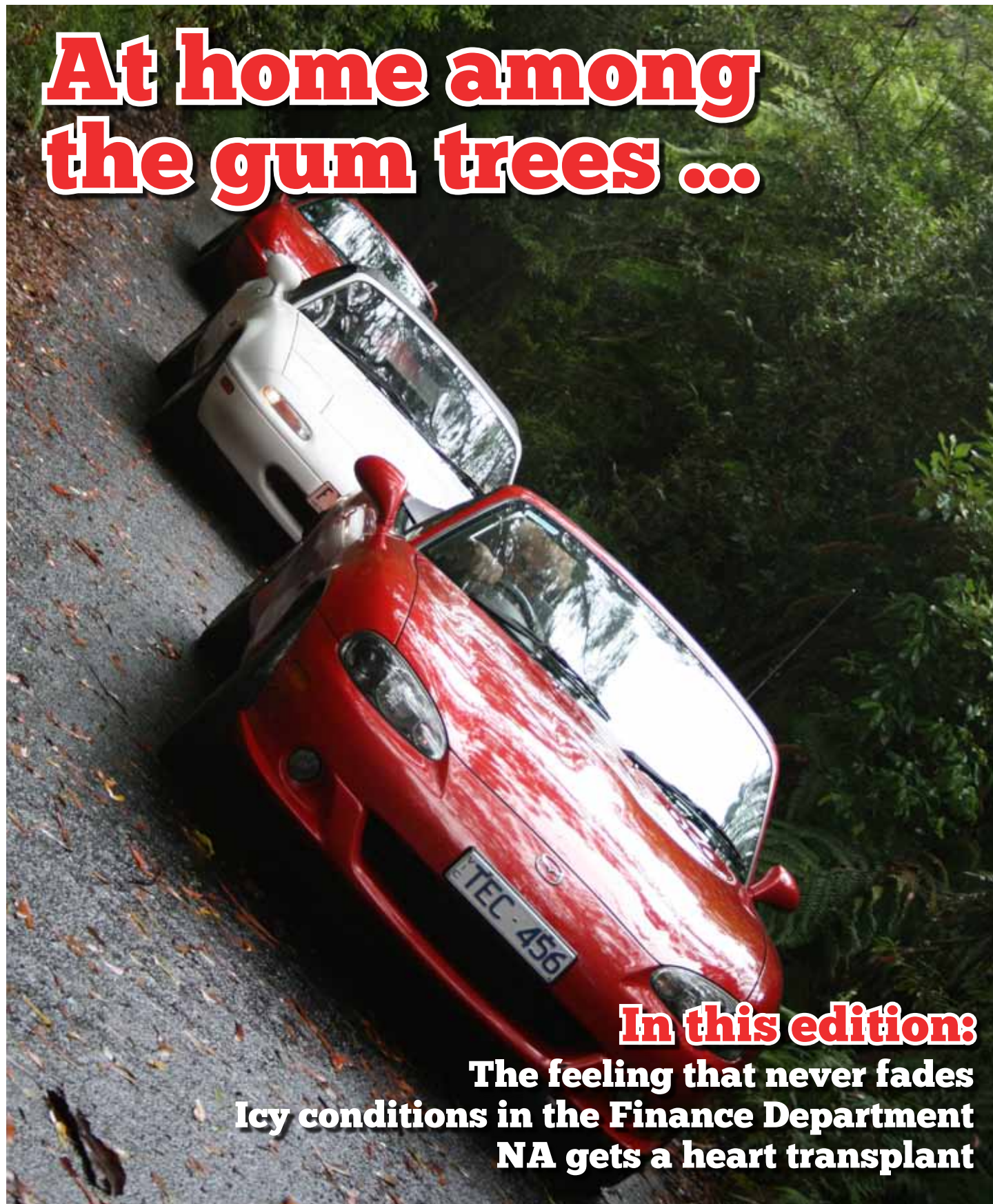


THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

## At home among the gum trees ...



**In this edition:**

**The feeling that never fades  
Icy conditions in the Finance Department  
NA gets a heart transplant**



# Max Kirwan **MAZDA**

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*Cover image:*

*MXs at the bottom of the garden? A ferny shelter at Tarra-Bulga.* Photo: Jenna Ferguson



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# Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

*G'day all!*

**We have some exciting times ahead!**

Our first-ever gathering of the Club's Committee and Chapter Convenors was held on 14-15 January and was a resounding success. Apart from the business discussed, it was a great opportunity to build – and reinforce – personal relationships across the Club.

Firstly I must thank Janette and John Todd for throwing their home open for the proceedings, and Janette especially for organising ... well, just about everything!

The Saturday was purely social (although I'm sure there was a fair bit of behind-the-scenes ear-bending going on!), with a run through some fantastic MX-5 country around Mt Macedon and a dinner in downtown Sunbury.

Sunday was all business, with discussion and debate covering a wide range of topics affecting the future plans and management of the Club and the Chapters.



*Rogues' Gallery? Here's the Club crew who attended the "social" part of the Convenors' gathering on 14 January ... from left to right across the photo: John Todd, Gail Collins, Murray Finlay, Janette Todd, John Waldoock, John Gleeson, Marg Gillick, Noellene Gleeson, Alyssa Finlay, Dave Collins, Ruth Beaton, Bruce Harvey, Coral Campbell, Michelle Waldoock, Don Nicoll, Cheryl Murray, Ron Gillick, Will Campbell, Ken Beaton, Saeko Fujiki, John Hadrill and Grant Butler.*

*... Used car, anyone??* Photo: Joan Read.

I foreshadowed some of these discussion points in my report in the January **mxtra**. There was general agreement on most of the topics discussed, but formal proposals need to be debated and ratified by the Club Committee at its February meeting before anything can be announced. We'll have a full report in the March **mxtra**.

What I would like to pay tribute to here, though, is the extraordinary dedication of the people who serve on our Committee and as Chapter Convenors (and their partners).

These roles are always busy, but have been even more so recently with the back-room work and planning that has gone into addressing the issues discussed at this meeting and the follow-up that has ensued.

It would be very easy for the Club to be complacent and just drift on, but the dedication of these people ensures that we are constantly striving to improve the Club and the membership experience for all involved.

All are volunteers, but nothing is too much trouble. We are very lucky indeed to have such a wonderful bunch at the helm.

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

*Murray*

## **Boom tish!**

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30 this morning. Can you believe that? 2:30am! Luckily for him I was still up playing my bagpipes.

Paddy says, "Mick, I'm thinking of buying a Labrador. "Really?" says Mick. "Have you seen how many of their owners go blind"

I saw a poor old lady fall over today on the ice!! At least I presume she was poor ... she only had \$1.20 in her purse.

My girlfriend thinks that I'm a stalker. Well, she's not exactly my girlfriend yet.

Woke up last night to find the ghost of Gloria Gaynor standing at the foot of my bed. At first I was afraid, then I was petrified.

The wife has been missing a week now. Police said to prepare for the worst. So I have been to the charity shop to get all her clothes back.

A mate of mine admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop any time.

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed four grave diggers walking about with a coffin. Three hours later and they were still walking about with it. I thought to myself, "These guys have lost the plot!"

My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were \$70. "Blow this," I thought, "I can get one cheaper off the web."

Statistically, six out of seven dwarves are not happy.

I was at an ATM yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance, so I pushed her over.

I start a new job in Seoul next week. I thought it was a good Korea move.

I was driving this morning when I saw an AA van parked on the side of the road. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable. I thought to myself, "That guy's heading for a breakdown."

I just met a fat, alcoholic, transvestite. He wants to eat, drink, and be Mary.

*~ Janette Todd*

## *For your diary ...*

See the full calendar for details

### **2012**

#### **February**

- 19 Past Presidents' run
- 25 North Tassie: Symmons Plains
- 25 Hobart: Saturday twilight run
- 26 Ballarat: Rocks and Rolling Hills

#### **March**

- 11 Hobart: Tarraleah run
- 17 Cobaw & Macedon Ranges (Saturday)
- 22 New Members' Night
- 24-25 Ballarat: Grampians 2-day
- 24-25 North Tas: Strahan Overnighter

#### **April**

- 1 Phillip Island run
- 6-10 NatMeet 2012, Canberra

# Scene about ...

■ Photos: Ron Macdonald, Jenna & Peter Ferguson





# Membership

Current membership count:

492

■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

*G'day all ...*

### What a bumper crop!

This month, we have been joined by 15 new members and a few who put in belated, but welcome, renewals.

We're rapidly approaching the magic 500 member mark for the first time in our Club's history.

I'd like to welcome the newcomers and wish them all the best for an enjoyable and extended relationship with the Club.

See you out and about ...

*Will*

Robert and Veronica Atkins	1999 Silver NB
Jill Gibbon	1990 White NA
Philip Hutton	2001 Black NB
Colin Jevons	2002 Platinum Silver NB LE
Robert McKenzie	1990 Classic Red NA
Tony Monley	2005 Silver NC
Michael Neil	1992 White NA
Jenna Perks	1989 Classic Red NA
Jacob Seymour	2005 Copper Red NC
Alan Smith	2001 Silver NB
Pamela Stoffels	2003 Supreme Blue NB
Jordan Sudarevic	1994 White NA
Mark Szutta	1999 Classic Red NB
Rodney Tickler	2004 Aluminium NB

*Motor sport calendar*

See the full calendar for details

### 2011-2012 Championship

#### March

- 3 Racecraft/Driver training, Winton (motor sport participants only)
- 4 Rd 7: Sprints, Winton

#### April

- 27 Rd 8: Sprints, Sandown

#### May

- 11 Annual Motor sport meeting

### 2012-2013 Championship

#### June

- 30 Rd 1: Sprints, Phillip Is.

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## Social-lights

■ Janette Todd – Club Captain - Social [social@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social@mx5vic.org.au)

*See you at the new members' night!*

What can I say (?) – mix together like-minded people and their great little cars, throw in some lively conversation, some tasty food and we finish up with yet another MX-5 Club event on the calendar; this time we are about to celebrate the first of our bi-annual New Members' Nights (the second one will be scheduled in September).

Via his monthly column in this magazine Membership Officer, Will Campbell, informs us of the current membership count as he welcomes the many "newbies" to our Club.

In an effort to introduce these folk to what the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania is all about, we invite you all (long-term *and* new Members) to come along on Thursday, 22 March, 2012 and chat about all things MX-5.

We will once again gather at The Garage Café (221 Berkeley Street, Carlton) at 6:30pm. Dinner and drinks, for those who wish, will be at your own cost. (Check out their website, [www.garagecafe.com.au](http://www.garagecafe.com.au) for a look at the menu.)

No formalities – no speeches – just a common passion for a wonderful little sports car.



So, if you have recently joined, or are thinking of joining our Club, you will be made most welcome. It is a great opportunity to meet with members of the Club Committee and to put forward suggestions for future events!

Please call me – Janette (0448 833 321) – to let me know you will be attending.

*It's a date: ink it in!*

*Janette*

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# The feeling that never fades ...

■ **Words:** Glenda Wise ■ **Photos:** Ron Macdonald & Neville Fair

■ **Run organisers:** Ron Macdonald and Wendy Clark

**T**hanks to organisers, Ron Macdonald and Wendy Clark, our twilight run through the Dandenong hills was a blast, comprising 30 cars keeping a pretty tight convoy with no stops until we reached our finish point, the *Ronald McDonald Café!!* (no relation).

I left home early to swing around to the car wash before setting foot amongst the Club's ever-shiny MX-5s. My little baby is never without dust from the dirt road where I live.

At the car wash behold, I saw a young guy over at the petrol bowser filling his red MX-5! I never pass another MX-5 owner without some (usually mutual) acknowledgement. After all, we're a universal fraternity!

I asked him if he was going on the Twilight Run. He didn't know about the MX-5 Club, never mind any Twilight Run. I said, "Come with us, there are a few of us meeting around the corner in the Tecoma Primary School car park". He joined the 30-strong convoy, and *voilà*, another new member in the making! And a 'racer' at that, by the look of his newly-fitted roll bars.

Before we set off, 'Chicken Little' me took one look at the black sky ahead and was the only one amongst the 30 without my top down (the car's, not mine). But the light just got better and better with tree ferns and mountain ash (not to mention our cars) sparkling against the black-sky backdrop. *Just sensational!* I was so glad I pulled over to press the button and join the roofless ranks!

We all left Tecoma and wound our way around to Terry's Hill, down to Belgrave then up through Sassafrass, Kallista, Monbulk, towards Emerald and through The Patch. Then, via Perrins Creek Road back up to Sassafrass before heading down the winding western face of the mountain to The Basin and out to Ferntree Gully where we finished.

The well-mapped run was majestic. Tons of bends and *lots* of hairpins. The Dandenong Ranges never disappoint!

Having been a resident of the Dandenongs all my life, I was amazed to discover Ron and Wendy had included a few lovely roads I didn't know existed.

A few people were out walking in the early evening light. It's always fun when locals wave or stand counting our colourful procession. Such a simple

pleasure for them ... and us.

We had the pleasure of the company of Denise Peck, the President of the Queensland MX-5 Club and her husband Neville as well as the Crayfords, who are members of the Hobart Chapter. It was



fantastic to see them, and great that we had a run to coincide with their time in Melbourne.

Plus we had three cars carrying either new members or members new to the runs – Tristan Penfold, Ian & Janet Vague and Charlie Tickler ... a great mixture of visitors, new members, potential new members and the faithful.

I had a chat with Denise as we both enthused about the fact that the pleasure of driving our MX-5s never diminishes.

It's like having a really great outfit which looks good and feels good every time you put it on. The feeling never fades.

***Yeah ... you're not wrong!***







## Foreigners in a foreign car



Queensland President Denise Peck with Don (left) and Murray

### Neville and I recently visited Melbourne to catch up with relatives whom we hadn't seen for a bit.

Having spoken with Murray Finlay over the past 12 months after becoming the Queensland President, I took the opportunity to finally meet the man who had helped me settle into my new position and who was always ready on the other end of an e-mail with advice and encouragement.

Happily our visit happened to coincide with Victoria's Sunday club run "Twilight in the Trees".

An invitation from Murray to join the group on this run was very gratefully received, though driving it in our rented Corolla wasn't the most ideal way to enjoy it. We arrived at the meeting point at Tecoma around 6.30pm to find a very familiar sight – a number of MX-5s all congregated in a car park. What a pretty picture – we immediately felt at home!

After having met our fearless run leader (along with many of the Club members) and having assembled for the usual pre-run briefing we were cordially invited by both Murray and VP Don Nicoll to join them as passengers in their cars. Oh boy, a drive in a 5 through the Dandenongs – *yes please!*

Don and Neville pulled in behind run leaders Ron and Wendy (Neville was getting excited as this can mean but one thing – *Whawho!*). Murray bravely asked me to be his navigator and then pulled in at the end of the convoy as Tail End Charlie. The radio was duly passed over. *Feek* – good job I had had a bit of experience reading a run sheet and talking on the radio – *thanks Murray!* I surprised myself actually, as I was able to do both, as well as speak non-stop with Murray about our respective clubs, as well as take in the breathtaking scenery that is the Dandenong Ranges.

*What a fun way to spend a Sunday night.*

Run complete and not having got us lost – bit hard when you have five cars in front, though surprisingly toward the end of the run we scored two behind us! Just like home ...

A number of us rolled into Maccas at Ferntree Gully for a quick bite to eat and a chat. What a great bunch of people.

Thanks Victoria for making us both feel so welcome. We have taken away some happy memories of our run but also some ideas



Ron Macdonald marks the roll ... er, briefs the troops

gleaned from your club President.

If ever you find yourselves up our way in sunny Queensland (well, it used to be) let us know and we'll be happy to get you on to one of our runs.



Cheers everyone! We look forward to perhaps running with you once again some time.

*Denise Peck and Neville Fair President and "first bloke", MX-5 Club of Queensland*



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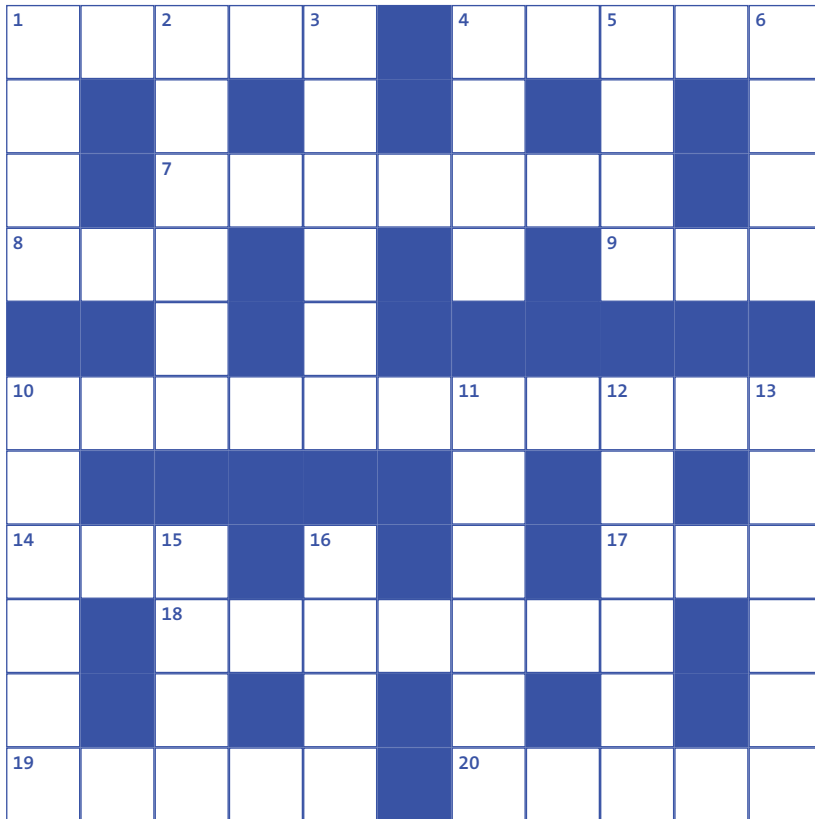
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Alan Bennett's

# MX-5 crossword



## Across

- 1 Great places to have coffee breaks on a Sunday drive (5)
- 4 Four-door car with a boot, definitely not two- or five- door (5)
- 7 Sharp to a point, injects not only fuel but vaccines (7)
- 8 A place to sleep (3)
- 9 Holder of drink, vessel (3)
- 10 High execution (11)
- 14 And 17, electronic guidance aid that looks up and talks down to you (abbrev.) (3-3)
- 17 See 14 across

- 18 Does not exclude options (7)
- 19 When they run, they provide guidance – you can even take them (5)
- 20 Over the edge, a vast gap (5)

## Down

- 1 Where fuel is mixed with air (abbrev.) (4)
- 2 A bumper by another name (6)
- 3 More than twice mono, it just sounds better in both ears (6)
- 4 At the foot of an opening, still missing something (4)
- 5 Brakes and an Olympic throwing competitor can have at least one of these (4)
- 6 A small tide, not associated with the nape of the neck (anag.) (4)
- 10 Stop in an engine part (anag.) (6)
- 11 Has a head, with snakes for hair (6)
- 12 Tiny NE suburb is nine by 10 or 10 by nine (anag.) (6)
- 13 Is jealous of; eg, a non-MX5 owner (6)
- 15 Prevents seeing through the window (4)
- 16 Relic escort gets very cold (4)

S	S	L	B	V		S	E	T	O	N
E		T		S		E		N		O
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N	V	D	E	S		S	E	F	V	C

## Plagiarists and Real Writers

We all receive a fair bit of rubbish in our e-mail inbox from all sorts of unsolicited sources ... and most of it gets binned immediately.

But one that crossed my screen this month – I have no idea where it came from or how I got on their list – tickled my fancy. It came in the context of the wonderful sight of a Federal Minister passing off lines from a movie as his own, and gave some examples of wonderfully creative – and *original* – writing.

It included these nuggets from writer and columnist Michael Stahl who, among other things, is a contributor to *Wheels* magazine (so it has a motoring bent, and that's my excuse for using it here) ...

“ My mum has decided to sell her Porsche.

The occasion is one of great sadness for me, and I don't mind admitting that I've had to struggle through this process of letting go.

But it's time for acceptance, for taking inventory, for gathering strength and facing the future.

She was a good mum, but now I need a new one.”

(*Wheels*, April 1992)

“ I love to drive.

There are plenty of things that remind me of how much I love to drive.

The best one is walking.”

(*Wheels*, January 1999)

“ I never drink and drive, but while at the wheel I could be in any one of my 17 diagnosed personalities.

On my way to the office today, I was Radnar, a 17th century Albanian hog farmer.

Obviously, I can't vouch for Radnar's driving abilities. I'm only a six-year-old orphan girl from Cairo.”

(*Wheels*, March 1996, on appraising one's own driving)

~ Murray Finlay

# From NASCAR to Flyin' Miata ... getting icy

■ Words & photos: Daniel White, Assistant Club Captain - Motor Sport

*Following on from his report last month on his NASCAR adventure, Daniel White brings us part two of his US sojourn ... leaving Las Vegas and heading for the Flyin' Miata World Headquarters in Colorado ...*

**After leaving the luxury of "The Vdara" in Las Vegas and the excitement of the NASCAR experience still buzzing, we jumped in the Dodge Charger hire car and headed north-east on our way to Vail, Colorado.**

This was an 800-mile, three-day drive taking in some truly spectacular scenery through Nevada, Arizona, and Utah and into Colorado with overnight stops at Bryce Canyon and Moab. If you have never seen or heard of these places before, then do a Google search of images for them; it is an amazing part of the world.

In the weeks leading up to our trip, I had been emailing with Brandon Fitch of **Flyin' Miata** to arrange a visit and tour of their operation. Seemed like too good an opportunity to miss, since I would be driving right past their front door; might even buy a couple of things to bring home??? Tour date was set for 3 October.

For those who don't know, *Flyin' Miata* is a company that specialises in one thing: MX-5 performance. They sell just about everything you could imagine to make your MX-5 stop, turn and accelerate better. Suspension components, driveline, cooling, performance engine parts and turbos, stage 1 and 2, superchargers and let's not forget V8 conversions! Street legal 550hp LS3 Corvette V8 engines ... **Wow!**

*Flyin' Miata* have been operating out of Colorado since 1996 starting as a small basement operation which has now built up to a very impressive 25,000 sq. ft. purpose built development workshop and parts sales operation. They are nestled in a very pretty location surrounded by orchards and wineries with the spectacular Colorado mountain ranges as a backdrop. They have cars sent to them by customers from all over the USA to have modifications and development work done and they sell parts online and ship them all over the world.



Flyin' Miata

# in the Finance Department!



*Elvis, above, with the Corvette V8 engine hidden under the bonnet (left)*



The facility is really well set up and very professional. The building has several areas comprising a large sales office/phone room, new parts storage and shipping area, salvaged parts area, customer car area (where modifications are carried out), dedicated development area, motion sensing workshop lights, a sound proof dyno room and, as if that's not impressive enough, there is The Grand Junction Motor Speedway just around the corner for testing!

Brandon was very generous with his time and spent a good two hours showing us around, explaining what they do, and he also gave me an opportunity to check out their range of MX-5s.

The highlight of the tour was when Brandon asked if I would like to go for a ride in *Elvis*? I reckon I thought about it for a nanosecond before I said "You bet!"

*Elvis* is their blue V8 NB (see pics). So we headed out a few miles from the workshop winding our way through the 35mph zone warming up the tyres and brakes until we reached a quite straight stretch of road. The car sounded amazing and felt just like a normal MX-5 right up to the point when we took off from a standing start at full throttle through 1st, 2nd and 3rd reaching just under 100mph in a very short distance. The acceleration was simply breathtaking, no wheel spin, just hooked up and gone and when he hit the brakes they were sensational, very well balanced.

### ***I WANT ONE!!!!***

Of course, whilst I was there I couldn't resist buying some goodies for my racecar. After all I had travelled so far to get there ... at least this was my angle for the Minister of Finance (my wonderful wife, Tammy).

So I bought a *Flyin' Miata* chassis butterfly brace, two sets of *Flyin' Miata* pedal kits (one for the road car and one for the race car), an intake duct and some brake lines. Shipping was arranged and the parts would be back home in Australia within four or five days.

I was rapt but somehow, when we got back in the hire car and drove away, a deafening silence fell for a good 20 minutes (*Hmmm ... don't know why??*) ... only to be broken by me saying, "Gee, Tammy, don't the mountains look big over there?", quickly followed by "Are there any more factory outlet stores in Vail you want to check out??" *Oops.*

Special thanks to Brandon Fitch, and the guys at *Flyin' Miata* for their time and generous hospitality. Do yourself a favour and check out their website at [www.flyinmiata.com](http://www.flyinmiata.com) ...

***... just check with the Minister of Finance first!***

# Chapter news ...

## Tarra-Bulga run 22/1/12 | Gippsland

■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photos: Jenna & Peter Ferguson  
■ Run organiser: Alan Laine

### *ARE YOU MAD?!*

*This was what was said to us when we were at a friend's 60th birthday party on the Saturday night.*

We were saying our goodbyes at 11pm because we had the bags packed, our little car facing out in our driveway (*Ed: for a quick getaway, Noellene?*) and were heading from Ballarat to Dandenong for the night.

Home to change and off we go, arriving at the motel at 2am, thanks to road works on the Westgate Bridge. Surprise, surprise!

Next morning, at 8.15am, we head to Trafalgar for the Tarra-Bulga National Park Run. On arrival at the starting point, we were car number 16, and three of our Ballarat Chapter cars were already there! Jeff Woolf had left Ballarat at 5.30am to make it for this terrific run.

After Alan (pictured opposite, top right) gave us our instructions and his request for the mxtra report was met by everyone admiring their shoes, I got the job (*please guys, give it a go sometime*).

*We head off over the railway line on Waterloo Road towards Morwell. The road is great, around twists and bends through some lovely farming country. Then we hit the most shocking smell ... yes, we are in cow country. Pew !! Now we can breathe again, heading to Willow Grove under the trees, through lovely valleys with great views; a terrific road.*

We are going towards Erica which is a very pretty place. Alan is setting a good pace, but alas now we are stuck behind three 4WDs. The weather is a little misty, but all is fine because the drive is

great, winding through tree fern bush and tall timbers.

At least at the slower pace we can appreciate the Boola Boola State Forest. We now know we are in the mountains: fresh air, mist and those bush fragrances.

This is a great run, Alan. Thank goodness the 4WDs have turned off, so off we go again.

Out into open country again and what a terrific view of the power stations and countryside as we pass the Tyers Lookout. Wow ! Now off to Traralgon, through and under the bridge roundabout and up the Tarra Valley, where the road is a little patchy because of the logging trucks. Would you believe it, traffic lights in the middle of nowhere! Certainly adds to the interest of the run.

We are now near Tarra-Bulga. What a beautiful drive. The tree ferns are right out to the edge of the road. After one wrong turn we reach the car park for our lunch break. To work off lunch, a few of us do the 3km walk on some beautiful bush tracks. Then it's back into our cars again to head back through Callignee, Yinnar and Thorpdale to Trafalgar. We all pull into the car park and have a great chat with the rest of the MX-5 lovers. All agreed it was a great day.

Now it is time for the four Ballarat cars to head for home. Three hours later we are sitting up to a very nice meal at the Golf House Hotel.

Another terrific day with great company, great roads, great scenery and of course great little cars. A big thank you to Alan for organising such a great run.

**ZOOM ZOOM ■**





# Chapter news ...

## Hurrying to Hastings ... 11/12/11 | Hobart

■ Words: Caz Timbrell ■ Photos: John Waldoock ■ Run organiser: John Waldoock

*We all met up at our now regular spot, the Three Ducks Café in Bellerive.*

We were joined by Dick Shoobridge, a new member who has two MX-5s, a green NA and a red NB SE. Julie and Steve also came for coffee but couldn't stay for the drive. Unusually, Allan Pryer didn't show up. Rumour is that he has a few stitches in uncomfortable places! (hint: where the seat belt rubs!). Prospective members Peter and Cheryl (silver NB) also joined us for the run to Hastings. So a total of seven cars set off from Bellerive, losing Andrew at Lower Longley where he peeled off on other business. Must have been good if he chose to miss out on our first drive of the year.

The route south from Hobart was cluttered with camper vans, boats, bicycles, hire cars full of hippies, even horses, all out to enjoy this perfect Tasmanian day. Cloudless blue skies, perfect reflections on the Huon River and all the other beautiful scenery meant that the convoy tended to get broken up more than usual.

However, heat has one unexpected side effect. The abundant Tassie wildlife inevitably loses the battle with traffic when they try to cross the roads. In an open-top car their decaying aroma is one of the lesser joys of a hot summer's day.

One local character was attempting this dice with death, or maybe just soaking up some heat, as two-metre-long Tiger snakes like to do. First driver, John, only just missed him. Jo swerved and also managed to avoid ending his slithery life. He reared up and had a strike as Caz also gave him a wide berth. Or maybe he was just trying to get a better (appreciative) look at all these beautiful cars with their amazingly caring and skillful drivers.

The route to Hastings follows Hobart's Southern Outlet (a steep uphill and curvy highway), through Huonville and Franklin, where we stopped for morning tea. A chance to drool over Ian and Carla's green Limited Edition NB with its beige upholstery and green piping, colour co-ordinated steering wheel cover and console, and walnut-look dash. Also to inspect the damage done to John W's 'Feisty' by vandals pouring an unknown liquid over the boot during the wee small hours of the previous night.

Certain Chapter members, who shall remain nameless (oh, all right ... John W was the ringleader) gave Jo a 'fright' by inserting a large branch into the folds of her car's soft top. She coped surprisingly well, considering it actually touched her car and left debris behind. This was a bit of a disappointment to the aforementioned members.

Onwards through Port Huon, bypassing Geeveston (fast and curvy) via Dover (exceedingly curvy) and southwards (even curvier) to the dreaded gravel section (not at all curvy and taken at a very sedate pace). Hastings is about 120km south of Hobart and people visit it in droves (and MX-5s) to enjoy the thermal springs where you can bathe in a setting of ferns and rainforest. We stopped there for lunch by the pool and some of the group swam.

There are also some great underground caves but the timing for a guided tour wasn't right so we gave them a miss. A pleasant surprise awaited us when we returned to the Hastings car park, to discover all the cars were parked in the shade. After a lengthy discussion about destinations for upcoming drives we set off again.

Homeward bound we detoured via Police Point (very, very curvy, hilly, fast and scenic) and Fern Tree – all of the above but ferny too. John W's new engine performed well, challenging Jo and Caz to keep up. All in all, it was a great day out, providing plenty of opportunities to catch up with MX-5 friends, old and new, and to enjoy some wonderful roads.



*Jo (left) and Caz*



# 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 *17" NC rims and tyres*

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## Wanted to buy *NB hardtop*



Mildura member **Barrie Mansell** is looking for a detachable hardtop for his NB.

- » must be in good condition
- » must have all fittings
- » colour ideally Highlight Silver, but not necessarily.

If you can help him out, please contact Barrie, [andman@tadaust.org.au](mailto:andman@tadaust.org.au), with your offer.

## Club library ...

### Books



### Workshop Manuals:

- » 1.6 NA
- » 1.8 NA
- » 1990-2009



### Miata Mazda MX-5

- » original 1989  
2-book set

To arrange a short-term loan, please contact [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

### Tools



**Random orbital polisher**, ideal for machine polishing your car. Consumables available (at your own cost) through the Club.

Contact [merchandise@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:merchandise@mx5vic.org.au)

**Bushing tool**, for servicing or replacing your suspension bushes.

Contact [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)



## Club number plate frames



- » 6-digit Slimline or Standard size
  - » White text on black plastic
  - » Cost is \$10/pair (\$17.30 posted)
- Ask at your next Club run or contact Murray Finlay, [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au).

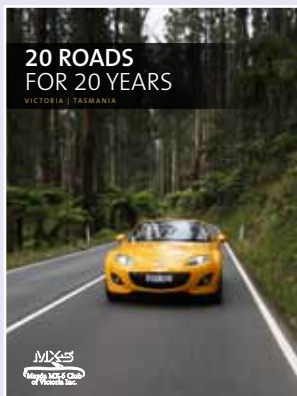
## "20 Roads" book

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](mailto:merchandise@mx5vic.org.au).



# Heart transplant - or what to do when

■ Words & photos: John Waldock, Hobart Chapter Co-Convenor

## This is an issue that I have been considering for quite some time.

As my car has aged and I have watched the kilometres click over, it has often been in my mind that sooner or later I would have to do something about the motor.

I bought my car – a 1990 Classic Red NA – six years ago and there were already 165,000km on the clock, but since I drive to work in it every day it hasn't taken long to turn that into 290,000-odd km. The engine has generally run well over that time; other than beginning to use a little oil, there were no obvious outward signs that things weren't quite right.

Then, midway through 2011, I noticed that the motor wasn't idling very well. So, Allan Pryer (fellow member and my partner in all things 'car') and I changed the oil, spark plugs and checked the timing. This made things a little better, but still the motor idled poorly.

So, various friends in the Hobart Chapter were consulted and the general consensus was that I needed to have the compression checked. My mechanic duly discovered that one of the cylinders (#3, I think) was very low on compression, especially when idling. His theory was that one of the valves was cracked, hence the loss of compression.

Which left me with the million dollar question: what to do when something like this happens to your engine? It appeared there were four options:

### 1 Have the head repaired or replaced.

I was quoted \$1200 to have the head removed, replace the valves and put it back on. This didn't include shaving the head, which it might have needed. For \$1500, I could have purchased a reconditioned head. This price doesn't include labour costs.

### 2 Purchase a reconditioned engine.

My mechanic was able to offer an H&M reconditioned motor for about \$3500, not including labour.

3 Have my old motor rebuilt to my own specifications. Cost unknown, but probably around \$4000+ ...

4 Purchase a second-hand motor. So, I spoke to three MX-5 parts sellers, and I found that, at that time, *MX5mania* in Sydney were the only people selling motors out of wrecked older cars. They had a NA6 motor for \$695 with low kilometres or \$350 for one with higher kilometres.

Lots of information there, so which option is the best way to go? I had (and still have) thoughts of rebuilding the original motor, however budget was a big consideration and it was not possible to just go ahead and have it done. I didn't see repairing or replacing the head as worthwhile, as I was throwing quite a lot of money at an engine with pretty high kilometres and was I concerned that there may have been wear in other parts of the motor, which may have soon needed repairing as well. The replacement engine option I didn't much like, as it's not a new



# your motor says it's had enough ...

motor but a reconditioned one and, to be honest, I thought if I had to spend that much I may as well have my own old motor rebuilt for not much more. Eventually, I decided to purchase the low-kilometre used motor, as it seemed the most cost effective.

Purchasing the low-kilometre motor of course has its own risks. *MX5mania* do offer a short warranty (three months) and I found that they were very helpful in the information they provided to me. The motor was out of an '89 Eunos automatic with 130,000km. They had already had the motor in a car to test it, so they were confident it was fine.

*I decided to go with this motor while thinking that, if it turned out to be mediocre, I could begin saving to have the original rebuilt ...*

So, money transferred, the motor (and

a new engine undertray and window weather strips) arrived by freight (it cost about \$140 to ship it to Tasmania). On first look the motor seemed fine. My mechanic was impressed that they left on the fuel injectors and associated piping plus the exhaust manifold (mine was getting pretty long in the tooth). The outside of the motor was a bit grotty and so we decided to use my existing rocker cover. *(Note here: due to this decision, we had to replace the gasket, which ended up costing a little over \$100. WOW!)*

So the engine was lifted out, and after checking the cooling pipes, the replacement was put in. We also put a complete new clutch kit into the car, as the clutch was also ageing and I didn't want to replace it later in the year.

The car was returned to me the next day and there were a few issues to sort out. Despite checking everything they could, two of the smaller pipes on the replacement engine (a small stopper at the back of the head and a small cooling

pipe involved with the fuel injection manifold) had to be replaced, after driving the car showed that they had given up the ghost.

*So in conclusion ...*

I have found the new engine to be as good as I could have hoped. The engine performs nicely and, with the new clutch and other parts, has now got a very smooth gear change action. Also, one of the side benefits is that I have a spare engine, which I can use for parts, or rebuilding at some stage, without taking my car off the road. This new motor idles well and gives really good performance when running.

I tried it out on a Club run and was pleased with the power band and general acceleration it provided. It has cost somewhere in the \$1800 range, which included the cost of the engine, clutch kit, new rocker cover gasket and some cooling piping and installation and, in some ways, I feel like I have a new car. ■



# The 'Arm-Strong' patent hood lifter



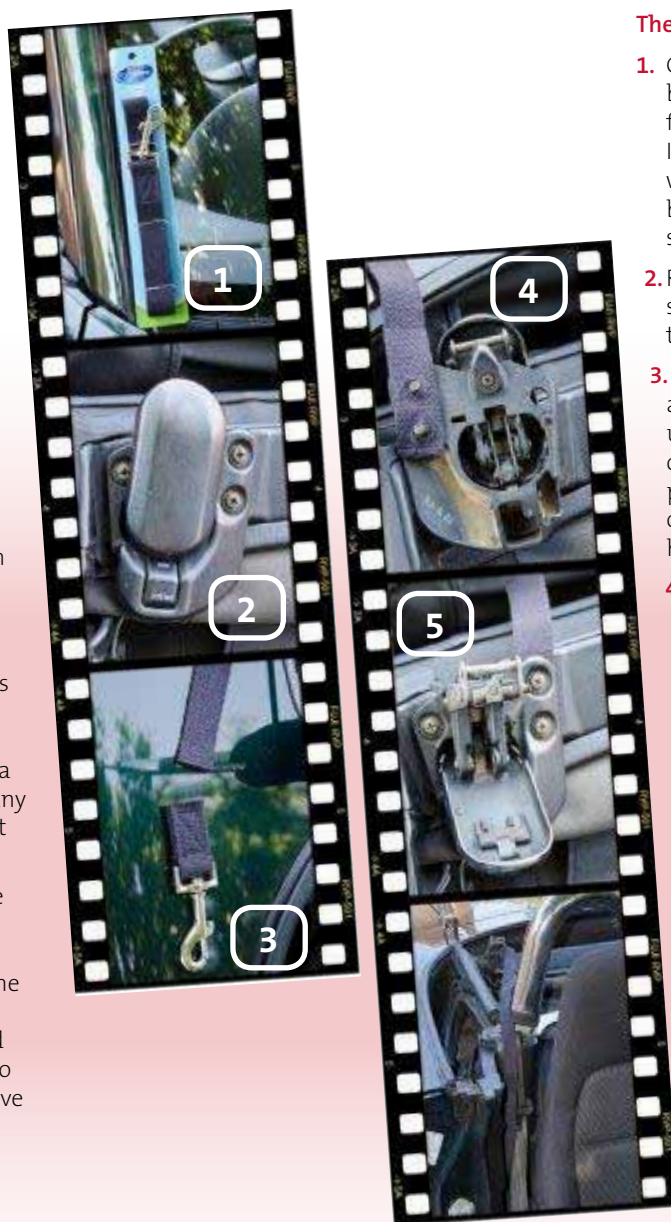
Words & photos: Ron Macdonald

The engineers at Mazda spent many hours designing and perfecting the basic soft top arrangement on the MX-5 so that it can be easily lifted from the driving position without having to get out of the car.

**The problem:** Enter some *Muppet* (hand held high) who then fits a stainless steel style bar and ruins the entire system on his NB. With the style bar fitted you have to place your arm over the bar and cannot get the required purchase to then raise the top.

There are of course other reasons why people may have an issue raising their tops, such as strength or stature for leverage, a disability or simply a few too many miles on the clock (the driver, not the car).

**What to do?** One could of course see an engineer and have him design a snazzy (and expensive) automatic power lift set up, or the second option is to fit the "Arm-Strong patent hood lifter". I opted for the latter and have found it to be a very effective and inexpensive solution to my problem.



## The method:

1. Go down to your favourite store and buy a 90cm (3 foot) dog lead. I opted for a black woven cotton one though I guess you could use leather if you wanted, although you would need to be careful that the latch screws are still long enough.
2. Remove the three Phillips head screws holding the latch to the soft top.
3. Cut the CLIP end off the dog lead and put it aside (might be able to use that if you have a very tall dog or want to tie the missus up!). Then punch two holes in the loose end of the dog lead to match the screw holes in the latch.
4. Place the lead across the back of the latch and poke the screws through.
5. Refit the latch to the soft top.

You are now the proud owner of an "Arm-Strong patent hood lifter".

To use the lifter, simply reach over your right shoulder, grab the strap (sitting near the seatbelt), place the strap over your head and pull. The hood will now be sitting in position ready to engage the latches. Once the catches are locked grab the hood lifter and tuck it under the middle stay in the soft top (or it will drive you crazy).

**Total fitment time:** five minutes.

**Total cost:** \$7.95.

It doesn't come any cheaper or easier than that! ■



(Ed. This handy idea might work on the NA latch as well, but it would probably be difficult to take the same approach with the single latch on the NC.)

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# The MX-5 Club Grill



## Introducing ...

### David Collins

Assistant Club Captain – Social

**Name?** David Collins

**Age?** 62

**Born?** London, UK

**Current abode?** Dandenong Ranges

**Profession?** IT industry for 44 years, now other life activities (the never-ending list) and some social work

**Partner?** The lovely Gail

**Pets?** None ... Gail has two cats which tolerate me and I them

**Fave food?** Thai, and Gail's Tiramisu

**Can you cook?** Yes, although Gail does most dinners

**Favourite tippie?** A Corona with lime first then a RED variety (I don't go into the depths of wine analysis); I've not come across a bad drop yet

**First drive?** 17, in the UK, I drove my father's Green Ford Popular, three-on-the-floor. I remember coercing him to take me on the M4 motorway that had just been opened. He was not comfortable with driving on such 'big' roads and going above 30 mph! A first for both of us. The start of many driving firsts, the latest driving the MX-5

**First car?** Austin Mini Van 848cc, Grey, 1965, KYV 197D

**First fender bender?** In said Mini Van, was rear ended

**Everyday driver?** My MX-5s, what else ...

**Current MX-5?** » NB, 1999: Grace Green with yellow leather driving seats.

» NC, 2010: Metropolitan Grey. Not into names of things or 'he' or 'she'

**MX-5 improvements?**

» NB: bracket for GPS, purchased a front grill but not installed yet and thinking of upgrading exhaust. » NC: bracket for GPS and installed a CB radio

**MX-5 dislikes?** When the MX-5 is so good, any small blemish is not worth talking about

**Why an MX-5?** Always loved the design and sleek lines, long before I knew of its handling and driving capabilities. I should have purchased one long before 18 months ago. Now who needs anything else?

**Fluffy dice?** Never! You wouldn't put something in front of your TV so why when you are driving. Hence one of the reasons for finding brackets for the GPS as I hate them on the windscreen

**Passions besides the MX-5?** Dining with friends, all forms of travel

**Favourite TV show / movie / book?** Most programs on the ABC, hardly watch commercial, then only for the cricket / 'Mary & Max', what a great movie / 'Pillars of the Earth' by Ken Follett

**Dream wheels (money no object)?** Happy with my MX-5s



**Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong?** Only in a life or death situation

**Favourite other Mazda?** Took a test drive in an RX8 once

**If not a Mazda (gasp!) what?** Not worth thinking about

**How long in the Club?** 18 months

**How many MX-5 Club runs?** 8-10 and loved every one. What better way to enjoy a drive, and catch up with lovely people?

**Favourite Club run?** Two, Maffra to Dargo, 90km of road made for MX-5s, and the Great Ocean Road run on a clear, dry (early) morning

**Funniest thing seen on a Club run?** Handbrake not applied correctly; luckily a potential disaster of MX-5s merging was quickly averted

**Done DECA?** No, alas missed last year's but will be in it this year

**Ford vs Holden?** Holden for when you have kids

**What's playing in your MX-5?** ABC radio or an audiobook when the roof is up. Otherwise why spoil the sounds of the great outdoors?

**Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)?** Enjoy watching all forms of sport, particularly Test cricket

**Final comments?** We all share in this common passion and I love the opportunity to get out there for a terrific ride and getting together with a great bunch of folk. Like all good things it takes effort to make it happen.

As the Club goes from strength to strength it needs more support, so I urge you to become involved in some way. Every little bit helps. Enjoy and be safe. ■



## ***A new option for the MX-5 owner***

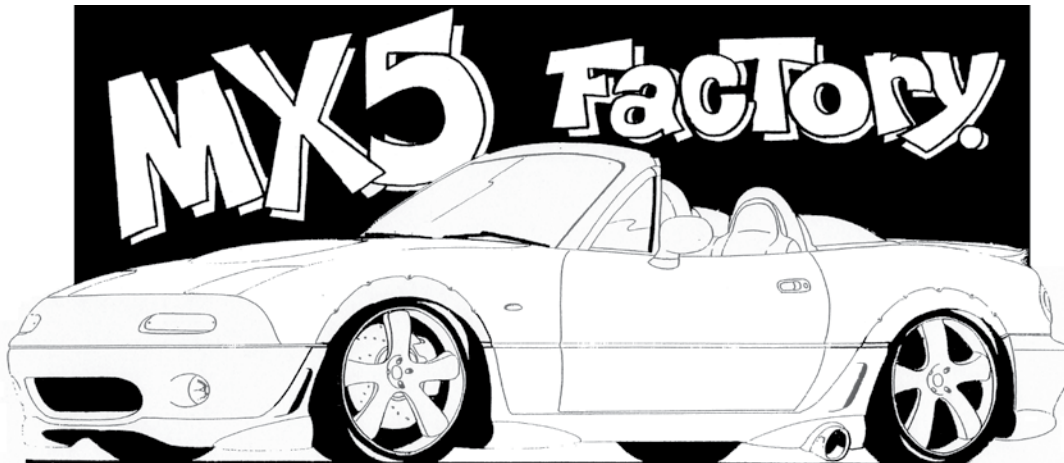
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