

MX-5 TRIA

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

SEPTEMBER 2010

www.mx5vic.org.au

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*20 years
young!*



MX-5
Mazda MX-5 Club
of Victoria Inc.
20th Anniversary
1990 - 2010

In this edition ...

- » **Our newest Life Member**
- » **Kangaroos ... are they out to get us?**
- » **The low-down on lowering your car**



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Cover image:

Joan Read's magnificent (and delicious!) cake was a fitting tribute to the Club's 20th anniversary. **Photo: Ben Sale**

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Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President

And so we embark on another Club year – our 21st.

The 20th anniversary celebrations at the Westpac Centre on 14 August went off magnificently. Almost 100 people enjoyed what I believe was our best event yet.

The room was decked out from head to toe in black and gold, the band (*Band o' Gold*) was terrific, there were plenty of awards and prizes and everyone had a ball.

Our display at Federation Square followed just two weeks later, with 24 cars of all models and colours turning many heads and generating a great deal of interest.

Now we move on to the AGM, which will be done and dusted by now.

Probably because we handed out all the annual awards this year at the 20th celebration, instead of the AGM as we usually do, interest in this meeting was limited pretty much to the committee.

That's a real shame, because the AGM is (usually) the only formal meeting held each year where members can come along and express their views about the running and the future of the Club.

It would have been nice to see some more people there to give us feedback on past performance and food for thought for the future.

Not only was attendance tiny (at the time of writing, the only RSVPs received were from the committee ... and two of them were overseas!), but we only received three proxy voting forms (from over 300 members).

To me this shows either complete ambivalence or complete satisfaction among the membership as to the way the Club is being run.

Until I'm convinced otherwise, I'll take it as a sign that we're doing things right!

The fact that over 300 of last year's record membership have already renewed is testament to that.

But it's a bit disappointing that for one night in the year Club members can't make the effort to come along and give some input into their (*your!*) Club.

Club Captain – Social, Janette Todd, picks up a similar thread in her *Social-lights* report this month. Janette highlights

that some members have been a bit critical of the perceived lack of events on the calendar, yet very few outside the committee have come forward with suggestions or offers to help change that.

Perhaps we have done it all too well and members think there's nothing they can add or improve. Or perhaps we're too intimidating (*I refuse to believe that!*) and people think they can't match the standard or their ideas won't be considered.

We often speculate that many members are quite happy to get their monthly magazine and leave active involvement in the Club to others.

Whatever the reason, I hope that all members share my gratitude that we have such a dedicated and hard-working committee to bring us all the events – social and motor sport – and services (like MX-TRA, the website, insurances, event permits etc) and other things we take for granted, especially at the high standard we have come to expect.

The main business of the AGM was the election of the 2010-2011 committee. Again at the time of writing we had only one nomination to fill the one vacancy, so I'm assuming all that went through smoothly.

We'll introduce the 2010-2011 committee in next month's MX-TRA.



Finally, I'm putting out one last plea to ask members to come and support the *Cars of the World* show 'n' shine event in the Yarra Valley on Sunday, 31 October. The MX-5 is one of the featured marques at this event, and so far we have only *four* formal registrations.

Remember, the Club will pay the bulk of your entry fee, so all you're giving up is your time. If you register before 6 October, you can have your car featured in the event program.

It would be great to see as many cars there as possible to showcase the car and the Club. The flyer in this month's magazine has all the details.

Until next time, look up, stay back!

Murray

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

September

- 12 Great Ocean Road run
- 19 Hobart Chapter run

October

- 2-3 North Tassie: East Coast overnighter
- 3 Daylight saving begins (lose an hour!)
- 3 Todds' Tour of Macedon Ranges
- 3 Ballarat run
- 24 N-E Chapter: Dartmouth Dam run
- 24 North Tassie: Michael & Anna's run
- 31 Cars of the World display

November

- 6 AG Group detailing day
- 21 Club Christmas break-up, Albert Sailing Club
- 21: North Tassie: Sandra & Keith's run to Boat Harbour

December

- 5 Grant & Saeko's summer run to Gippsland
- 19 North Tassie: Christmas break-up

2010-2011 Motor Sport calendar

Sept	19	Rd 3	Sandown
Oct	23-24	2010 AROCA Winton	6-Hour regularity ...
			Non-Championship Club event
			Spectators and helpers welcome
Nov	TBC	Rd 4	[event TBC]
Dec	12	Rd 5	Phillip Island



Motor Sport

■ James Saunders – Club Captain - Motor Sport



Well, it's been a very busy August with the 20th anniversary dinner/awards night, Winton sprints and the Haunted Hills hillclimb.

The dinner was a great success and everybody seemed to have a very enjoyable evening. I certainly enjoyed myself and was even talked into spending some time on the dance floor! A rare occurrence indeed. I'd like to say a big thank you to the organisers, they did a great job and everything went off without a hitch.

And congratulations to the motor sport award winners; it was good to see so many of you in attendance. In fact the motor sport section of the Club was very well represented and I'm sure we all enjoyed catching up with each other indoors for a change, instead of outdoors at a cold, wet and windy racing circuit.

I wasn't able to attend Winton but from all reports it was a sensational event. We've had a lot of wet days in recent times so I'm sure all the regulars were very relieved to finally have a nice dry day with good track conditions. There were 30 entrants from our Club and, of those, 29 set a new personal best lap time! That really is quite incredible. There were also several new Club members in attendance,

which is great to see. There seems to be a lot of interest in motor sport from new members at the moment, judging from the enquiries I've been receiving. It does seem to be a bit of a golden period. We're regularly seeing around 30 entrants at our events, which is very healthy indeed.

The Haunted Hills event was also run in good conditions and, although the hillclimb events don't tend to attract as many entrants as our track days, those who did attend were treated to an enjoyable day of motor sport. It's a great piece of road and it's also very good for spectators, as not only is there plenty of action on the track, but it's also in a very pretty location. Brendan Beavis has written a really beautiful article about the event.

The next event is Sandown on 19 September and entry forms can be found on the Club website. Once again we're being hosted by our friends at AROCA and I'm sure it'll be a brilliant day. Our last event with them at Sandown was an absolute corker and I expect this one to be the same. I'd also like to remind everyone that the AROCA 6-hour event is coming up soon as well. More about that in next month's column.

Cheers

James

At the 20th Anniversary celebration on 14 August we released our new MX-5 driver's companion, "20 Roads for 20 Years", featuring Club members' favourite Victorian and Tasmanian roads.

Copies are still available from Steve Dunlop, merchandise@mx5vic.org.au. The cost is \$20 per book, plus \$4 postage.



Found in *Unique Cars* magazine ...

Do the changes compliment or insult our pride and joy?

~ Perry Tountsios



AMX07, 2007 & 2008 build, extremely rare, professionally built on MX5 chassis. Aston Marton looks at a fraction of the cost. Black car has turbo power, leather, a/cond, p/steering, Bose stereo, rollbar, alarm. Seriously fast & USA trophy winner. \$40,000; Blue car has airbags, leather, a/cond, p/steering, rollbar, incredible handling \$38,900.

Looking for some really good driving gloves?

Perry Toutsios has a suggestion you might like to try.

Perry had been looking for driving gloves in Melbourne for some time, thinking it would be easy. Myer? NO. DJ? NO ... etc etc. However he sourced a pair of beautifully designed gloves from sales@finehandwear.com



They were not particularly expensive compared to other gloves and are of excellent quality (Perry paid \$A89).

You can check out the product range at www.finehandwear.com The only thing is ... the company is in the US so you have to buy online.

To quote Perry, "There is nothing like looking and feeling more classy in a classy car during winter!"



Membership

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer

Current membership count:

347

347 since 1 July ... and growing!

We have had just four *new* members in the last month, but renewals are continuing to flow in a-pace.

I would like to extend a hearty welcome to the following new members:

» Robert Davies	2002 Black NB
» Tony Harper	1989 Red NA
» Dave Moore	2004 Silver NB
» Brian Mutton	2007 Galaxy Grey NC

Please make them feel welcome when you see them at a future Club event.

See you out and about ...

Will

Years of membership recognitions

20 years

Malcolm Brand
Margaret & Michael Cemm
Murray Finlay
David Henry

10 years

Pam Bown & Tyrone Dark
Kim Cole
John Fisher
Matt King
Nick & Sylvia Oklobdzija
Rob Spargo
Andrew van der Mei

5 years

Graeme Adams
Chris & Joni Condos
John Downes
Marg & Ron Gillick
Jo Hirst
Mike Kirby
Darrel Koochew
Ian McInnes
Colin Nicoll
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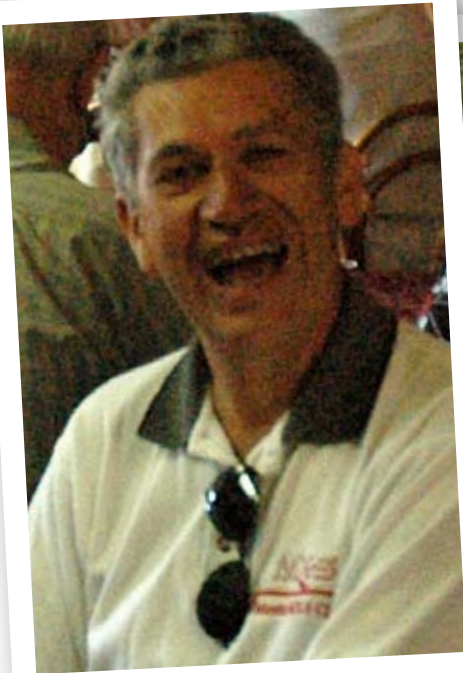
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Scene about ...



The MX-5 Club Grill



Ernie de Vlieger

Ernie has been a Club member for over a decade now, and served on the committee for nine years, most of those as Treasurer. He stays in the background now, but still enjoys the Club and loves his MX-5!

Name? Ernie Francis de Vlieger

Age? 59

Born? Hoensbroek in the deep south of Holland

Current abode? Rosebud on the sunny Mornington Peninsula

Profession? Retired

Partner? The beautiful and fun, Sue Dixon

Pets? Sandy the spoodle

Fave food? Pizza – vegetarian with hot salami

Can you cook? Yes I love to cook – Sue and I cannot, however, share the kitchen

Favourite tippie? Red wine, preferably Coonawarra

First drive? Aged six in a Dodge(y) ute

First car? 1952 Austin A90 (same engine as Austin Healey)

First fender bender? Simca Aronde (not my car) in 1968 ... backed into a light pole

Everyday driver? 2004 Mitsubishi Verada Ei

Current MX-5? Classic Red (what else?) 1996 MX-5, known affectionately as Mixxie

MX-5 improvements? Sports exhaust, door sill protectors, cup holders, wind blocker, rear screen protector and custom travel bag for rear shelf

MX-5 dislikes? What's not to like about an MX-5?

Why an MX-5? Shape, style, handling, fun factor, reliability, and did I mention shape?

Fluffy dice? Nup – waiting till I buy my first vintage purple Valiant

Passions besides the MX-5? House renovating, model collecting, golf and walking

Favourite TV show / movie / book? Bladerunner and anything written by Jeffrey Archer

Dream wheels (money no object)? Bentley Continental GT

Would you drive a Daewoo or SSangYong? I like cars and will give anything a go

Favourite other Mazda? Mazda 6

If not a Mazda (gasp!) what? Subaru Liberty, Honda Accord Euro or Golf GTD

How long in the Club? 12 years

How many MX-5 Club runs? Well and truly lost count - all great

Favourite Club run? Gippsland to Kilcunda

Funniest thing seen on a Club run? Bunniest thing I have seen is our esteemed President wearing an Easter rabbit hat in Beechworth when we were checking out the NatMeet venue in 2007

Done DECA? No

Ford vs Holden? Holden since early Bathurst days

What's playing in your MX-5? Best of Cold Chisel or Best of Bach

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Nup

Final comments? MX-5s rock ... as do the members of the Mazda MX-5 Club

Life Membership ~ Mike Quist



■ Words: Murray Finlay, Club President ■ Photos: Ben Sale

Every so often we have the privilege of bestowing on someone the Club's highest honour ... life membership.

Our constitution says that, to achieve this honour, you have to have done something that has, or will, benefit the Club for at least three years. It also has to have the unanimous support of the Committee.



We have awarded 11 life memberships so far in our history, for a range of different reasons ... some for outstanding service to the Club or on the committee, some in recognition of their feats on the track and their role in developing the motor sport side of our Club. In a couple of cases I think we awarded it to make the people go away ... at least that's been the effect! Tonight, however, is a little different. It's about correcting an important piece of our Club's history, and it's an award that should have been made years ago.

Normally we try to keep the recipient's name a surprise until the end, giving a

run-down of their feats or involvement before announcing their name.

But this time the person's role in the Club's history is such that there's no point trying to do that ... it couldn't be anyone else!

As National Public Relations Manager for Mazda Australia when the Mazda MX-5 reached our shores in 1989, Mike Quist played an integral role in the car's launch and in the development of the Australian MX-5 clubs.

Mike was at Mazda's proving ground in Japan reviewing a Mazda that was about to be released in Australia, when Toshihiko Harai, later known as the father of the MX-5, stopped the bus and took him to a nondescript shed in an out-of-the-way corner.

From this hiding place Mr Harai rolled out the prototype of a secret new front-engine, rear-wheel drive lightweight sports car ... the Mazda MX-5.

After putting his eyes and his tongue back in his head, the first thing Mike promised Mr Harai was that he would deliver him an MX-5 car club in every Australian state.

And deliver he did. Mike built the development of the Australian Mazda MX-5 clubs into his public relations plan as an integral part of the launch and ongoing support of this exciting new vehicle and, with his deputy Sue Ransom,

gave great support to their establishment in each mainland capital city.

In Victoria's case it was Mike who oversaw the birth of the inaugural club, with founders and fellow life members Michael and Margaret Cemm. Then, after a parting of ways between that club and Mazda, he again provided key resources to establish a second, Mazda-affiliated club.

Mike remained in the background but was always an active supporter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria, through the early lean times and through the merger of the two Victorian Clubs in 1995, right up until his retirement from Mazda in 2001.

His belief in the formation of our clubs, despite strong urgings from others within Mazda that he was creating a rod for his own back, set the foundation for the support that our clubs have enjoyed from Mazda to this day. The relationship between Mazda and the MX-5 clubs is probably unique in Australia, and it stems from the seeds that Mike planted more than 20 years ago.

There is no doubt that there would have been MX-5 clubs in Australia without Mike's involvement, but they would certainly have been very different from what we see today.

Mike's influence and support for this Club from its earliest days has extended across the 20 years of its existence. It is not forgotten and is certainly worthy of recognition, however belated.

In the opinion of the President and Committee of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria, Mike more than meets the requirements for life membership, and I am very pleased to present him with this award today. ■



MX-5 conspiracy!

■ Words & photos: Lachlan Story, GNN Mockinya

Fundamentalist kangaroos suspected of random attacks on MX-5s

Report: Global News Network, Mockinya Office

At about 1830 hours (6.30pm for normal people or when Mickey's big hand is on the 6 and his little hand is just past the 6 for Holden owners) on the evening on Tuesday, 20 July 2010, the red Mazda MX-5 known as *Molly*, owned and driven by Mockinya resident Lachlan Story, was viciously attacked by a mob of suicidal kangaroos on the Western Highway, about 40 kilometres south east of Horsham in Victoria, Australia. It is believed that as many as 40 'roos were involved in this ambush.

The incident occurred as *Molly* was nearing home after a Ballarat Chapter run on the Sunday and a 48-hour layover in Melbourne. It is understood that as *Molly* approached the turnoff to Laharum, the waiting mob moved out of the nearby bush, where they had been lying in wait, and surrounded the car.

Despite attempts at evasion, one kangaroo – a large buck – managed to land on *Molly*, striking her at the junction of the



windscreen and bonnet, badly damaging the bonnet and front guard as well as destroying the windscreen in front of the driver. The momentum of the vehicle, believed to have been around 50 kilometres per hour after heavy braking, forced the buck on to the roof, which tore beyond repair, and back on the radio aerial, pushing it through the rear guard.

Witnesses to the incident made no comment because they were mainly wallabies and emus and everyone knows that they can't talk.

The offending kangaroo was so badly injured that he had to be despatched on the spot. Mr Story was quoted as saying "*Struth!*" and "*This thing must weigh 300 kilograms*" and "*ughhh!*" as he dragged it from the road.

Sources close to the kangaroos claim that the attack was possibly in response to a fatal attack on *Molly* earlier in the year during a Ballarat Chapter run that resulted in the death of the kangaroo, but only minor damage to *Molly*. In this incident, a lone Eastern Grey doe attacked a convoy of some 25 MX-5s. *Molly* was the only car injured in this apparently random, but malicious, attack.

Despite the severity of the attack and the significant damage inflicted to *Molly*, Mr Story was able to pilot her for the remainder of the 40 kilometres home ... slowly, but without further incident. Panel shop owner, Greg McLennan, together with Shannon's Insurance acted swiftly to save *Molly* from permanent injury or even death. Mr McLennan was quoted as saying "*Gawd*" and "*Tough little bugger of a car*" and "*What are you? A 'roo magnet?*" Shannons were quoted as quoting on Mr McLennan's quote.

This area of the Western Highway is a known stronghold for these radical kangaroos and attacks on beautiful vehicles are not uncommon. Authorities have advised MX-5 drivers to avoid the area if possible or exercise extreme care if they have to pass through this particular section of the Western Highway.

It has been stated that this is not an isolated incident. Other MX-5s have been similarly assaulted in isolated attacks elsewhere in the state. Pam Bown's "*Clara*" was attacked coming home from a Club run when a suicidal kangaroo leapt on to her bonnet, then leapt away. It is believed that this 'roo was possibly from South Australia as it was completing its fifth suicide mission for the year.

It has been suggested that RX-8 owners, jealous of their MX-5 counterparts, may be giving aid to this renegade group, but they are only rumours at this stage and no hard evidence has yet been presented.

The kangaroo community has been unable to comment because they can't speak either. It is believed that Big Red Kangaroos have distanced themselves from these attacks by the Eastern Greys on MX-5s, preferring to attack B Doubles and road trains.

Reuters and AAP have yet to pick up the story ... ■





Social-lights

■ Janette Todd – Club Captain - Social



“Driving on Borrowed Time”

The President’s Run, Reefton Spur, Great Ocean Road, Macedon Ranges, Petanque.

The President’s Run, Reefton Spur, Great Ocean Road, Macedon Ranges, Petanque.

The President’s Run, Reefton ... do you get a sense of repetition? All of these are iconic events on our Social Calendar and will, I am sure, be there for the foreseeable future.

And what is happening in between? Well, following a couple of comments made to me recently that there have not been many runs lately I looked back over my **events calendar** – not in a defensive way, but more to ease my own mind that we have, in fact, been leading busy MX-5 lives.

In the 20 months since January 2009 to end of August 2010 there have been:

- » 18 monthly runs**;
- » two AOMC displays;
- » an AGM;
- » a Ladies’ Day;
- » a Christmas party;
- » a New Members’ Night;
- » an AG Group detailing info day;
- » a go-kart night;
- » a Federation Square display;
- » a long weekend around Portland (hosting the South Australian club);
- » a three-night event down through Gippsland;
- » a 10-day non-NatMeet tour of Tasmania;
- » NatMeet itself (five days in South Australia)
- » and, of course, our 20th Anniversary dinner just recently.

*(** two events were either cancelled or postponed because of extreme weather and/or fire conditions.)*

These are all events organised from Melbourne and do not include the many events that our four Chapters work so hard to arrange every month. Nor do they include the FULL calendar of motor sport events that James and Robert meticulously put together.

And they have all been organised by volunteers among our membership – the “borrowed time” I refer to in my heading. As Club Captain – Social my role is to oversee and co-ordinate the events calendar – and I rely on others to put suggestions and ideas forward.

Already there are eight events listed on the calendar for the months between September 2010 and March 2011, with seeds planted and maturing beyond then (and again, I am only speaking of Melbourne-based events).

Of course I fully appreciate that not everyone can attend an extended trip to Tasmania, an interstate trek for NatMeet or

even a long weekend at Portland. It has been suggested that when these events are on that we should also schedule a “normal” monthly event, which is a fair comment – *or is it?*

The organisers of these events can’t be in two places at once ... so it begs the question: ***why doesn’t someone else put their hand up and do something?***

Blunt, I know – but not sorry!

“Borrowed time” is a finite resource. *(Think about it!)* When you consider that a lot (certainly most) of these events are organised by members who also serve on the Club’s Committee, then that “borrowed time” becomes more relevant as it is stretched even further.

And I for one do not want it to SNAP – I thoroughly enjoy this Club and want to see it prosper ... and I want to see people enjoying their cars and the outings we go on!

If you look at the calendar and think “oh, didn’t we do that recently?” then spare a thought for me and the other Committee members who have to think of different ideas, persuade people to host the events and then schedule them over and over again. *We all* deserve new runs and destinations.

And yet you all do it so well already – you simply get into that gorgeous little car of yours and you go for a drive along your favourite roads.

Well, why not take some more cars with you?

Yes, it does take some organisation, but there are plenty of Club templates and protocols in place and plenty of experienced people around who are more than willing to assist.

Our social calendar should not have to rely solely on the repetitive drives listed above, or the same faces organising them.

With our membership numbers continually growing my hope is that more will be prepared to host a run and add some new vitality to our events.

So please, think about where you love to drive and then contact me on social@mx5vic.org.au or on 0448 833 321 and let me know – I am more than happy to add your name to the social calendar.

I’ll leave one last thought with you: instead of having the heading “Driving on Borrowed Time”, wouldn’t it be great if my next Social Lights article could herald “Lending Some Time to Drive”?!

Remember: it’s a date – ***ink it in!***

Janette

Celebrating our 20 years!

■ Westpac Centre, 14 August 2010 ■ Photos: Ben Sale





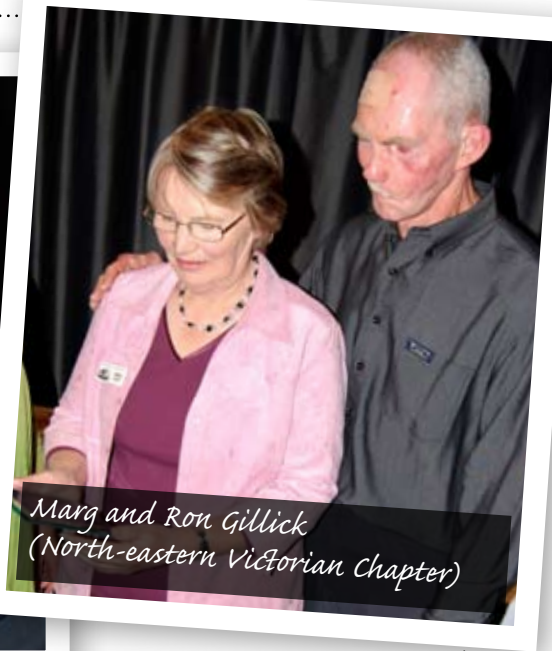
In Appreciation



Noellene & John Gleeson (Ballarat & Western Victorian Chapter)



Alistair Dennis



Marg and Ron Gillick (North-eastern Victorian Chapter)

Other "In Appreciation" awards went to: Ken Beaton (Northern Tasmanian Chapter) and John Waldoock and John Hadrill (Hobart Chapter)



l:
odd



MX-TRA award: Alan Bennett (left), with editors Don Nicoll and Alistair Dennis



Rusted on! Malcolm Brand and Murray Finlay receive their 20-year membership badges from Mike Quist



2009-2010 Motor Sport Champions



*2009-2010 Motor Sport
 Champion Russell Garner
 (left), with Club Captain –
 Motor Sport, James Saunders*



Standard NB: John Downes



Standard NA: Brendan Beavis, Robert Downes & Teruo Delacroix



Standard NC: Lindy Anderson



*Clubman Class:
 Peter Phillips*



*Modified Class and Rookie
 of the Year, Russell Garner*



*Restricted Open:
 Randy Stagno Navarra*

*Not present to
 collect their
 awards ...*

- » Open Class:
 Darrin Morice*
- » Club Captain's
 Award: Phil
 Munnings*

2010-2011 Rd 1: Winton

8.8.10



■ Photos: Brendan Beavis, John Todd, Cheyne Toomey



Results - Round 1	1st	2nd	3rd
Standard NA	Robert Heritage » 1:49.194	Robert Downes » 1:49.602	Brendan Beavis » 1:51.296
Standard NB	Max Lloyd » 1:51.241	Robert DeBont » 1:52.621	John Downes » 1:53.353
Standard NC	Colin Denman-Jones » 1:52.111	Mark Davies » 1:53.703	Lindy Anderson » 1:57.076
Clubman	Peter Phillips » 1:46.658 ¹	Sam Gumina » 1:46.684	Ray Monik » 1:47.347
Modified	Russell Garner » 1:42.477 ¹	Craig Healy » 1:45.506	Phil Munnings » 1:45.594
Restricted Open	Randy Stagno-Navarra » 1:44.088 ¹	Daniel White » 1:47.605	
Open	David Wilken » 1:36.881 ¹	Steven Cook » 1:37.679	

¹ New Club motor sport group lap record

Brendan hammers Haunted Hills

■ Words & photos: Brendan Beavis



A great person once said to me:
“It’s not the car, it’s the driver.”

A pretty clear statement really, and one that can often hold true, particularly in Club-level motor sport.

You see, people often look at lap times and say, “I need more power” or “Upgrade the suspension”. Instead, perhaps what should be said is “Can I brake later?” The easiest way to improve your lap times is to tighten the biggest nut in the car – the one sitting in the driver’s seat.

Take Gippsland Car Club’s *Haunted Hills* hillclimb for example. I drove around here at speed 12 months ago, my first event with the MX-5 Club in my newly-purchased NA. After a day of pretending I was Mark Webber, I managed a best lap of 1min 10.5 seconds.

“Not bad for a first outing,” I told myself. But why was I nearly three seconds slower than someone with the same car? Was my car old and worn out? Perhaps I just needed practice and experience ...

I can solve a Rubik’s cube, no matter how messed up it may be, in under 60 seconds. People think I’m a freak, or some sort of *Rainman*-type prodigy. But the facts are (a) I’m not unique; other people can do it too ... and (b) it comes down to one thing: practice.

Motor sport can be approached in much the same way; experience and practice make all the difference. Sure I’d never driven my car on a race track before, and I wasn’t going to win any trophies on my first outing, but what’s stopping me from aiming high?

Fast-forward a little over 12 months later to August 2010

Results - Round 2	1st		2nd		3rd	
Standard NA	Brendan Beavis	» 64.12 ¹	Robert Downes	» 64.92		
Standard NB	Robert DeBont	» 65.41	Ian Rogers	» 70.14	John Downes	» 70.31
Standard NC	Colin Denman-Jones	» 66.49				
Clubman	Sam Gumina	» 62.56 ¹	Peter Phillips	» 63.76	Teruo Delacroix	» 63.99
Modified	Russell Garner	» 63.53	Craig Baksa	» 63.99	Joe Bosnjak	» 67.99
Restricted Open	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 62.44 ¹				

¹ New Club motor sport group lap record

2010-11 Championship | Round 2 Haunted Hills hillclimb ~ 22 August, 2010



and the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria teams up with the WRX club for an event at Haunted Hills in Yallourn. This will be the second-ever official calendar event for our Club at this track and, likewise, my second attendance also. Things had changed a bit however. I had about 12 track days under my belt and about 12 months of practice to gain some useful experience. This therefore would surely mean an improvement in times.

The day started well, with a damp track quickly drying thanks to the warm sun and a blue sky. The usual necessities were addressed and the first runs of the day began around 10am.

I started the day with a 68-second lap, already an improvement from the same event 12 months ago. The following runs proved quicker and quicker, I dropped into the 66-second range, then into the 65. The times were clearly dropping and the smile on my face growing. The clincher came with the fourth and last run around the standard clockwise hill climb. I had a best time of 64.97, just 0.05 slower than key competitor, and equal Class Champion for 2009-10, Robert Downes with 64.92.

I put all my courage in my left pocket and all my skill in my right. I took the car out aiming for another personal best, a class record, and a round win. The light went green and I put my foot down. I hit (or at least aimed for) every apex, clipped every curb and squealed through every corner. The run felt good, the car was enjoying the track, and I really felt that the car was proving how good an MX-5 can be, even if it is 20 years old.

As I crossed the line, my time was shown on the digital display as I slowed to climb the hill back to the pits. All I needed was a tenth of a second, or even just a few hundredths of a second ... It was then I realised my day hadn't ended quite how I hoped. I had arrived at the track hoping for a good day and an improved time. I left after a great day, a new best time, a new class record *and a round win!* I'd managed a lap of **64.12 seconds!**

So is it the car, or is it the driver? I'll argue it was the driver!

See the lap that gave me the round win here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/BEAVISHSV> ■



Championship standings after Round 2 - Hillclimb, Haunted Hills (Bryant Park), 22 August 2010

	1st		2nd		3rd	
Overall Champion	<i>Too early!</i>					
Standard NA	Brendan Beavis	» 16	Robert Downes	» 14	Robert Heritage	» 10
Standard NB	Robert DeBont	» 17	John Downes	» 12	Ian Rogers	» 11
Standard NC	Colin Denman-Jones	» 20	Mark Davies	» 7	Lindy Anderson	» 6
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 17			Teruo Delacroix	» 10
	Sam Gumina	» 17				
Modified	Russell Garner	» 20	Joe Bosnjak	» 8	Craig Healy	» 7
Restricted Open	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 20	Daniel White	» 7		
Open	David Wilken	» 10	Steven Cook	» 7		

Chapter news ...

Mt Wellington – an unexpected snowy highlight ~ 7.8.2010 | Hobart

■ Words: Alan Dear ■ Photos: John Waldock ■ Run organiser: Alan Dear

Another perfect winter's day greeted us for our August run.

Setting out from Salamanca Place after coffee, seven cars (including an NB first-timer with Henry and Gail on board) headed south via the picturesque views from Churchill Ave, Sandy Bay. Yachts with full spinnakers set could be seen bursting forth through glistening waters in front of Wrest Point Casino: the sort of view one grows to be accustomed to, living in Hobart.

The convoy re-joined the Channel Hwy and twisted its way through Taroona and on to Kingston, enjoying further fantastic views of the Derwent River and across to the famous Iron Pot. From Kingston we wound our way to Blackmans Bay, through to Howden and on to Margate. It was a great day for top-down touring.

From Margate we took the Sandfly Road to Longley and on to the Huon Road to Fern Tree and Hobart ... at least that was the original intent! What transpired was different, but a great idea, John. We had noticed that on the southern slopes of Mount Wellington, viewed from Sandfly, there was a slight snow covering – not much but enough to present an attractive alternate route to the photographers amongst us. So after a quick conversation the convoy headed up the narrow windy road to the summit, dodging the centre road huggers and four-wheel drives along the way.

A shallow blanket of snow covered the summit area and satisfied both the photographers and those of us content with the striking views of the Channel area, Derwent River and of course Hobart, snuggled cosily beneath the mountain. A brief stop and we wound back down the mountain, again playing 'dodgem' with some of the oncoming traffic until finally back to Hobart.

From the city this time we headed over to the eastern shore and on to Richmond via Cambridge for lunch at the Richmond Arms Hotel. A chance to enjoy a relaxed lunch and chat.

After lunch a few folk peeled off to head their own way home, but four cars went on to Opossum Bay on a lovely afternoon via Cambridge, Lauderdale, and South Arm. We were able to enjoy views of the Derwent from the opposite side to our morning travels, as the afternoon sun began to settle behind that famous landmark mountain once again.

Overall a pretty enjoyable way to spend a sunny winter's day. ■





Round about in the mountains ~ 22.8.2010 | Northern Tassie

■ Run organiser: Stephen Roberts ■ Words: Steve's sometimes geographically-challenged passenger, Carolyn ■ Photos: Bruce Harvey

Nine MX-5s and one baby-toting, child-carrying Renault convened at the Harris Scarfe car park on a bright post-election morning.

The general chit-chat crossed the road to continue in the warmth of the Inn-dulgence Café, accompanied by coffee and pre-trip cake (yum), before we set forth into weather that was as confused about its intentions as the voting population had been the day before. Fortunately the sun encouraged us to lower our tops as we left Devonport to make our way through Don and out on to the Forth Road. We were on our way and enjoying the ride.

Gentle Annie provided her usual swaying thrills, slaloming ever upwards to greater heights on the way to Wilmot. Sparkling sunbeams added a gleam to the rain-enhanced greenery. It was all rather pleasant and I was enjoying myself immensely.

And then things became a little less relaxed. Someone (ie, me) wasn't fully briefed on our tour leader's preferred route. And, not being fully cognisant of the back roads and byways of the Ulverstone hinterland, I hesitated when asked where was the Spellman's turnoff. As I dithered, my usually unflappable friend became a tad agitated as we whizzed past the first of the two back roads leading to Spellman's. (*Are you still with me?*) Unfortunately we lost half of our party at this juncture. Or should that be lack of juncture ...

Now this is my side of the story – the left-hand side, of course. I now know, after careful perusal of the map, that there are two back roads leading to Spellman's, converging on the Wilmot Hills Winery (which is well-marked, and I marked the sign well as we passed it). So, fortunately, we did have the option of a second, rear-end access after we missed the first turn. While I suffered a little bit of agony after my moment of indecision, my much better-informed driver had worked out a contingency plan and decided to press on to Back Road Number 2, and thus avoid an embarrassing U-turn in Wilmot. Well, he would have avoided embarrassment anyway and said we had come for the scenic route via the old Coles store. *And why not?* The unexpected bonus of the mistaken overshoot was glorious views of Mt Roland and snow on the distant peaks. We were already glimpsing what Black Bluff would have in store for us.

After savouring the open skies and open views thanks to a well-wishing weather god, five of us turned off on the Other Back Road and waited patiently for our tail end to catch us up. Five gorgeous gleaming go-cars sat on the shoulder. And sat. *And sat.* Hmph. What was going on?

Someone (Bruce??) managed to make phone contact and collected the news that half our party had missed out on the spectacular scenic route (hey, it's not only politicians who can spin!), and approached Spellman's more directly. We revved up again and wended our way to the Wilmot Hills Winery and Spellman's Road. This dives down to the Wilmot River and climbs back out again. Bruce's wife (one day I will have all your names installed into my memory bank) later told us that trucks used to reverse down this once-gravel road to maintain traction. The MX-5s had no such problems cartwheeling down a now-sealed road to the river which was swollen by several days of heavy rain

and meltwater.

We then proceeded to the Leven Canyon via Upper Castra, hoping to catch up or be caught by the other drivers. The beautiful weather again revealed crystal clear views of snow fields against a blue backdrop. *Stunningly beautiful!*

Kaydale Lodge, our lunch venue, came into view and we wondered whether the other MX-5 party might be there, but with no sign of them we pressed on to Leven Canyon. A walk to the lookout had been on the agenda and, as the rain continued to hold off, this was still an option. However we had five missing vehicles to track down and when we failed to make contact at Leven Canyon, now beautifully upgraded, we became really puzzled at our divergence. The Loongana Road proceeds to gravel, boom gates and closed roads. Where had our compatriots-in-cars got to now? Another visitor in the Leven



Canyon car park informed us that a bunch of sports cars like ours had recently arrived, parked, tarried a while and then, failing to meet us,

departed. Steve decided to check out the lower Leven Canyon car park. It would have been a steep descent into the gorge for our child and baby-carrying gang, but these guys are heroes: you never know what will happen next.

Steve returned empty-handed from his recce, no MX-5s were in evidence further down the bitumen road, and he didn't fancy their chances on the gravel. As we couldn't have passed them on the road, we were now *very* perplexed. After a bit more waiting we forewent the walk and decided to head back to Kaydale for lunch, hoping we would all meet up there.

Hmm. *No-one here ... yak, yak ... let's hope they turn up soon ... yak, yak ... gardens look interesting ... hmm, where have they got to ... yak, yak ... soup sounds a nice idea ... log fire, yum, getting cold, will be cosy inside ... yak, yak ... OK, let's go and eat ... oh, and there they are, hurray!! ... lots of yak-yakking to find out what had happened and then we did, indeed, go and eat.*

OK, seems like someone (Kelly) knows the back roads much better than I do. She couldn't understand why anyone would

Roundabout in the mountains (cont)

miss the first turn off and take the long way round (mmm, I beg to differ, a few people take the long tortuous road and we aren't all perfectly logical, but I do most definitely see her point, and it was our leader's preferred choice too, of course). So, not seeing who was ahead of her (which is another story) and not knowing that we had indecisively decided not to take the First Back Road, she turned off and lead the back half of our merry party through her Preferred Back Road (missing the high-rise scenery, I dare to add 😊).

The shorter route and absence of waiting time meant Party No. 2 sped through Spellman's and ended up at Leven Canyon way ahead of Party No. 1. After a suitable amount of "Where are they?" time, Party No 2, again led by the intrepid Kelly, ventured down the Loongana Road, past the lower Leven Canyon track, off the end of the bitumen, and along the gravel to contemplate the Leven River at close hand.

Eventually they decided we weren't to be found 4wd-ing, and moseyed back to the Upper Leven Canyon car park, now deserted by the leading party, which was once in the rear ... so to speak. (Hope you are as confused as I am at this point.) Seeing our absence they decided it was truly time for lunch and headed back to Kaydale Lodge. There, Party No. 1 and Party No. 2 made a grand coalition and became one big happy party again. We proceeded in to eat, with much merriment all round, apart from our dear leader who by this stage was thankful (I think) that his day hadn't been totally dismembered by two women at opposite ends of the spatial awareness spectrum.

Lunch was a jolly affair of home-made soup, home-made bread, home-made dessert and a wonderful homestead log fire. Our party filled the dining room, bar a few independents on another table. Our hosts graciously made us welcome and comfortable while the rain finally escaped from the clouds to make the cosy dining totally worthwhile and satisfying.

Ah, what a wonderful thing the weather can be when it pours while you are safely tucked up in a cosy corner and shines when you want to drive with your hood down and the breeze around your earholes. Our post-lunch drive took us back though Nietta to the Preston Road (stop at the small layby to inspect the falls when you are travelling alone; they are pretty).

We then descended for a nicely thought-out roundabout tour of Gunns Plains. The countryside is very different here, a wide flood plain between two ranges of hills. There were once hop fields, but now the poles and wires have gone, leaving clear views of the flats. Turning left at the Gunns Plains shop, Steve took us on a big loop up the road past the caves turn-off to the far end of the plains and then around the western flank, almost back to Wings Farm Park before turning right to cross the bridge by the JR Lee Memorial Park, where an impressive liquidity met our gaze. A straight run took us back to the Gunns Plains shop, where we turned left past the Anguses grazing calmly in the fields nearby. Then we were off for a rattling run past the Gardens and other whitewater hot spots on the Leven River. Several kayakers were in the washing machine water making the most of the froth and foam. This is a great section of road. I love the combo of regular bends sweeping back and forth slalom-style, the rocks dropping down to the road edge and the long glimpses of sparkling water coursing over the boulders and through the trees. Great spot.

Climbing up from the river past Bannon's Bridge, we popped out on to the Motton-Preston Road leading to the Gawler Road and made our way back to Ulverstone, our party staying intact until we got to the Anzac Park Roundabout. Hmm. Whom had we lost this time? OK, not sure what happened this time, suffice to say that the radio proved fruitful and we were released from temporary immobility to proceed to La Belle's for afternoon tea.

The tea leaves may make more sense than my report. If you think so, check out La Belle's Bushell's and you won't be disappointed. We certainly were not as the owners had set out the tables in wonderful welcoming fashion and delighted us with the fragrant perfume of steeped tannin leaves, aka tea. *Yum*. After a final yak and delightful stories about past life in the local area, we said our adieu, congratulated Steve on a wonderful day out, and made our various ways back to base camps across the north and north-west.

It was a terrific day. Thank you Steve, and thank you to all who came. ■

Tech Talk ...

If you're thinking of lowering your "street-driven" MX-5 as part of a suspension upgrade – think again.

At the outset may I say that this article is directed to street-driven cars and not "track cars" or cars that the owner drives on the "road and track" and is therefore prepared to put up with a suspension compromised in favour of being suitable for the race track.

Those people contemplating modifying their MX-5 suspension to "improve handling" need to appreciate that Mazda spent millions designing, refining and testing the vehicle's suspension to produce a great compromise between handling and ride comfort. A well-researched suspension modification program should be able to improve handling with only a slight compromise in ride quality ... but the opposite is easily possible *and probable*, where a very small improvement in handling is achieved at the expense of a huge reduction in the ride comfort.

Before starting any suspension changes ensure that your standard components are in good condition – by 60,000km your shockers are past their best and by 120,000km are probably completely "shot". In addition, are your tyres and wheel alignment OK? ***New shockers, good tyres and an accurate full wheel alignment might be the solution to any unhappiness with your suspension.***

However, for many people, nothing looks better than a car which has been lowered – removing the large gap between the top of the tyres and the wheel arches of the car. This is often the driver for modifying the suspension.

So you are still intent on lowering the ride height of your car? Before proceeding don't ignore the legality issue relating to minimum ground clearance due to the reduced ride height, nor any issues with your comprehensive car insurance or any warranty implications.

What are the technical pros and cons of reducing the vehicles ride height?

Lowering the car lowers the vehicle's "centre of gravity" which is beneficial to handling as it reduces weight transfer during cornering. This is good because the loss of grip experienced by the

Thinking of lowering? Think again!



■ Words: Robert Downes, Assistant Club Captain - Motor Sport

inside tyres when cornering is NOT made up by the increase in grip of the outside tyres, thereby the overall cornering capability of the tyres is reduced due to weight transfer. In addition, a lowered MX-5 will allow additional negative camber to be set during a wheel alignment, more in line with what is needed for improved cornering. Also, the car is made more aerodynamic but the benefits are only best realised at speeds exceeding those that are road legal.

The disadvantages are plentiful:

- » It changes your suspension geometry affecting jacking properties, camber gain and roll when cornering.
- » It can increase the angle of the CV joints, increasing wear and marginally reducing power.
- » It reduces bump travel, which is already very limited, and more than likely will bring the bump stops into effect.
- » Your MX-5 will tend to scrape on speed bumps.
- » Your wheel clearance under the guard will be compromised particularly if larger/wider rims/tyres are fitted and some rubbing may be frequently evident.

Upgrading your suspension needs to be thoroughly researched and is not simply a matter of fitting a range of items from the "suspension candy shop" which can include: springs (different height & stiffness), shock absorbers (stronger and/or adjustable), front and rear sway bars, (stiffer and adjustable), more compliant suspension bushes and bump stops (length and stiffness).

Lowering your MX-5 generally goes hand-in-hand with shorter and stiffer springs (do not simply cut your springs to shorten them). Front spring rates on a NA/NB are approximately 160 lbs/inch with performance springs starting at 250 and going all the way through to over 500 lbs/inch. These springs are designed



Try driving this over a speed bump!

generally to give a ride height reduction of 25 to 35mm.

The stiffer springs will need stronger shock absorbers to stabilise the suspension oscillations. The natural frequency on the NA front suspension increases from approx 1.2 Hz to well over 1.4 and more as the stiffness exceeds 250 lbs/inch.

Front and rear spring stiffness needs to be kept within a tight "bounce frequency ratio" range to ensure satisfactory handling and similar issues exist with sway bars (front to rear stiffness ratios), remembering that a sway bar's stiffness increases dramatically with diameter. For example, 21mm vs 19mm diameter front bar is approx 50% stiffer.

In trying to minimise the likelihood that the car will hit the hard original bump stops due to the reduced ride height, many people are tempted to cut down the length of the standard stops or fit shorter aftermarket units.

There are obviously many decisions to be made when upgrading your suspension as part of lowering your vehicle's ride height. It is essential that you do your research and talk to people in the Club who have been down this road before.

Remember that **public roads are not racetracks** and if you intend to use the potentially improved handling capabilities that go with your modified suspension as part of reducing the ride height of your street driven car, please try it somewhere away from me, my family and friends ... instead, benchmark yourself and your car against other MX-5s on the racetrack. ■

Looks cool ... but what about tyre wear on the wheel arch?



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.

For sale **2007 Galaxy Grey NC Roadster** with folding hard top

Fitted with floor mats, door sill kick plates and automatic light sensor.

Although it has 62,000km on the clock, it has been used mostly as my daily work commute. Bought from and serviced only by Max Kirwan Mazda in Preston.

The first 18 months of the car's life were recorded in the *Emexley Report* published in this magazine. The car has never missed a beat – totally reliable.

(Note: the rego plates are not for sale.)

Asking price: \$29,800 Please contact Don on 0418 562 759



For sale **1996 limited edition Neo Green NB ~ MX5LE**

- » as described in "My Ride" article in MX-TRA [May 2010] ... but now with a hard top (and a few extra kilometres)
- » 99,000km
- » Vic personalised plates : **MX5LE**
- » registered to February 2011
- » approximately \$15,000 worth of extras



Price: \$21,000 firm Please contact Peter on 0417 562 357

For sale **1998 NB**

- » Classic Red with hard top
- » one owner / no accidents
- » 66,000km
- » looks stunning
- » only selling because I bought an NC!

Price: \$20,000 firm

Please contact Wayne on 0417 532 412



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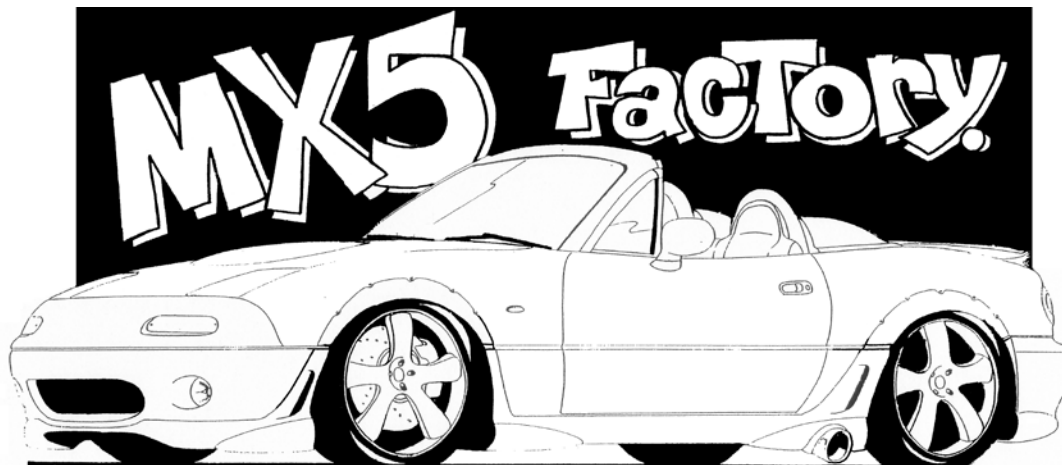
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