

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

And so this is Christmas ...



In this edition:
Winning the Interstate Challenge
Postcards from Maffra
Wind (and flowers?) in the hair



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Cover image:

The Christmas spirit abounded with gifts from members and Mazda Australia for the Salvos' toy appeal at our Christmas lunch in November. Photo: Ron Macdonald



Find us at:
**MX-5 Club of
Victoria**

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Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President president@mx5vic.org.au

G'day all!

Another year over, a new one about to begin.

We finished the year strongly with a great Christmas party and events in all Chapters right up to mid-December ... it's wonderful to see members from all parts of both states having the opportunity to enjoy their MX-5s in the fellowship of Club members. I know many of us have built strong and lasting friendships with others in the Club ... people we would never otherwise have met.

The Club is closing in on a new record membership. Our current tally is 466, just *four short* of our total of 470 members for the whole of last financial year –and we're not quite halfway through the year.

Growth has been strong across the board, but I believe a large part of our current success is the *retention* of existing members, and that's due in no small measure to the success of the Chapters (and the hard work of their convenors).

On behalf of *mxtra* editor (and vice-president) Don Nicoll and myself, thanks to everyone who contributed to the pages throughout the year – words and photos – making our lives and the magazine production much easier ... it's almost a headache making it all fit!

We constantly receive compliments from all over from people who are

amazed at the range and creativity of the content and the quality of photos, as well as the fact that we are able to produce this magnificent publication *every month!*

It's a credit not only to the tireless production team but to everyone in the Club, from the people who provide the material to the people who attend and make the events such fun, right through to those who organise the events that we cover in these pages.

We're kicking off the new year with a get-together in January of the Club's committee with all of the Chapter Convenors to discuss some key issues and to plan for the future. This will be the first time all these people will be in the one room at the one time, and it shows the commitment of the Club's leadership that they are giving up a weekend to come together to help make the Club even stronger.

If you have anything you'd like to throw into the mix for discussion, please let me know before 10 January – 9588 2868 or president@mx5vic.org.au.

There are some great events planned for January and February, and I look forward to seeing you there.

In the meantime, Alyssa and I wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and a relaxing new year.

***Especially at this time of year ...
... look up, stay back!***

Murray

JAPANESE CLASSIC CAR SHOW
The show for all classics made in Japan
Members: \$10 Display pass, Spectators: \$10, Children free
Our displays welcome and encourage
Prizes for special vehicles and the best club display
Catering, Displays, Photo Booth
Proceeds donated to local charities.

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THE ASSOCIATION OF
MOTORING CLUBS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES

SUNDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2012
Dandenong Showgrounds
Dandenong Netball Complex, Bennett Street Dandenong (Melways 99 A1)

Here's one for the diary ... the AOMC Japanese Classic Car Show on Sunday, 26 February.

Club displays are welcome, and it would be great to have a strong turn-out of MX-5s.

We know it's \$10 per car for entry and display and \$10 for spectators, with proceeds donated to local charities.

We don't have any more details yet, but will bring them to you as soon as we have them.



The usual Christmas lament
My energy it is all spent
With places to go and wouldn't
you know
My get up and go got up and went.

Though weary I slog through the
trenches
Of shopping mid sale-hungry
wenches
Dear Santa is nigh, I love the old
guy
But not everyone wants garden
benches.

Won't be long now till Christmas
is done
Turkey sandwiches! Please, no
more Mum
With the sun shining bright and
MX's in sight
We'll have fun in the sun on a run.

~ June Barry, 2011

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

2012

January

- 8 Twilight in the Trees, Dandenong Ranges
- 22 Gippsland Chapter > Tarra-Bulga run

February

- 19 Past Presidents' run
- 26 AOMC Japanese Classic Car Show - Dandenong

March

- 22 New Members' Night

April

- 1 Run to Phillip Island
- 6-10 NatMeet 2012, Canberra



Motor Sport Torque



■ Robert Downes – Club Captain - Motor Sport captain@mx5vic.org.au

Following a big month of Club motor sport in October with the Winton 6-Hour and the Interstate Challenge, there was no scheduled competition in November.

However, we held a “Special Motor Sport Meeting” on Friday 18 November at City Mazda to discuss several issues and it was attended by 29 competitors including “Lucky Tony” Harper. Great to see you “back on deck” Tony!

It was agreed to hold a Dyno Day next year and half the group indicated they would like to do the CAMS “Bronze” Standard Scrutineering Course. A query on certain “Federal” and “Yokohama” tyre classifications will be reviewed ready for the regular April motor sport meeting in the lead up to the 2012/2013 Championship.

However, the main agenda item was “**driving standards and behaviour**”.

Before opening up discussion to those present, I gave an update of the current situation and my take on it. This all stems from some concerns raised by the Alfa Club, who host us for most of our motor sport rounds, to me about several incidents both on and off the

track involving members of our Club and others at the AROCA events.

The MX-5 and Alfa Clubs both believe “*safety is of paramount importance and overrides all other considerations*”. We place the personal safety of competitors, officials and indeed all present at these events as our biggest priority followed by vehicle safety and then the enjoyment of the event.

To improve risk management, it is important that competitors:

1. remember the “driving against the clock” format of our competition;
2. comply with the “flag” system;
3. spread out behind the safety car;
4. use “common sense” and “be smart” when being passed or passing and giving yourself and others the best opportunity to have “clean uninterrupted laps”;
5. concentrate and use your mirrors;
6. if the car has mechanical problems, leave the track immediately and park in a “safe spot”;
7. if leaving the track for other reasons, be careful and respectful in returning to the track. You have already ruined that lap;
8. comply with the common Alfa/MX-5 Club “Code of Conduct” whilst both on and off the track. Treat and speak to others as you would wish to be. Be aware that the Alfa/MX-5 Clubs will be uncompromising on driving standards and personal behaviour in the future.

The meeting agreed that:

- » “competitor running order” within a group would be arranged “fastest to slowest” to minimise passing, and
- » should an MX-5 Club competitor either be asked to see the Clerk of the Course or take issue about the running of the meeting, he/she should do so in the company of the Motor Sport Captain or his representative.

I wish all Club members and their families a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Until next month ...

“drive responsibly at all times”

Robert #26

Third time lucky

The Victorian Motorkhana Championship has had a bit of a rough time with the weather forcing a couple of events to be postponed.

The HSCCV round was originally scheduled for 23 October, postponed to 27 November and finally run on 4 December at Avalon.

The venue is challenging with the competition surface being either natural dirt which provides good grip but generates dust or a compacted crushed gravel base which provides no grip and little dust. To add to the fun there were wet areas in the staging/pit area resulting in a number of vehicles becoming bogged.

Competition started about 10:30 with six tests before lunch and another four after with most heading home by 4pm. There were only 37 entries and a number were first-timers.



Our Club was represented by our three regular competitors; Pam and Nik dual-entered in Pam’s NA6 *Señorita* in Novice and Bob in his NB8B in Class B. Nik was handicapped with running first in the group and trying to drive *Señorita* without a handbrake ... resulting in a couple of WDs. Pam had a very good, clean day assisted by the non-functioning handbrake, allowing her to concentrate on accurate car placement. Bob was having a good day, but made two minor errors which cost him the class win by less than four seconds.

With the final round scheduled for 11 December it is all to play for as Bob now trails the class leader by *one point*. Pam has effectively won Novice class with Nik needing a wet sail to make it an MX-5 1-2 in the class.

The MX-5 Club has cemented its position of fourth in the State Club Championship.

~ Bob de Bont

Motor sport calendar

See the full calendar for details

2012

January

29 *Motorkhana practice day, Werribee (on dirt!)*

February

4 *Rd 6: Sprints, Phillip Island*

March

3 *Racecraft/Driver training, Winton (motor sport participants only)*

4 *Rd 7: Sprints, Winton*

April

27 *Rd 8: Sprints, Sandown*

May

TBA *Rd 9: Event/venue TBC*

2012-2013 Championship

June

30 *Rd 1: Sprints, Phillip Island*



Membership

Current membership count:

466

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer
membership@mx5vic.org.au

G'day all ...

This month, I would like to welcome another nine new members and wish them all the best for a long and happy association with the Club. They are:

Chris Anderson	2007 Silver NC
Suzette and James Heritage	1997 Classic Red NA
Mathew Holmes	2008 Emerald Green NC
Ken and Jessie Love	1999 Gold NB
Wendy Pitman	1992 Classic Red NA
Richard Shoobridge	2004 Velocity Red NB SE
John Smith	2006 Copper Red NC

I'm recently back from a few days at Apollo Bay – a great spot and the start of arguably the best stretch of the Great Ocean Road.

Alas, the powers that be have recently changed the speed limit from 100 kmh to 80 kmh on a considerable portion of the road.

I find it easier to understand the rationale for such a limit east of Apollo Bay, but I'm at a loss to understand the new limit to the west.




image: www.bikerbits.com.au

In the section between Apollo Bay and Lavers Hill, the GOR moves away from the ocean and heads through the Otway National Park. It is peppered with lengthy sweeping right- and left-handers and it offers wonderful driving experiences. A limit of 100 kmh was not excessive!

All the very best for the festive season and I'll ...

See you out and about ...

Will



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Social-lights

■ **Janette Todd – Club Captain - Social** social@mx5vic.org.au

■ **Photos:** Ron Macdonald

As we all start to think about our own Christmas festivities with family and friends, 70 plus members of our MX-5 family have just enjoyed the Annual Christmas Party at Kingswood Golf Club.

What a great venue it was; many thanks to Lynne Downes for bringing it to our attention. (For those who were not able to join us on the day, Lynne is the current Lady President of Kingswood GC.)

What a tasty lunch – I don't think anyone went away feeling that they didn't enjoy their meal. A pleasant location combined with wonderful company completed the day. Craig Bennett, who is Mazda Australia's National Product Manager, joined us and he was roped in to draw the various raffle prizes.

As in past years we had some very generous sponsorship/donation of prizes and a big thank you must go to:

- » Lachlan Story (Ballarat & Western Victoria Chapter)
- » autObarn Eltham
- » Mazda Australia
- » Carole & Dick Richey (MX5 Factory)

Prize winners on the day were:

- » Lesley Grigg (handcrafted platter)
- » Paul Murphy & Lois Scott (First Aid kits)
- » Joan Read (*Murder Mystery* tour on Puffing Billy)
- » Judy Searl (*Segway* tour of the Yarra Valley/lunch at Rochford Winery)
- » Coral Campbell (overnight winery escape for two in the Macedon Ranges)

Congratulations to all ...

I would like to thank all of you who kindly brought along a gift to be donated to the Salvation Army Christmas Toy Appeal – the Christmas tree was almost groaning under the weight (see the front cover)!

Finally, a special thank you to my husband, John, for helping me to get the toys home on the Sunday and then to the Salvos' depot on the Monday ... I promise that one year we will go to a Christmas function in our MX-5!

Remember: it's a date – ink it in!

Janette



If you love MX-5s and you know it, clap your hands ... President Murray (left) and Mazda's National Product Manager Craig Bennett lead the chorus at the Christmas lunch ...

A Gippsland adventure ...

29-31/10/11

■ **Participants:** Grant Butler & Saeko Fujiki, Will & Coral Campbell, Dave & Gail Collins, Ken & Joan Read, John & Janette Todd, Don Nicoll, Karen & Ian Bradshaw, Barbara & Keith Staite, Pam Bown & her brother, Stan, Tyrone Dark, Alyssa & Murray Finlay

Saturday morning, 29/10

Saturday morning found us at Berwick, ready for our weekend excursion to places unknown, on unfamiliar roads with many known friends from the club.

We drove to Loch for morning tea, splitting up with some trying out the local cafes whilst others headed to the sheltered park. At one point, Murray was heard to mutter (loudly), "How can you get lost in a one-street town?" -probably by following the wrong people. Hmmm....

After a leisurely break, we drove some great roads onto our next stop at Mirboo North.

Coral & Will



Mirboo North

60c

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Grant, John & Dave



... at Dargo

Saturday afternoon, 29/10

Wish you were here ... the weather is wet, dry, wet dry but good for top-down motoring. After lunch we drove through to Morwell for an afternoon stop, including its eclectic art gallery with exhibits including a crowd favourite "Hawaiian dancing sausages". Then we were all top-down through more beautiful scenery including Loy Yang power station to Maffra. Dinner was at the local sports club. The best way to get fed turned out to be "order last, eat first". Saeko looked in danger of becoming a gambling addict but recovered to be 400% up on the night. She said it's not going to change her life! The evening ended with a confluence of oysters and a "Ken Manoeuvre". You wouldn't Read about it and you certainly wouldn't want to see it.

Barbara & Keith



Maffra

60c

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Saeko



lunch at Yarragon

Sunday morning, 30/10

As we assembled in the Maffra Motor Inn car park, Grant welcomed locals from the Gippsland Chapter joining us for the day, and briefed us on the planned trip (adjusted with some local knowledge). We were to be aware of 4x4s and motor bikes. Weather was much the same as Saturday (overcast) but, not to be deterred, with the wind in our hair and hopefully not the rain we set off for a day's driving on superb MX-5 roads.

We were not disappointed: 98km that offered something for all driving tastes - tight and twisty, beautiful sweeping curves, roller coaster up-hill-and-down-dales, the occasional blind crest, single-lane bridges, flood plains and a floodway that, if you were not careful, bottomed you out. All this with scenery that was varied and beautiful ... and not forgetting the sounds and smells (plenty of cows). Dargo came all too quickly. Hot soup and sandwiches most welcome. Just fantastic! One of the best drives we have done with the Club ...

Gail & David



Dargo

60c

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Dave with new Gippsland member, John Smith



Gippsland members Alan Laine (left), Alan's son and Peter Shinn (right)

■ Photos: Alyssa Finlay, Joan Read, Will Campbell
 ■ Run organisers: Grant Butler & Saeko Fujiki



Alyssa

Sunday afternoon, 30/10

After a lovely relaxing lunch at Dargo, we headed back to Maffra with our roofs down. We stopped along the way a couple of times to practise our skills of putting the roof up, down and up again. The nearer the rain, the quicker the reaction times. Our afternoon cuppa at Stratford was washed out by a thunderstorm. Some made it to cover, the rest of us were stranded. After much indecision, our gallant leader abandoned our planned BBQ dinner – the 'chefs' refusing to cook under umbrellas. We headed back to the sports club. Great company, much laughing and chatting, great food (when it finally arrived). There was also some groping I'm told – for chocolate of course! A well-respected member still received lots of flack for abandoning his phone on the roof of his car!

Karen & Ian



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Monday morning, 31/10

We awoke to more grey skies and after another leisurely breakfast and a group hug(!!) headed off to the Maffra Car Museum. The building itself has a very interesting history. During the Second World War it was used as a dehydrating factory for vegetables which were then transported by rail for distribution to the troops. Preparation and packing of the vegetables was done manually by the women of Maffra. After the war it was used by Nestlé for storage.

A 1970s exhibition was taking place displaying vehicles in which some of us had learnt to drive (!) or brought back other fond memories of childhood or teenage years! The museum is well worth a visit.

From there we were on the homeward run via Glenmaggie, Heyfield and Yarragon for lunch. It is always a sad time when these weekends come to an end. Once again we had enjoyed good company, good food and wonderful scenery on good MX-5 roads.

Joan & Ken



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Murray & all his mates



Tyrone



Stan & Keith



Barbara & Pam



Dargo



Vics bring the Interstate Challenge home!

■ Words: Craig Healy ■ Photos: Jess Murphy (www.mx5pics.com.au)

23.10.11

Winton short track ... but on a hill!

... Faster through turn one, brake, stay wide left and change to third and turn in to turn two, a right-hander, slide through the late apex and slide more; power on ... c'mon **GET UP THAT HILL!!!** Lift, before on again for turn three to the left, drift a little to the middle but set it up for number four up the hill, brake a little, late apex and sliding towards the gravel, turn five is suddenly here – dab brakes and **TURN RIGHT NOW**, dip and slide down hill, pushing wide as it grips and slides and round six, full power through seven, the kink to the left, stay right and brake hard, back to second gear for turn eight, turn in left **NOW**, don't go too wide, feed throttle in and hug left turn as you exit the "Fish Hook" and change to third. Flat stick for nine to the left, sliding outside to the ripple strip, short shift to fourth at 6500 revs and dive for the right hander, second gear corner, breaking downhill from the 80m mark. Very late apex and jump the curb, pushing wide. **GET IT RIGHT!** You miss this one and you lose speed on the straight, push hard, change into third before the end of the ripple strip, get into fourth half way down the straight and hang out to centre track for turn one – fast!

... Do it all again, **but do it BETTER!**





That is a lap of Wakefield and it's all over in about a minute and a quarter, a rollercoaster of short straights and uphill/downhill complex corners that could take a lifetime to perfect.

Our little cars love it and it has direct comparisons with the short track at Winton. The difference between the fastest standard NA and the MX-5 race cars is less than 9 seconds and it is the Hill that makes the difference, compared with Winton. It is a tough track to take on for the first time, even for the guys who have been going round in circles for years. *Much to be learnt here, Grasshopper!*

For me, the experience of a new track brings on the little butterflies in the stomach that I remember from the first track days I attended. There is plenty of run off, so the danger factor is slight compared to Sandown. The danger is not the issue; the butterflies are from the thrill of something new, of testing your ability against a new challenge and the learning curve that comes with it.

There was added pressure at this track – it was the annual NSW/VIC Challenge and we did not want to be beaten badly. It is near-impossible to win away from home and there is the chance that we could look really silly. It is a long drive to Goulburn and you need to allow 7½ hours up the Hume from the outskirts of

Melbourne. Yes, the pressure was on – it's a long way to go and be embarrassed.

We arrived on the day with 21 Victorians to represent our motor sport team, including the NSW-based Phil Munnings. A good thing he was helping us out too as he drives the track regularly and provided much inside knowledge and helped a few of us zero in very quickly. He was the centre of attention at dinner the night before and invaluable to me on the day!

Cookie, Princey and Brendan had attended the HSV track event on the previous day and had learned plenty. Cookie managed the time of the day by *1/100th* (1:07.63) and Brendan was our fastest NA. Peter was our best Clubman class – nothing new in that! All the big guns performed well: Russ managed a 1:13 to take out Modified, Robert and Noel had a good fight all day with Robert taking the honours and Owen Boak finished with a 1:09.

As far as the Interstate Challenge is concerned, we had to abide by the NSW scoring system. The last competition had been at Philip Island last December

and Victoria had won by the smallest margin. We thought it was going to be a whitewash under NSW house rules! We had plenty of competitors in Standard, Modified and Clubman classes – this is what managed to push our points up as we outpointed NSW in these classes. Of course, NSW had its way in other classes but with Owen, Brendan and Cookie taking class wins and many others outperforming the locals, it looked like it may be close!

The final announcement was made in front of 70 competitors and a crowd of supporters.

Final points: **NSW – 143 points ... VIC – 168 points. WE WON!!**

The long drive back seemed a lot shorter with a huge smile on the dial! ■



Results - Round 4	1st	2nd	3rd
Standard NA	Robert Downes » 1:17.22 ¹	Noel Heritage » 1:17.56	Lucky Tony Harper » 1:23.76
Standard NB	Bob de Bont » 1:19.65 ¹		
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra » 1:14.35 ¹	Lindy Anderson » 1:21.24	Alan Conrad » 1:22.85
Clubman	Peter Phillips » 1:15.72 ¹	Ben Sale » 1:15.94	Paul Murphy » 1:19.02
Modified	Russell Garner » 1:13.41 ¹	Phil Munnings » 1:14.17	Craig Healy » 1:14.97
Restricted Open	Brendan Beavis » 1:14.16 ¹		
Open	Steven Cook » 1:07.63 ¹	Owen Boak » 1:09.81	Christine Boak » 1:19.43

¹ New Club motor sport group lap record

Championship standings after Rd 4 - Wakefield Park Sprints, 23 October, 2011

(corrected points)	1st	2nd	3rd
Overall Champion	= Robert Downes /Peter Phillips » 40		Russell Garner » 33
Standard NA	Robert Downes » 40	Noel Heritage » 28	Tony Harper » 19
Standard NB	Stephen Downes » 30	Bob de Bont » 10	= John Downes/James Young » 7
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra » 26	Lindy Anderson » 25	Colin Denman-Jones » 15
Clubman	Peter Phillips » 40	Paul Murphy » 19	David Wilken » 14
Modified	Russell Garner » 34	Craig Healy » 22	Phil Munnings » 21
Restricted Open	Brendan Beavis » 28	Daniel White » 23	Teruo Delacroix » 16
Open	Christine Boak » 22	Steven Cook » 20	Owen Boak » 17

Blue skies, red trucks, white knuckles ...

■ **Words:** Don Nicoll ■ **Photos:** Ron Macdonald & Wendy Clark (gracies-place.net/gallery.php)

■ **Run organiser:** Don Nicoll

First rule for the organiser of any run is to have a list of things to be covered during the clan gathering at the start of the event.

This is especially important when the organiser has only a few minutes to drive to the start of the run and thus little time to do some thinking. As a consequence, the writer forgot to organise a tailend Charlie (thanks to Ken and Joan for jumping to the rescue) ... and to find a report writer.

It seems that it is almost mandatory now to have a writer organised *before* the event, such is the reluctance of Club members to offer on the day.

My price for this oversight was to write the report myself, although I did receive an email from Alan Bennet offering to help if I was stuck (*thanks again Alan, but when you're busy, busy and I'm on long service leave, it hardly seemed fair*).

Seventeen cars showed up for the day, one belonging to non-members who were checking us out to see if we are a respectable bunch. I think we passed.

The run took us directly from Research up to Kinglake via Panton Hill and St Andrews. As usual, the run up to Kinglake from St Andrews had a lot of cyclists, but we did manage to avoid cars going in the same direction until near the top of the climb. From Kinglake we meandered along the road to Toolangi before turning down the fabled Myers



OK, hands up who's going to volunteer to do the write-up ... Anyone?? ... I know you can hear me! ... Dang!



Where there's a windy road ...

6/11/11



Gorgeous!

Creek road. I have driven this road many times and never have I encountered any traffic.

Not today ... barely one third of the way down the hill and we came upon some slow-moving vehicles. Such was the slowness that a certain Grace Green NB started sand-bagging to relieve the boredom. One minute there were Ron and Wendy filling the rear vision mirror and the next they had disappeared.

A quick stop for coffee in Healesville allowed for time to reflect on what might have been, before we set off again. This time the route took us back to Kinglake via Chum Creek Road which, I'm pleased to say, was not so congested with slow-moving traffic. A short regroup before the Melba Highway saw us altogether again for the run through to Kinglake and Kinglake West. It is now nearly three years since the 2009 fires and yet you can still see plenty of scars from that horrific event.

The road from Kinglake West to Flowerdale now has a 100km/h limit which is a great improvement on the 80km/h limit installed after the fires. Never the less, it didn't seem to impress a certain shopping trolley that was being driven at 80km/h despite the speed upgrade. The Flowerdale pub was again playing host to a big group of bikers as we passed. I have to conclude that the group must live at the pub, as they are always there whenever I go that way.

A run through the valley of a thousand hills saw us pull up at the Strath Creek and Reedy Creek CFA where we were welcomed by Gavin Hodge, the Brigade Captain and Eric Smith, the Secretary. This year we added interest with a couple

of extra activities. We asked the brigade to judge the best car according to any criteria they chose (I had images of red cars and fire extinguishers having the edge over the rest). To our surprise the Brigade decided to award a second and third as well, which was a worry as we had only brought a prize for first. However Gavin came up with three CFA hats which were awarded to Lester Scott, Murray Finlay and Dennis Barry. The Brigade were particularly taken with Lester's fully-restored NA and so he got the main prize of a Mazda

picnic rug.

Ron Macdonald had come up with the idea of offering Brigade members a ride in the passenger seat of an MX-5. We had four volunteers who were given a quick run out to Reedy Creek by Ron, Ken Read, Alan Bennett and yours truly. There were a couple of white knuckles emerging from cars when we returned, but all agreed the cars were faster than the fire truck!

Once again the Club donated \$250 which was almost matched with another \$243.70, donated by members when the hat was passed around. I would like to add my thanks to those of Gavin and Eric for the incredible generosity of the members who attended the run. At the time of going to press, I'm not sure how our donations will be used but I'm sure Eric will let us know. ■



*Above: Our CFA hosts
Left: another fine MX-5 lunch*



The CFA's jolly giant in green! Strath Creek-Reedy Creek CFA brigade secretary Eric Smith takes a spin with Ron Macdonald.

Chapter news ...

Getting high ... 12-13/11/11 | North-eastern Victoria

- Words: Day 1: Lyn Jordan Day 2: Lockie Story
- Photos: Lyn Jordan, Bronwyn & Geoff Roche
- Run organisers: Gerry & Ellen Engwerda

Day 1: Saturday morning was perfect – blue skies and sunshine.

By 8:45 all 15 cars were present and accounted for. Gerry gave us our pre-run pep talk and a folder of information for the weekend. It was very impressive and well organised.



Heading out of **Wodonga** we passed Bandiana army base, where my grandfather had been posted after WWII ... I hadn't seen that before. The Kiewa River was full. We were driving over the Murray River flood plains through farmland dotted with trees. There was smoke in the distance – I hoped it was just burning off.

And there was Lake Hume – full to the brim. What a magnificent sight. We headed around the end of one of the arms and noticed the tops of pylons of an old bridge protruding out of the water like sentinels guarding the lost valley, which must have been beautiful before the flooding. The sounds of nature all around serenaded us as we drove along. Don't you love how you can hear the birds singing when the roof is down? *Who needs a radio?*

Our first stop was at the **Old Tallangatta** lookout. We paused, regrouped and enjoyed the view and the sunshine.

Continuing on the road to **Granya**, the countryside changed from green paddocks and river flats to winding, mountain roads, dry forest and cool, leafy fern gullies. Then suddenly pine forests (*screws up nose in disgust and says "YUCK!!!" out loud*). Climbing into the high country, we were now looking down into the valley we had just left – farms, rocky outcrops and little dams terraced down the hillside, like the eyes of the world looking up at us.

Back out of the forest and the land flattened out. This is cattle country and there's the Hume again. Through the little village of Granya and on into the countryside, the road began to follow the edge of the Hume. It's probably been decades since the water was this close. There wasn't a breath of wind. The water was flat and smooth – perfect reflections of the big old gum trees standing knee deep in the water. Now it's sheep country and the forest covered hills rise up to our right, while the perfect green pastures run down to the water's edge on our left.

Soon we were heading into **Walwa**, where we stopped for morning tea. The Saturday market was in full swing; we bought the last of the dim sims from the Thai food stall. The local community radio station was broadcasting from the market and Gerry was invited to say a few words about the Club and the run.

I met a lovely lady in one of the galleries who asked me if I'd come in on the C546. "I don't know," I replied. "We came on the road that follows the river." Yep, that's the one. That's the C546. It turns out that the locals are trying to get the road known by this name so they can promote it for tourism, so please keep that in mind if you are talking about it.

Leaving Walwa, we entered horse country – stocky little kick-arse workhorses, ready to take on the mountains we could see ahead, as we had our first glimpse of snow on the rooftop of our world.

We arrived at the turnoff to Khancoban and met a large contingent of bikers heading in the same direction. Their police escort stayed with them until they had all turned the corner!! This was the Alpine Way. Here we had our first close-up look at the Snowy Mountains and the pipeline for the hydro-electric scheme snaking its way through the countryside. And then we were in **Khancoban** for lunch. By now it was very warm, bordering on hot, so the shady picnic area was very welcome. After a delicious lunch we made our way to the **Murray 1 Power Station** for a guided tour. Mark Clayton, a Club member, works for the power company and was able to give a very interesting and informative tour of the facility.

From there it was on to **Cabramurra**. The roads became narrower as we climbed into the hills and entered the Kosciuszko National Park. This was old forest – big, old trees, bracken and ferns on the forest floor, with splashes of yellow from the egg and bacon plant that was flowering everywhere. Then suddenly we were amongst alpine vegetation. The air was cooler, the trees smaller and the rocks covered in moss.

We were up very high now, with breathtaking views of the valley and miles and miles of dead, white snow gums – the result of the 2003 bushfires. The good news is that the roots are still alive, and they are already sprouting again. The stark contrast between the bone white



*Gerry Engwerda
with his award*

trunks and the deep, dark green of the new growth beneath them was stunning. Below us we could see a large expanse of water – **Tooma Dam**. We stopped here to regroup and stretch our legs.

After the break, the road climbed up and up until we were gliding over the top of the world. More dead trees – so many – a ghost forest. Starting our descent the mountains looked like a huge, old, silverback gorilla with the silver ghosts of the burnt out forest standing out over the new growth. It looked so soft and furry.

Next stop was **Tumut Dam**. We all walked down to have a look at the wall and then were quickly on our way again. There was another climb and this time, as we looked down into the valley, we could see dams everywhere. They are all part of the amazing hydro-electric scheme. In front of us was a huge lawn, or so it appeared at first glance. It turned out to be the private ski run of the small town of Cabramurra, the highest permanently-inhabited town in Australia. Cabramurra is a company town for the hydro workers. It has all the “mod cons” – a general store and petrol station, primary school to Year 6, a pub, an indoor heated (of course) swimming pool, a ski slope, and tennis courts – what more could you want?

From Cabramurra the forest opened out to the high plains. We drove through the abandoned settlement of **Kiandra**. It would be a harsh place to live – ice and snow in the winter, hot, dry and exposed in the summer – a place of extremes.

We passed the turn off to Bugtown (*hmmm ... that sounds inviting – a great place for a holiday!!*) and then we were in **Adaminaby** (home of the big trout) for a quick coffee. Leaving there we turned towards Berridale.

Off to our right there was a hint of a rainbow. A huge storm front was moving across the sky and a few big splotches of rain began to hit the windscreen. We drove through **Berridale**, quite a large

town and obviously oriented towards the snow season with ski hire and lodges everywhere. The sky was now getting really dark and dramatic – which would come first, Jindabyne or the rain?

And there was **Lake Jindabyne** in front of us – full to the brim.

We made it.

Day 2: After a leisurely breakfast we headed off from Jindabyne to our first stop, a schnapps distillery, not an hour away.

Here we had a tasting which changed my thoughts on schnapps entirely. Obviously I have only tried rubbish in the past. Drinking hard liquor at 10am could get out of hand; fortunately it didn't. The owners also have a range of large carved and polished granite sculptures including half a bull peering around the corner of the tasting room.

As we climbed higher we were looking at the number of completely dead trees that were still standing. When we asked about them, we were told that these particular eucalypts have to live to 30 years before

they are mature enough to regenerate. This means that if there is another fierce wildfire in the area before the young trees mature they will be wiped out. No wonder they are so strict on their fire regulations.

It was then on to **Thredbo**. It seems that a halt in Thredbo will cost you \$10 to stop legally and considerably more to stop illegally. We were taken on a tour through the town driving on most of the streets which, at this time of year, seemed almost deserted, but still a very pretty place with some amazing vistas.

We continued up through Thredbo Valley getting the odd glimpse of the remaining snow on the peaks. I have to say at this point that the weather was well organised ... sunny, not hot, not cold – just right. As we reached the top of the Great Dividing Range, we had a stop at **Dead Horse Gap** at 1592 metres (the highest point I have ever been in a car) where we had an impromptu presentation of awards. These were a five-year membership for Stuart James and this year's North-East Chapter Champion awarded to Gerry Engwerda.

Next came the downhill and very windy

... continued page 17



Chapter news ...

Awesome in Orford ... 6/11/11 | Hobart

■ Words & photos: John Waldock ■ Run organiser: John Waldock



The destination for November's run has been traditionally to Orford, where we meet with the Post Vintage Car Club of Tas for a bit of 'Show and Shine' before we move on to Darlington Vineyard for a picnic lunch and wine tasting.

The day started well; sunny with a smell of spring in the air. We met for the first time at Bellerive (for non-Hobartians, Bellerive is on the eastern shore near the Tasman Bridge), as the parking is easier there and the coffee is really nice too. There was a good turnout of members, a dozen cars all told, which made for a vibrant and interesting group. It was nice to welcome back Jo Hirst, who hasn't been able to attend any runs for quite a long time (forgot to pay her membership!). Jo kindly offered to take Caz as her passenger and commented that Caz is the first female passenger Jo has had in her SE. *Perhaps we should organise a plaque for Jo's car ... or a bravery award for Caz?*

The drive to Orford is a pleasant one, with plenty of MX-5-type corners to keep the drivers happy. Upon our arrival, we all de-carred (*Ed ~ a Taswegian term*) and took the opportunity to walk around and look at the older cars in the car park. One gentleman (not from our Chapter) made a beeline for Jo as she was parking. I think he was trying to make a joke about rice

burners or something, but we couldn't quite understand what he was saying (a lack of teeth can make enunciation difficult).

After we debriefed about the journey (many comments were made about motorcyclists and their manners or lack thereof) followed by a refreshing beverage, we mingled with the other car owners and chatted about cars, however Jo was still deep in conversation with her new toothless friend.

Before we knew it, it was time to decamp again, as we needed to get to the vineyard for our wine tasting and picnic. The wine was lovely; there is something special about having a sup whilst looking out across the vines on a sunny day.

After lunch, some members purchased wine and we made our way back to town via Richmond where some of us stopped for a coffee and late afternoon chat.

Thanks to the Chapter for making the day so enjoyable. ■





Twilight run ... 26/11/11 | Hobart

■ Words & photos: John Waldock ■ Run organiser: John Waldock



As the days are now getting longer, the Hobart convenors have decided to put on a few twilight runs.

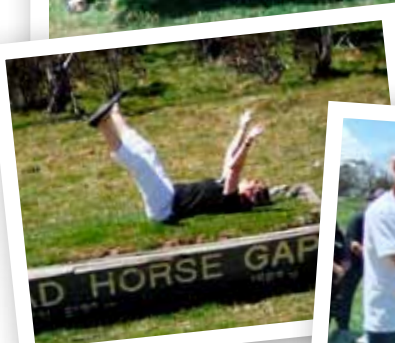
These seem popular with members as they are shorter and tend to be more social in nature. This run was planned to take a long tour from Hobart to Richmond to South Arm, past Ross and Inga's place for coffee (Ross has a mobile coffee van) and on to Salamanca for fish and chips.

Alas, despite the weather being superb during the week, it decided to rain constantly on Saturday and this probably explains why only a small group of hearty and damp MX-5ers arrived at the departure point.

We headed off slowly and cautiously, and it became obvious to the leader (me) that the group didn't really want to find the limit of adhesion for their cars. So, an executive decision was made to go straight to Ross and Inga's place for a warm coffee. The coffee was lingeringly good, probably due to the welcome addition of some homemade rum and other very nice concoctions (Ross is a man of many talents).

Before we realised it, it was getting well into the early evening, and so tracks were made, home in my case, but off for dinner for others. Thanks to Ross and Inga for their very kind hospitality. ■

Getting high ... from page 15



Karen Bradshaw ...



Stuart James (right) receives his 5-year pin from Ron Gillick

part of the day's drive, which made for some *really fun driving*. It was alleged that my new exhaust could be heard 10 cars back. I can't see how that could be possible ...?

We arrived in **Khancoban** for lunch, finding ourselves ahead of the cars that had been in front of us ... It seems we had got a bit spaced out and Tracey and I had missed the group having a break further back on a siding. Eventually all cars made it to town with some really great fish and chips for lunch. We agreed to meet at a point on the way out of town at 1:45 and went off to do our own thing. Tracey and I went to *The Man from Snowy River Museum* which was a fantastic exhibit where you could spend hours. It is definitely a place we will return to someday.

We gathered at the appointed time and cruised our way to **Corryong** and **Wodonga**, losing some of the cars on the way as they turned off for home. As we got lower down the roads became more sweeping and the vistas extensive. Every bend was a new experience in visual acuity and presented as something from a picture book. Tracey made the comment that the towns all had lovely names and I have to say I agree with her. All this, combined with the dulcet tones of Eric Clapton, made for very relaxing and enjoyable driving. We arrived where we had started, back in Wodonga and then travelled to Corowa where we were invited to a BBQ at Ron and Marg's which turned into a party with everyone having a great time. ■

Ballarat and Western Victoria Chapter members who attended the alpine run would like to thank Gerry & Ellie and Ron & Marg for the most fantastic weekend. The most beautiful scenery, mountains, valleys, lakes and the best roads any MX-5 lover could wish for.

Thank you all for your hospitality, friendship and incredible organising; we feel it will be almost impossible to match. We'll be back!



Chapter news ...

Longford

East Coast run ... 19-20 /11/11 | Northern Tassie

■ **Words:** Marg Davies ■ **Photos:** Dot Manion ■ **Run organisers:** Bruce Harvey & Cheryl Murray

The weekend East Coast trip proved once again to be a most enjoyable and entertaining event for the 14 participants in their respective resplendent MX-5 machines!

After meeting at Longford, with a couple of us delayed due to work commitments, we motored through the back roads to Campbelltown for a quick stop. I wonder if the rest of the public knows about these beautiful country roads?

On arrival at Campbelltown one black MX-5 was slightly dirtier than at the start due to the cattle crossing, er, residue on the road near Rosedale. Perhaps he was travelling a bit too close to one NC and failed to notice it!!

From here we travelled via the Lake Leake Highway, encountering diverse driving conditions (heavy fog and mobile chicanes), but it was still an amazing drive and the fog added some interesting moments.

After arriving at Bicheno, we discovered a wine and food festival in progress, however a quick enquiry at the venue dampened our hopes of lunching there. Hot chips at the café opposite lured some of us who hadn't self catered.

The adrenalin increased somewhat after our departure from Bicheno as we encountered the amazing Elephant Pass through to St Marys Pass and on to Scamander.

Hey, this was the best! From these spectacular passes and the seaside views along the way (note to self re. several wineries of interest) we arrived at our stopover ... the Scamander Beach Resort.

After check-in, it was rest time for some, whilst others took a run through to St Helens, Binalong Bay area and Weldborough, or strolled on the beach.

Dinner in the evening at our resort was a really lovely exchange of fun stories over a nice meal and a few bottles of wine. How good is it to share the company of such a great group of people!

After a very peaceful night's rest, we breakfasted, did a bit of car detailing, and were on our way via St Helens to the Weldborough Pass. Now this has to be one of the best drives in an MX-5, a real driver's delight!

Proceeding through to Derby for a pit stop, we continued on, passing through Legerwood for a look at the carvings there and through to Scottsdale. The wet weather that had threatened all day hit and for most it was time for the roof to go up. Some of us toughed it out in true style till the top of the Scottsdale Pass, then made a mad dash for the roof and gathered

up our lunch, running for cover under the rotunda. Lighting a nice fire sounded like a good idea, but with the absence of dry kindling, we instead had to endure the cold, wet conditions.

We waited for a while and the weather cleared for our departure through to St Leonards.

From here Michael Nolan led the way to Josef Chromy Winery for a much-enjoyed coffee to finish up the day. More rain bucketed down here but no-one minded too much as we enjoyed the beautiful surroundings of the vineyard.

Lastly, our thanks must go to Bruce and Cheryl for organising such a wonderful weekend. It was indeed a fantastic MX-5 run! ■



Bicheno



Picnic by the Lake ... 30/11/11 | Ballarat

■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photos: John Gleeson ■ Event organiser: John Gleeson



Nice coat, John!



No sunscreen spill this time, Jeff!

Oh my goodness, it's so cold this morning. Is it really spring? It's only 7°!

Being the keen enthusiasts we are up this way, bad weather is not going to stop us showing off our pride and joy at the Ballarat Springfest beside Lake Wendouree. We love our MX-5s!

It is 8.30am. John has already headed off in the work wagon with the banner etc on board to meet Jeff Woolf and set up our display area.

I follow to the lake in the MX-5, driving very slowly so as not to dirty our baby ... John had spent ages washing, drying and waxing so she looks a treat.

On pulling up, others had already arrived, coming from as far as Bendigo and Geelong to participate. Gwenda was proudly sitting up in a brand new Limited Edition NC. Having relations at the local Mazda dealership, she was asked to display this brand new car with ours to see if it could be sold. Very nice car!

Eleven MX-5s soon lined the lake foreshore. We were frozen as the wind was blowing straight off the water. Just the same, the guys still had a good time chatting in groups or popping in and out of each others cars having a good yak.

Gwenda and I were not silly. We sat in our cars, only leaving to find the loo. I kept starting our engine to charge up the heater ... John said I was going to use half a tank of petrol standing still! Well, I ain't silly, and I was certainly warm! John, braving the elements, was so cold he was the colour of his coat – *a nice shade of blue.*

Later in the day Jeff decided to put his roof down to try and encourage the sun. John told our new members from Bendigo that once one member puts their roof down, everyone has to follow. You should have seen the look on their faces!

Shannons had a 'Top 5 Cars' competition on the day. We were the very proud winners in our section and were awarded a trophy to add to our growing collection. So all the cleaning and waxing was worth the effort.

Thank you to all MX-5ers for supporting this once again; we really appreciate it. ■

Ed: cold in Ballarat ... who knew??

Mazda's grand ideas for the MX-5 ...

■ Words & photos: Mazda media release

Low-emissions and lightweight MX-5 Spyder and Super20 headline Mazda's line-up at the 2011 SEMA, the USA's annual automotive aftermarket tradeshow.

Mazda North American Operations (MNAO) reputation for Zoom-Zoom dynamism was further enhanced at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) Show in Las Vegas in November.

"There is no limit to one's imagination and when applying that to the already dynamic design and punchy performance of Mazda vehicles, the end result is nothing short of a well-crafted vision," said Derek Jenkins, director, MNAO Design. "And because the stock models are extraordinarily versatile, who's to say some elements of these SEMA concepts can't be ready for public consumption?"



Beloved worldwide as the best-selling two-seat roadster in the world, the MX-5 is the vehicle motor sport enthusiasts love to drive on the weekday streets of suburbia and the weekend roads and race tracks nationwide.

The **MX-5 Spyder** is a re-imagining of the roadster and features a sweeping, single-panel grenadine-red soft-top made by Haartz Corporation.

Its design, a collaborative effort between MNAO Design and Magna Car Top Systems, offers an even lower slung stance of the MX-5 without sacrificing headroom. The MX-5 *Spyder* has been painted *Stratosphere White* and features a Yokohama rubber-and-rims set of AO48 225/45R17 performance tyres matched with 17-inch, 10-spoke ADVAN RS wheels in Gun Metal Metallic. But as the adage goes, there is more than meets the eye.

Under the bonnet is where the vehicle's exterior treatment matches wits with an interior trick. Powered by Mazda's ever-dependable MZR 2.0-litre engine, the MX-5 *Spyder* is fuelled by BP's isobutanol*. The significance? The biofuel supports Mazda's mantra of "Sustainable Zoom-Zoom", which means crafting exciting, fun-to-drive vehicles that create minimal environmental impact.

A testament to this philosophy is the Mazda/Dyson Racing entry in the American Le Mans Series. The #16 LMP1Lola vehicle features a turbocharged MZR-R 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine, runs on isobutanol and beat competing larger-block V-12s to win the manufacturer, team and drivers' championships for the 2011 racing season. Mazda also was given the *Michelin® Green X® Challenge* at the Baltimore Grand Prix, a distinction awarded

to the "cleanest, fastest, most efficient" category cars in the race.

Another fuel-saving, engine-efficient feature of the MX-5 *Spyder* is a lightweight lithium-ion racing battery made by Braille Battery. The lead-free advanced battery system is RoHS compliant and constructed of non-hazardous materials, has a high charge retention and offers a longer life cycle than comparable standard batteries. A Racing Beat header, intake and exhaust muffler as well as a MAZDASPEED coil over kit and Brembo brakes complete the vehicle's mechanics.

The cabin area is accentuated by tanned Saddle black-leather seats with aqua leather accents and coal ash suede inserts. Subtle Spider Silk grey metallic-coloured trim pieces on the doors and dash panels tastefully adorn the mostly black interior, which is finished off with customized floor mats by Star West. A MAZDASPEED short-throw shifter adds a tasty reminder to the MX-5's motor sport pedigree.



Introduced during last year's SEMA Show, the **MX-5 Super20** is back and with a new "do". Now blazing in a Hyper Orange Mica exterior treatment, the MX-5 Super20 retains its darker, edgier *Mr Hyde* attitude in comparison to its more sociable *Dr Jekyll* MX-5 persona.

With its soft-top replaced with a stationary glossy black hardtop, and matching orange stripes, the MX-5 *Super20's* interior was also modified and fitted with a colour-matched roll bar, lending a Grand Touring-inspired feel and function. The black leather seats feature suede seat inserts and channel stitching, which provide improved grip for drivers. Orange contrast stitching adds the finishing touch to the sporty seat profile.

Additional modifications include a DPTune reflashed ECU, Racing Beat 304-stainless steel header and exhaust, Racing Beat hollow front and rear anti-roll bars, ACT organic street clutch, MAZDASPEED coil overs and a shock tower brace, Power Slot slotted brake rotors, StopTech stainless steel brake lines and street performance brake pads, SpeedSource front brake ducts, black 16-inch Enkei RPF1 twin-spoke racing wheels, Toyo Proxes RA-1 245/45ZR16 high-performance tires and 20mm H&R Track+ bolt-on wheel spacers in the rear with 15mm Sparco wheel spacers in the front. ■

* Although similar to how ethanol is produced from agricultural feedstock, isobutanol does not compromise vehicle performance for the sake of fuel economy and can be added to the current fuel distribution infrastructure without requiring modifications in blending facilities, storage tanks and retail petrol station pumps. Isobutanol's compatibility with existing technology and infrastructures is a significant step toward meeting the demand in renewable fuels for transportation.

Back to the future?



■ **Words & photo:** Alan Laine, Gippsland Chapter



I thought with my upgrading from an NA to an NC everything would be better. Well, one thing that was a disappointment was seat comfort.

After a couple of hours' driving, fatigue set in around the lower back no matter how I tuned the seat.

I went on to the forums looking for complaints from other people hoping it wasn't just me (odd-shaped spine perhaps). There was no mention on the Aussie forums, but the US forums had lots of issues with them (never thought Americans complained about anything).

Their solutions varied between replacing the seats with Recaros; pulling the backing off and putting in extra padding (possibility of an airbag going off didn't deter them), or going to the local auto shop and getting those lumber supports that sit behind your back, the ones that look ugly and usually put wear marks/holes in the seats.

One solution that came up was quick and neat. Remove the two rear bolts on the seat rails, lift the seat up high enough to fit 5 x 2mm washers between the rails and the floor, then replace the bolts with high tensile ones, 10mm longer than the original and problem solved. I wasn't convinced 10mm would do a lot but

decided to try it anyway. It *has* made a difference! Long distance driving is now a lot more comfortable, handy when spending an extra four hours behind the wheel to meet up for the Melbourne runs. ■



Ed ~ A word of caution: we have it on good authority that such a modification could create a liability issue with your insurer if, for example, the seat airbag didn't deploy in an accident or there was some other malfunction involving the seat.

MX5CENTRE

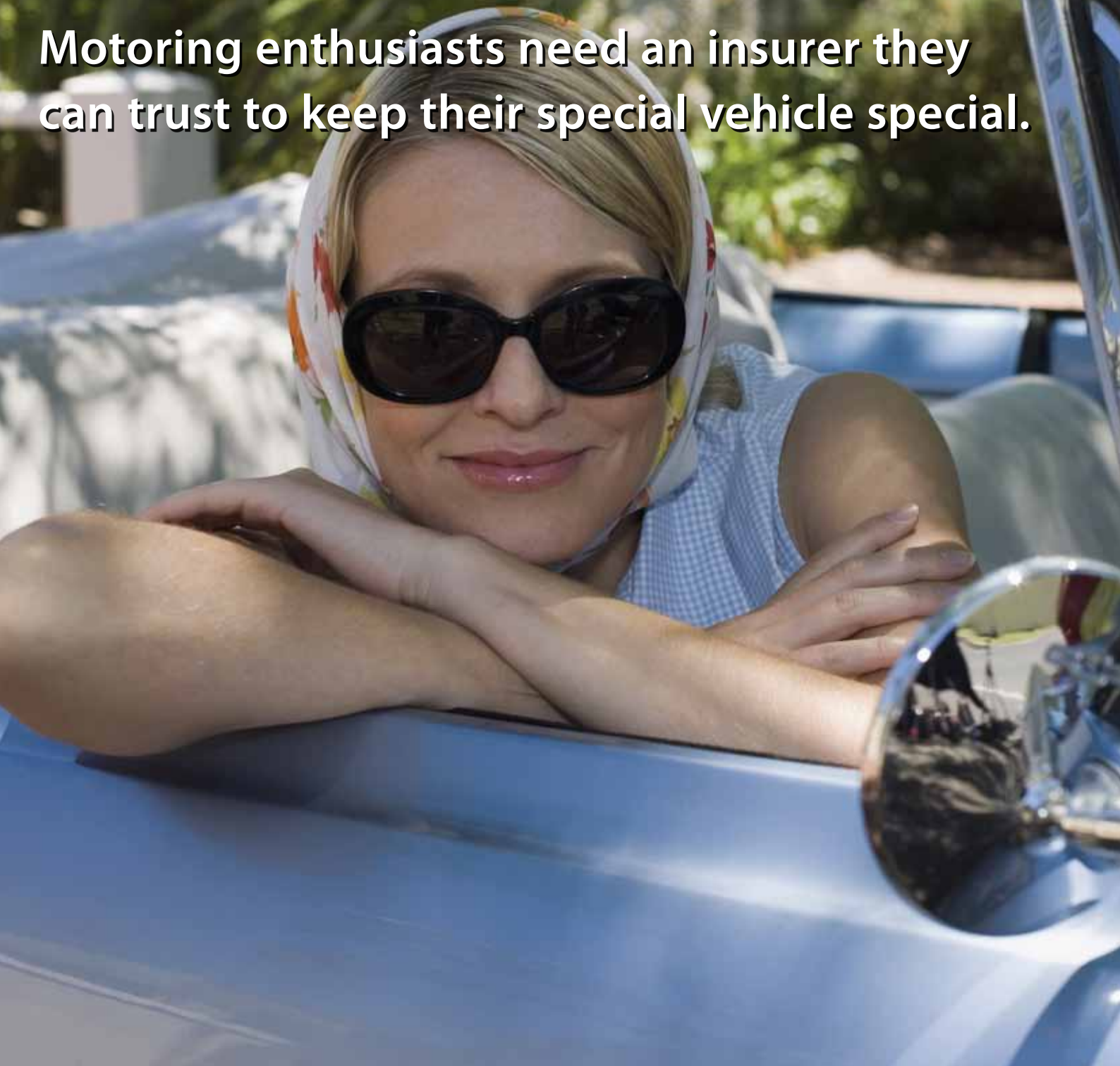
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The MX-5 Club Grill



Introducing ...

Peter "Princey" Phillips

2009-10 / 10-11 Clubman Champion

Name? Peter (Princey) Phillips

Age? 56 going on 21

Born? Camberwell

Current abode? Phillip (Paradise) Island. Only overseas members of MX-5 Vic (Our Tasmanian friends might disagree ~ Ed)

Profession? Ambulance Paramedic

Partner? Married to the lovely Pam ("Cupcake") for 35 years

Pets? one Labrador, two moggies, 12 chooks (favourite: "Chloe" the Lab)

Fave food? Anything exotic (lamb roast)

Can you cook? Yes, roasts, BBQs, spag bol and anything in Pam's 200 cookbooks (favourite restaurant "A Perfect Drop" in Dalesford)

Favourite tipple? A good aged Shiraz or Cab Sav

First drive? (Legal or Illegal?) 1950s 15/60 Woolsley rebuilt from the ground up in 1970

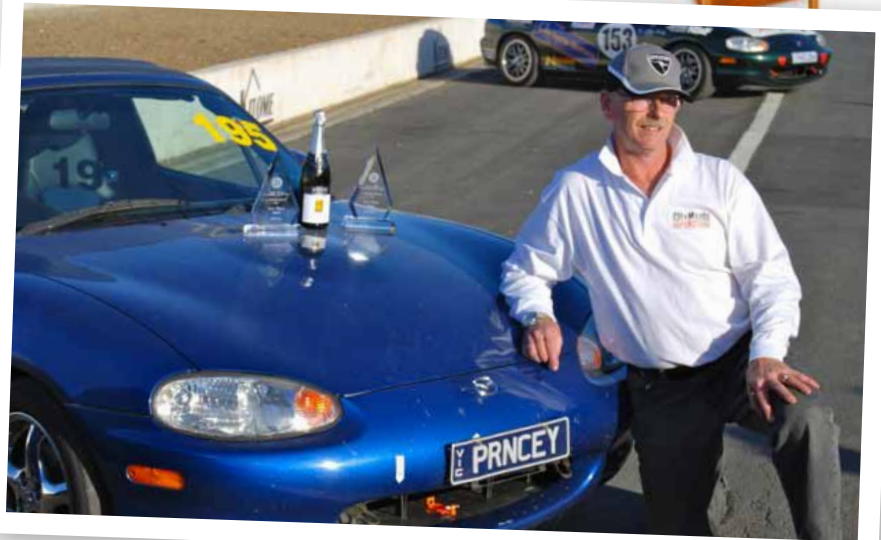
First car? 1961 Morris Mini 850, followed closely by a 1967 Mini Cooper S (first car driven at 100mph) – top speed 102mph

First fender bender? In the Cooper S when some clown rear-ended me, damaging the fine British Racing Green paintwork

Everyday driver? Any one of Ambulance-issue Ford/Holden sedans, 1990 VQ Statesman, 1985 turbo diesel Patrol, 1994 Holden V8, 2005 VY Calais to the ever-reliable "Prncey" MX-5. Occasionally allowed to drive NC "CUPCAK"

Current MX-5? 1999 NB 10AE "PRNCEY" Innocent Blue race-ready with secret bits and a 2011 NC limited edition "CUPCAK" Dolphin Grey

MX-5 improvements? Adjustable shocks, 7½" (not 8" Robert!) racing rims and lower LSD. Just love that car!



MX-5 dislikes? Ride of the NB, but hey it's built for speed, not comfort. And no cruise control. The NC LE just great. Needs a bigger boot for Cupcake!

Why an MX-5? Ask Ken and Joan Read ... they are the ones who pushed us into the damn things! Now they can't get us out of them. If only the MG F hadn't blown up!! Pam wanted a new daily drive (200km return to work) and we tested everything except a Roller. When testing a Mazda 6 she said "why don't we try out the new MX-5?" That was it; nothing else would make her happy. 20,000km since June and still she can't get the smile off her face.

Fluffy dice? "Nemo" in the back roll bar (in the NB) ... nothing in the front

Passions besides the MX-5? Cupcake, children x3, travel, boating/fishing, V8 Supercars, racing, racing and more racing. (Number 1 for 6-hour next year, Robert!)

Favourite TV show / movie / book? News / "Topgun", "Bucket List" and "Mrs Doubtfire" / any driver improvement manual

Dream wheels (money no object)? Torana A9X or Aston Martin DB

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? Are you crazy?

Favourite other Mazda? Anything quicker than mine!

If not a Mazda (gasp!) what? V8 four-wheel drive for towing boat

How long in the Club? Not long enough (three years) ... should have listened to Ken years ago

How many MX-5 Club runs? Apart from last Natmeet, two. (Not enough, but

racing keeps getting in the way)

Favourite Club run? Gippsland but desperately want to do the Great Ocean Road.

Funniest thing seen on a Club run? On the way to the SA NatMeet going into Mount Gambier, seems that 20 cars went in 20 directions to find the motel

Done DECA? Absolutely!

If yes, how many times? Twice – once as competitor and once as navigator for Cupcake in the NC. Noel still cheated her!

Ford vs Holden? Holden: what else is there?

What's playing in your MX-5? Mozart and ABC radio 774

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Go Saints ... Oops!

Final comments? The MX-5 Vic club would have to be one of the best groups of people we have ever belonged to, from the motor sport group to the social group to the run groups. Everyone has been helpful, obliging, nothing has ever been a problem when supporting each other.

The competitive but co-operative spirit amongst the motor sport group has been nothing short of fantastic. This was particularly highlighted at Wakefield recently when several disasters occurred: eg, Robert Parr's car blowing up (Robert and Noel gave up their trailer to tow it home). When Tony Harper collapsed and had to be resuscitated, everyone rallied, from Teruo making sure all was taken care of, to Lindy and Murray taking his rig back to Melbourne and supporting him throughout his ordeal. ■



Left: with Robert Downes and Noel Heritage at Sandown. Above: after finishing second with the 'Flyin' Miatas at the 2011 Winton 6-Hour

Wind (and flowers) in the hair ...

■ Words & photos: Caz Timbrell, Hobart Chapter





One of the first things I noticed in San Francisco, once I'd got over the disappointment of missing the Tattoo Expo, was the number of MX-5s. They were everywhere.

However the point of being there was nothing to do with tattoos or an MX-5; it was to hire an American car and drive Highway One. Hopes of a 1960s Thunderbird disappeared and a Mustang seemed more feasible.

He who knows best thought it would be easier once we got there, but the queues at the hire places were long and the prices scary, not to mention the scathing attitude of the staff. And the apparent lack of anything available until "next Tuesday at 11am". We had just about given up and resigned ourselves to a Golf or worse when we noticed a scruffy (even possibly *dodgy*) little office advertising cheap rental cars.

Well, what a find! The guy behind the counter was black and possibly no older than 15. By this stage we were getting rather silly but in response to our "*We'd ideally like a Mustang, but even a Golf will do,*" he smiled indulgently and said: "Let's have a look".

Quietly, quietly he scrolled and clicked and asked what colour we'd like. We thought he was joking and asked for red ... he replied that we could only have black, white or silver but it would be ready next morning at 7.30am, to be returned by midnight three days later! And the price was HALF the previous quote.

The paperwork took a minute and he was so polite and friendly. Too easy!! We left on a high, couldn't believe it and had to go back to check that we hadn't imagined the whole thing. Seemed real enough!

So, if ever you are in San Francisco and want to hire a Mustang, go straight to Reliable Rent-A-Car at 349 Mason Street.

The adventure began. It was a white 2010 model, automatic, which was a bit disappointing but to be expected. His handsome lines and flat planes was reminiscent of *Kryton* (from *Red Dwarf*), and so it was named.

Driving in San Francisco is easy, despite the high traffic volume and left-hand drive. We were soon out of the city and enjoying beach views. Found a parking spot and stopped for photos and a good giggle. The hood was automatic, a bit of unfamiliar high-tech that was soon

mastered. Change of driver and on to Monterey and Cannery Row.

The coastal scenery was stunning: the mist was swirling down the valleys, the beaches were interspersed with rocky headlands. Condors soared and pelicans sailed. The road was pretty clear though there was traffic, quite a lot of it being Mustangs. At every corner it was "*ooh*" and "*aah*" as we pulled into the parking spots to take photos.

Time to compare *Kryton* with *Lolita* (my 2000 Classic Red NB back home in Tasmania). Well, the automatic certainly makes a difference – it's not half as much fun. The road didn't lend itself to "*zoomies*", being gently curving with a 70mph speed limit. There weren't even many junctions to allow a bit of foot planting and throaty roaring of the 4L SOHC six-cylinder engine. Rather than the understated confidence of the MX-5, the Mustang boasted about itself with logos all over the place. The interior was much larger of course and all the gauges were standard. It was like driving a normal car. Still fun though, in the US scenery, wrong side of the road, hood down, Beach Boys on the iPod, flowers in the hair (*well, in spirit anyway*), and big motor pulling.

We had three days of driving enjoyment, counting Mustangs and MX-5s as we did all the tourist stuff. Found our way as far south as Lucia for lunch with hummingbirds (*in the bushes, you understand, not on the plate*).

On the last day, nearly on dusk, we did the iconic Golden Gate Bridge crossing, camera clicking, got lost trying to get back and found ourselves following a silver MX-5. *Brilliant!*

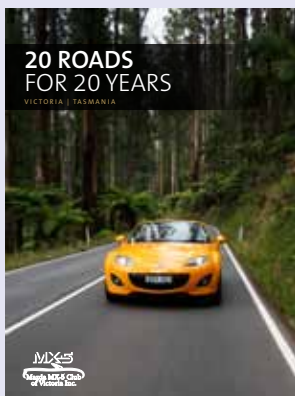
So if you should feel like a change from your gorgeous little MX-5 (it might happen), I can recommend this drive. If you should choose a Mustang, look out for the illuminated logo on the door sills when the lights are on, watch the rippling disco indicator lights and don't miss the logo behind the rearview mirror. And don't forget *Reliable Rent-A-Car*.

If you can't see yourself in a Mustang, there is always the yellow GoCar. ■



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.



“20 Roads” book

Looking for the ideal birthday or Christmas gift for the MX-5 enthusiast in your life?

This is *the* perfect companion for the MX-5 glove box.

Put together by Club members for Club members to celebrate our 20th anniversary, this book profiles some great drivers' roads in Victoria and Tasmania.

» Cost is \$20 + postage. Contact Steve Dunlop, merchandise@mx5vic.org.au.

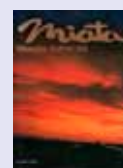
Club library ...

Books



Workshop Manuals:

» 1.6 NA » 1.8 NA » 1990-2009



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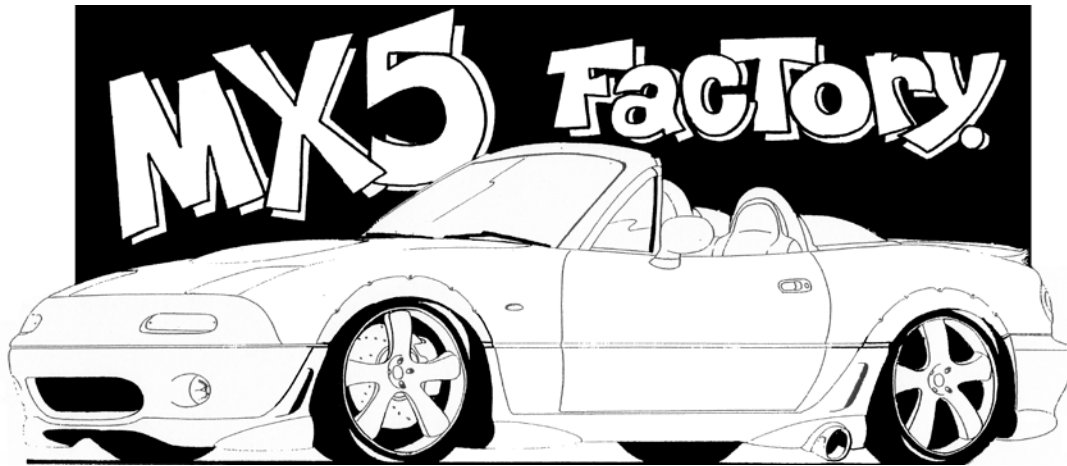
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