garner	» 40	Peter Phillips	» 37	John McGregor Darrin Morice	» 34
Standard NA	Brendan Beavis	» 33	Teruo Delacroix	» 27	Noel Heritage	» 22
Standard NB	John McGregor	» 34	Max Lloyd	» 17	John Downes	» 13
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 37	Ray Monik	» 31	Daniel White	» 10
Modified	Russell Garner	» 40	Craig Healy	» 20	Phil Munnings	» 17
Restricted Open	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 30	Marcus Stacey	» 14	Andrew Shenouda	» 13
Open	Darrin Morice	» 34	David Wilken	» 20	Michael Ruck	» 13

* No Standard NC class this year, all our NCs are too modified

It's Christmas in Ballarat ...

■ Words: Lockie (& Tracey) Story (Mockinya via Horsham via Ballarat)
■ Photos: Alyssa & Murray Finlay ■ Run organisers: John & Noellene Gleeson

6.12.2009



It seems that "things" are always happening to me at very inconvenient times.

This time I missed the Club's San Remo Christmas run because of an argument with a table saw. When fingers meet a disc of tungsten-tipped steel turning at 3000 revolutions per minute, it can only end in tears (and a lot of swear words). So 20-odd stitches in two fingers and the loss of the very tip of my thumb later I was in no fit state to go.

The night before the Ballarat Run, we were in Melbourne for Lauren's graduation dinner so Tracey and I were able to sleep a little late(?) before heading for Ballarat. As I was loading the car, I tripped and went base over apex, tearing open one of the wounds causing substantial bleeding. I wasn't going to miss another run, so I bound it tightly and smothered it in tape, took two Panadol and off we went to Ballarat. (Later in the day I was given a gift from John and Noellene which contained, among other things, a supply of bandaids!)

The day was perfect. Not hot, not cold, plenty of sun and the feeling that only comes from an open-top trip on a perfect day which becomes all pervading and you throw back your head and think "it doesn't get much better ..."

We arrived at Ballarat at the appointed time, realising that I had forgotten to organise food. I never said I was bright. Tracey left me there and made a flying trip to Safeway for supplies and returned just in time for the drivers' briefing. Talk about being organised, I hadn't even washed the car, although some thought I was deliberately displaying the fact that, yes, we do have mud in the Wimmera.

Visiting Royalty from Melbourne were well represented by King Murray The Phlegmatic and his bride Queen Alyssa

the Gorgeous, attended by Sir John and Lady Janette, Lord Bill and Lady Coral.

Twenty-seven chariots and over 50 humble members set forth on a 127km winding tour through the region as far afield as Yendon, Ballan, Trentham, Daylesford and their environs. In Ballan we gathered up another couple, a scurrilous pair, Tim and Jenny Davis from Melbourne. There were two more waiting at our destination.

During the trip, those who had UHF radios were entertained with a running commentary from Nick in the sweep car, including a comment on a sign that indicated a 70kmh sign above another sign indicating a wombat. *Fast wombats up there.* Noellene in the lead car was announcing a very sharp left hander when John misjudged the corner, ending up sideways in the gravel (with a huge grin on his dial) and a loud exclamation over the radio from Noellene petitioning heaven for divine intervention.

The signs along the way were a real treat. And so informative. "Trees near road" and "Slippery when icy" These are defiantly things we need to know. *Duh!* Along the route there were signs selling any kind of poo you can think of ... Sheep poo, Cow poo, Alpaca poo, all with potato sack-sized bags on display. Then we got to one that had Quail poo and all I could think of was potato chip-sized bags for sale. How many quail would you need ... *enough about poo!*

Eventually we arrived at "Ville Yandoit" where we were greeted by our hosts, the recently crowned Mayor and Mayoress of Yandoit (population two), John and Natalie Jardine. They opened up their beautiful property to us with its lovely gardens and spring-fed creek.

It is amazing what you can do with a garden when you have water and a little imagination and commit to a bit of elbow grease.

We all sat around in small groups and discussed everything from cars to philosophy (seriously), ate



good food and enjoyed each other's company. We may be in the worst crisis since Methuselah played full back for Jerusalem, but we were able to amble about the country in lovely cars, eat great food and spend a relaxing day together. Things aren't all that bad.

Eventually we had a brief formal bit with some thankyou's and presentations to some pretty special people, and then in dribs and drabs wandered off to head for home. For us we had covered just shy of 800km for the weekend by the time we got home, and it was worth every yard (sort of like a metre).

I really have to say a huge thank you to the Gleesons (*pictured above*) who have taken on the role of unofficial leaders for the unofficial "Ballarat and as far North as you can go" register. They have got us up and running and have planned and executed a great run every month since they started. Huge effort with huge appreciation. We, personally, have made some great friends and really feel a part of something good.

Time to sign off now as typing left-handed is giving me buggery (pardon the explicative). Roll on 2010.

Yandoit's leading citizens, John & Natalie Jardine



Note: John and Noellene would like to thank Lockie for his donation of the beautiful handmade Redgum turned fruitbowl and the boxed timber pen sets. Also to Trish Viner for the delicious Christmas cakes.

And last but not least John and Natalie for the use of their great facilities for the day.



Lockie (left) holds court

Strath Creek sortie...

■ Words: Bert Brogan & Marina Garrard ■ Photos: Ben Sale

■ Run organisers: Don & Linda Nicoll, Janette & John Todd



This report is a little late due to a set of circumstances in and out of my control.

Our first attempt was submitted on time but due to some address changes it went to the wrong person and then my computer crashed and burned and the report was lost in cyber space. My memory ain't what it was so to those who took part in the run please forgive if details are a bit vague.

Earlier in the year Don and Linda organised a run to visit some of the areas devastated on black Saturday and make donations to our brave CFA volunteers. Today's run was initiated from an invitation to a BBQ by the Strath Creek CFA as a thank you.

Another beautiful Sunday morning, another chance to join friends and fellow enthusiasts on a drive in our magic little machines.

We all gathered at Doncaster Westfield's car park and after our usual meet and

greet Don briefed us on the days run. Unfortunately Linda had taken ill the night before so Don was flying solo on this run.

We left Doncaster and headed towards the pretty townships of Eltham and Research. This part of the run was a little slow as we had to stop and regroup a couple of times due to all the red lights we caught going through Eltham.

Finally finding some open road, we drove on through Kangaroo Ground, Yarra Glen and up the Melba Highway towards Yea. Turning right towards Healesville we soon found ourselves on Myers Creek road. When God weaved his magic, He made this road just for us although Marina might not necessarily agree.

At Healesville we stopped for coffee and cake at the Beechworth bakery where Marina was feeling quite proud of herself after surviving my driving.

The look on her face was priceless when, after downing half a bottle of chocolate milk, she was told we were going back up

the same road.

We left Healesville with new leaders John and Janette. *I wonder, did John plan this to have the open road for himself?*

Leaving Myers Creek road we headed towards Kinglake.

To those of you who have not visited this part of the world since Black Saturday, believe me it is a very emotional and sobering experience.

The black hills and gullies where there is still no sign of regrowth is proof of just how hot it must have been.

The portable housing the residents are living in seems adequate but I feel it would be pretty cold in winter and uncomfortably hot in summer.

Pam commented that she knew the area very well and could really appreciate just how much had been lost. It was nice to see a lot of visitors in the town and the friendly waves and smiles from the locals as we passed through.

We arrived at Flowerdale Estate in Strath



Creek and were greeted by many men and women in their very familiar yellow uniforms.

The weather was warm so we set ourselves up under a huge tree and settled in for a very enjoyable BBQ picnic. We supplied our own meat and drinks and the CFA guys provided everything else.

The captain welcomed us and thanked the club for our support. Don passed the captain's helmet around and everyone generously donated to this much-appreciated organisation.

Many thanks to Don and Linda from us all for organising a day that showed us just how brutal Mother Nature can be and how true spirit and determination can rise above adversity.



Tassie news ...

A great way to end the year ~ 12.12.2009 | Hobart Chapter

■ Words & photos: John Waldock

■ Event organisers: John Hadrill/John Waldock



Christmas and a visit from Murray! Grand plans were considered, rejected and then reconsidered as we feverishly prepared for the Presidential visit.

Could we get the Premier to meet Murray at the airport? No, he was interstate (at some junket called CHOGM). So we decided that the thing to do was to take Murray on a big drive in an MX-5 and show him as much of the state as we could in one and a half days, before handing him over to the Northern Tassie group.

So, first things first. John H decided that we should take a short cruise on the Derwent River to relax and show off a little bit of Hobart. We made offerings to the weather gods, and we loaded Murray on to Allen Sewell's charter yacht (who very kindly volunteered his time to us) and spent a lovely evening cruising the Derwent. This was followed by a delicious dinner prepared by John H. Thanks to Allen and John for organising a great evening.

Saturday morning saw us all meeting up in North Hobart for the obligatory 'fuel up' of coffee and cake before leaving on the run across the south of the state towards Strathgordon and the South West wilderness. The drive consists of a run to New Norfolk, then south towards Mt Field National Park, Maydena and

then off towards Strathgordon with stunning scenery and roads all the way.

The weather was nice, not terribly sunny but (mostly) dry and warm. The run was fairly uneventful, except for coming across thousands of protesters marching against global warming. They were obviously hoping to attract the attention of a President other than Murray. Not what we expected to come across in what is normally a pretty quiet road to nowhere!

Lunch was at Westaway, where the group filled up before running north to Bothwell and then south towards home. All in all, about 400km in a day was a good effort.

That evening we were hosted by Mike and Liz Williams for a curry night and social evening. Mike showed us his cars (his garage is like a small car show in itself) and we enjoyed the lovely food and fellowship. We gave away a few prizes (kindly supplied by Mazda and a couple of Club members) to celebrate the end of the year.

Sunday morning was a very early start on our drive to take Murray up north to meet the Northern Chapter. We took a slightly detoured route, via Bothwell, the Central Highlands, Poatina, Longford and Launceston before finishing in Georgetown. The drive itself was superb, the weather improving as we drove north, and the roads again suiting the cars as we wound up and down mountain passes.



It was with happiness that we met the Northern group, a great bunch of enthusiasts and notably more organised than we Hobartians. We enjoyed a lovely barbeque lunch and general chat about all things MX-5 and the Club.

Soon it was time to whisk Murray off to the airport for his flight home. John and I would like to thank Murray for giving up his time to come down and support our Chapter, and it was encouraging to be able to discuss our ideas about both the Chapter and our cars.



“Christmas, north Tassie style ~ 13.12.2009 | Northern Tassie Chapter

■ Words: Ruth Beaton ■ Photos: Rob Bryan ■ Event organisers: Ken & Ruth Beaton



The day started bright and sunny and continued for our Christmas get-together for a BBQ and the final Club activity for 2009.

Members came from Devonport, Deloraine, Mole Creek and Sheffield and met our Launceston members at the Frankford Hall on the Exeter Highway; we had 11 cars in total. This was also the meeting place for a group of touring bikers. We checked out their bikes while we waited and they checked out the MX-5s, and we swapped local road knowledge ... they were a friendly lot.

It was time to move out and we planned to take the windy road to Beaconsfield through Howell, a great MX-5 road. This was until we were forced to travel behind old farmer in a flat tray who travelled 40km and he appeared not be aware of us or he had no intentions to letting us through. What a waste of a great road!

Patience is virtue, so the saying goes, as we mumbled to ourselves. At last up came a straight piece of road and 11 MX-5 zoomed past. Our next stop was the Batman Bridge where we picked up more MX-5s and drivers. Our Club president Murray met us there, capably escorted by the “two Johns” from Hobart.

After a short break and talk, we headed off to George Town to where Tim and Dot

Manion awaited us with Club Banner displayed in the their front yard.

During the festivities all members were given a lucky ticket for a chance to win a prize, kindly donated by Mazda Australia. The task fell to Ken and Murray to draw the numbers out of the hat.

All those attending sat around chatting and having a great time relaxing in the sun. Tim and Malcolm kindly volunteered to act as the cooks for the BBQ while the rest of us had a lazy day in the sun sipping wine or drinking an ale. We all had such a relaxing day that no-one wanted to move on.

The day was enjoyed by the 26 MX-5 enthusiasts, and our final Club event; the Christmas BBQ was completed with a slow drive home.

We all had such a lovely relaxing day, and extended a big welcome to all the newbies who joined us during the year. A special thank you to Murray for coming over to meet with our group and of course our hosts Tim and Dot Manion for opening their home to us.



Other stuff ...

When too much is never enough!

Some take their work home ... but what if you already work from home? Well, just because you're chained to the desk doesn't mean you can't surround yourself with uplifting images.

Here are the home office desks of Club stalwart and former Treasurer, Chris Biffin (below) and President, Murray Finlay (right, with MX-TRA in progress on the screen!).

Guess which two blokes love their red SEs ... !



Mazda's record December caps off a strong 2009

- » 7,813 retails in December is a new Mazda record
- » Mazda market share for 2009 up 0.4pc to 8.3pc
- » Mazda remains the leading full-line importer for the fifth consecutive year
- » Mazda maintains its position as 4th overall
- » 77,739 retails for the year is Mazda's second most successful year ever

Mazda Australia has finished 2009 in style by retailing 7,813 vehicles in December making it the company's most successful year-end ever and beating the previous December best by over 1,100.

This strong finish to the year has contributed to a 0.4pc increase in Mazda's market share to 8.3pc for the year and ensured that Mazda remains Australia's favourite importer. A total of 77,739 new vehicle retails means that 2009 has been Mazda's second most successful year ever.

"There is no doubt that the market has seen some challenging times this year but Mazda has continued to meet the

needs of the Australian car-buying public by offering a portfolio of stylish and affordable products" said Doug Dickson, Mazda Australia's Managing Director.

"We are extremely pleased with such a strong result and must take the opportunity to also recognise the significant efforts made by Mazda dealers to contribute to this success. To outperform the market in such challenging times is an achievement to be proud of."

The charge was led by the ever-popular Mazda3 with 3,353 buyers choosing to take one home in December. The enduring popularity of the Mazda3 is further highlighted by the fact that 2009 has been its most successful year ever.

"We introduced the new generation Mazda3 in April and it was always going to play an important part in our portfolio. The fact that it has finished 2009 as Australia's third best-selling passenger car speaks volumes."

Mazda's passenger car range performed strongly in 2009 with the compact

Mazda2 remaining one of Australia's top three best-selling light cars while the Mazda6 continues to be Australia's best-selling imported medium car.

Mazda's range of SUV's was also in high demand this year. The recently facelifted CX-7 made a significant contribution with December sales up by 106pc on the same time last year while the CX-9 continues to provide a stylish alternative in the medium SUV segment.

The Mazda BT-50 light commercial range has been another success story and assisted by the introduction of the value-packed Boss range in September, 2009 has been its most successful year ever with sales up by 8.6pc over 2008.

"We are delighted with the way the Australian public has reacted to our products this year. Mazda Australia is committed to bringing more new Stylish, Insightful and Spirited products to the market in the coming months and look forward to another successful year in 2010," said Dickson.

The MX-5 Club Grill



Funniest thing seen on a Club run? *Our group sheltering in the rain at St Peter's Pass Midlands Hwy for a picnic ... we froze!!*

Have you been to DECA? *Not from Tassie!*

Ford vs Holden? *Ford*

What is playing in your car at present? *Rod Stewart*

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? *none*



John Hadrill Hobart Chapter co-convenor

Full name (including embarrassing middle names)? *John Francis Campbell Hadrill*

Age (in years thanks)? *56*

Born where? *UK*

Where do you live? *Hobart*

Profession? *Piano technician/tuner*

Married/single? *Single*

Pets? *Cats*

Cats or dogs (choose one)? *Cats*

Fave food? *Pasta*

Can you cook? *You bet!*

Favourite tippie? *Gin & tonic*

What age did you learn to drive? *12*

What did you learn to drive in ... or on? *On a tractor*

What was your first ever car (make/model/colour)? *'63 Datsun Bluebird*

What was your first car's name? *"The wreck"*

Where was your first fender bender, and in what car? *The Bluebird*

What is your current car/s (ie, everyday driver if not the MX-5)? *2001 VW Golf GTI*

What's your current MX-5 (colour,

options, name)? *Grace Green, "Rufus"*

What have you done to improve your MX-5? *Nothing so far*

What don't you like about your MX-5?

It's getting older and I can't afford a replacement...!!

Why an MX-5? *Easy ... best value sports car ever made*

Fluffy dice (yes/no)? *NO!*

Southpark or The Simpsons? *Neither*

Dream wheels (money no object)? *New Golf 6 GTI, so practical and a lot more than a German Corolla hatchback ... just ask Jeremy Clarkson*

Would you ever be seen driving a Daewoo or Hyundai? *Only if I rent one on holiday when a convertible is unavailable*

Favourite other Mazda vehicle in current line up (ie, RX-8, 6 etc)? *Mazda 6*

What other car would you buy if not a Mazda (gasp!)? *VW Eos*

How long in the club? *Four years*

Have you been on many MX-5 Club runs? *One in Victoria and all in Hobart Chapter*

Favourite Club run location? *East Coast road to St Helens in Tassie*



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Market place ...

Please note: notices in the Market Place section are presented as a service to members only. The Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc. has not tested the products, equipment or services listed and makes no warranties or representations about any of the products or their purported uses.

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Contact Alan Laine: 03 5195 5375
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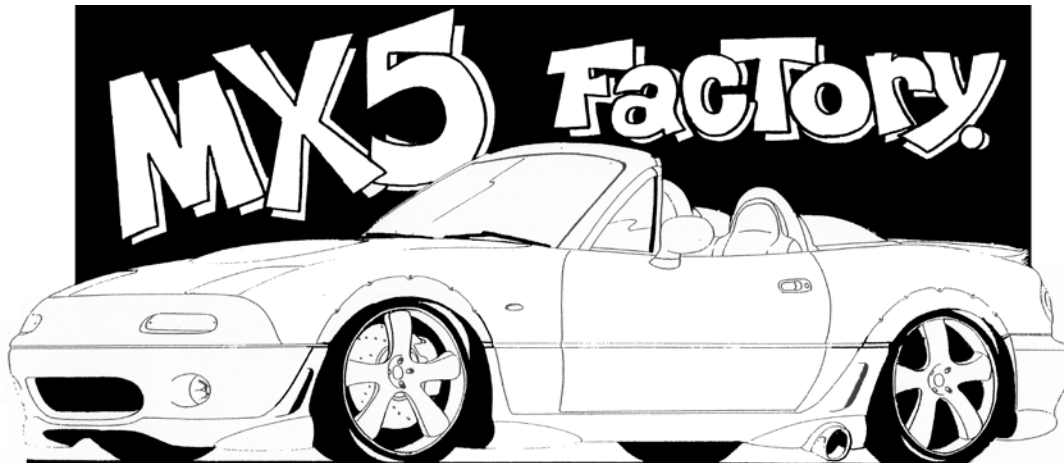
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