

mxtra

3/2012

www.mx5vic.org.au

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

**500
up!**

**The road
ahead ...**

In this edition:
New members' night: Thursday, 22 March
New Club smartphone calendar
North-eastern Victoria Chapter - five years up!



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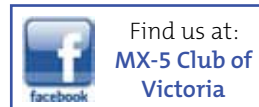
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Cover image:

Zoom-zooming to the future.
 Photo: Alyssa Finlay



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Murray's Corner ...

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

G'day all!

The heading opposite says it all this month ... Welcome to the future!

We have some very exciting news for the Club this month, with a host of initiatives introduced to pave the way ahead for the future of the Club.

The changes take effect immediately, but will no doubt take some time to filter through the Club. Please read through the next section of the magazine ... hopefully you will feel as enthusiastic about our future as I and the rest of the Committee do!

All this coincides with another fantastic milestone for the Club; this month we crashed through the 500-member barrier for the first time in our history. If you're one of the ones who got us over the line, on behalf of all your fellow members I wish you a hearty welcome. *If you have half as much fun in the Club as I've had over the years you'll have a ball!*

The Ides of March were bad luck for one bloke a couple of millennia back, but for me they have a particularly positive significance.

13 March was the anniversary of the purchase of my first Mazda MX-5 back in 1990, and brought up my 22nd year of MX-5 ownership. Of course, all but about five months of that time have been spent as a member of the wonderful Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria, which means I've been a Club member for just four months less than fellow committeeman Ben Sale has been on the planet! *Yikes!*

As well as developments at Club level, we've been playing around at national level too.

The MX-5 Club presidents around Australia have developed a pretty good network for asking each other questions and advice, swapping ideas and generally keeping in touch.

This is mostly done via e-mail and the occasional phone call, but there's nothing like a face-to-face chat to kick ideas around, share thoughts and learn from each other.

Up to now the only opportunity for face-to-face encounters has been the Club presidents' meeting at *NatMeet* ... but these are only every two years, and the problem of the time span is only exacerbated by the fact that presidents change frequently ... those at the meeting at one *NatMeet* are very likely not going

to be the ones present at the next one.

Thanks to the generosity of Mazda Australia, we overcame that problem this month. On 2 March Mazda kindly provided their interstate video-conferencing facilities and allowed all the Club presidents – Denise Peck (Qld), Glenn Thomas (NSW), Ed McCaul (SA), Barrie Parker (WA) and me – to eyeball each other and talk about all manner of things. Well, unfortunately two of the presidents had to join in by phone, but we were all involved and it was extremely productive. Our VP, Don Nicoll, was also there to keep me in line.

The agenda was very wide ranging and covered subjects including how the different clubs are structured and operate, membership trends, reciprocal membership rights, standardised competition classes, pooling for Club magazine content, relationships with Mazda Australia and CAMS and more.

Lots of ideas were shared and quite a few balls set rolling for future development. There was still plenty on the initial agenda that we didn't even begin to address, and which will be revisited in a future link-up.

With Mazda's further indulgence, we're hoping to have another two of these at three-monthly intervals and then regularly every six months.

Finally, we had a tough moment last month when the Committee had to **suspend** the membership of one member who, after several months and many reminders, had not paid for their spot at the November Christmas lunch.

The member was a last-minute cancellation; there was no time to find a replacement and the Club (ie, all of the rest of us) had to cover the cost of this person's meal.

The Club's cancellation policy clearly states that, in these circumstances, you may be charged for the event.

Given the lack of response, the Committee was forced to *suspend* the person's membership – an uncomfortable first for the Club. Happily the matter has been resolved, but it shows *we stand by our policies!*

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

Murray



New Club Smartphone calendar

We are very pleased to unveil a new version of the Club's calendar.

You can now access the calendar anywhere, any time, via your smartphone or 3G iPad!

Alyssa Finlay, the Club's (almost) tame graphic designer, has developed a version of the calendar that works beautifully on any portable device. We've tested it on an iPad, an iPhone and on an HTC android, and it works a treat.

The URL for the calendar is www.mx5vic.org.au/smartphone/events.html.

You can type that directly into your device, or you can visit the events calendar page on the Club website and click on the small icon at the top of the page. Once there you can add the above icon to your home screen. Label it something appropriate ...

Just like on the website and the printed calendar, the events are listed month-by-month. Just tap the month you want and the events will cascade out on your screen. Tap the month again to close it.

Thanks, Alyssa – another great job!

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

March

- 17 Cobaw & Macedon Ranges (Saturday)
- 18 Northern Tassie: Frankford run
- 22 New Members' Night
- 24-25 Western Vic: Grampians 2-day

April

- 1 Central: Phillip Island run
- 1 Eastern Vic: Phillip Island run
- 6-10 NatMeet 2012, Canberra
- 15 NE Vic: 5th anniversary run
- 15 Southern Tas: Spit roast at Ross
- 29 Western Vic: run

May

- 15-17 Mid-week adventure
- 20 Southern Tas: Ross picnic
- 26 Club: Dyno Day

The Club's road ahead ...



■ **Words:** Murray Finlay (President), Don Nicoll (Vice President) and Dave Collins

Welcome to the future!

As outlined in the last couple of editions of *mxtra*, there has been a fair bit of contemplation by the Committee and Chapter leaders regarding the way forward for our Club.

In January, the full Committee met in Melbourne with all of the Club's Chapter leaders from Victoria and Tasmania and discussed a broad range of issues relating to the Chapters and to the Club as a whole.

From that meeting, a series of eight proposals went to the February Committee meeting for consideration and, as it's turned out, ratification.

Overview

The main impact of these initiatives is to make the Club more inclusive ... putting the day-to-day running of the Club – runs, events, etc – into the hands of those “on the ground” ... the Chapter leaders and their assistants. This will free the Committee from organising things like Sunday runs and allow it to focus on the “big picture” – broader Club-wide issues, such as direction setting and long-term planning, future growth, policy setting, finances, communications, promotion, merchandise, liaison with Mazda and the other State clubs and so on.

They are also designed to remove the outdated and unintentional focus of the Club on its Melbourne membership, which sometimes leaves the 20% or so of members who live outside of Melbourne feeling like they are a bit of an afterthought.



Take us to your leaders! The Committee, Chapter leaders and partners at the January meeting

The changes outlined in the following adopted proposals take effect from 1 March, 2012.

Initiative #1: Update the Club name

Whilst still “officially” (and legally) the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc, our day-to-day operating name will now be the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.

With around 10% of our memberships based in the Apple Isle, this is obviously more inclusive and more representative of the true make-up of our Club across the two States.

Update the Club logo

Reflecting the name change, we have also modified the Club logo, with “Victoria & Tasmania” replacing the old “Victoria”. We have also changed the font, to make it more contemporary and welcoming ... just like the Club!

The new logo will appear on stationery, banners etc as they are replaced over time.



Welcome to the future ...

Initiative #2: Form a new Melbourne-based Chapter

To put the Club's Melbourne metropolitan and regional Chapter members on an equal footing, we now have a sixth Club Chapter.

This is called the **Central Chapter**, and takes in members registered as living or having their principal place of business with a 100km radius from the Melbourne GPO.

All six Chapters have equal standing and the same structure.

The Committee's rationale for forming this new Melbourne-based Chapter is to reinforce the fact that all members have the same importance within the Club, no matter where they live.

It is also intended to free the Committee from its historic link to the Club's Melbourne hub, allowing the Committee to focus on "Club-wide" management while – as already happens in the regional Chapters – the Chapter leadership takes care of event planning and other day-to-day Chapter matters.

Elect a leader for the new Central Chapter

Ron Macdonald accepted the nomination and was elected to lead the new Chapter. *Congratulations, Ron, and thanks for taking on the challenge!*

For those who don't know him, Ron has been with the Club since September 2010, and he and his partner, Wendy, have not missed a Melbourne-based run in that time. They have already led at least three of their own runs, and have been to "play" with a couple of the other Chapters too.

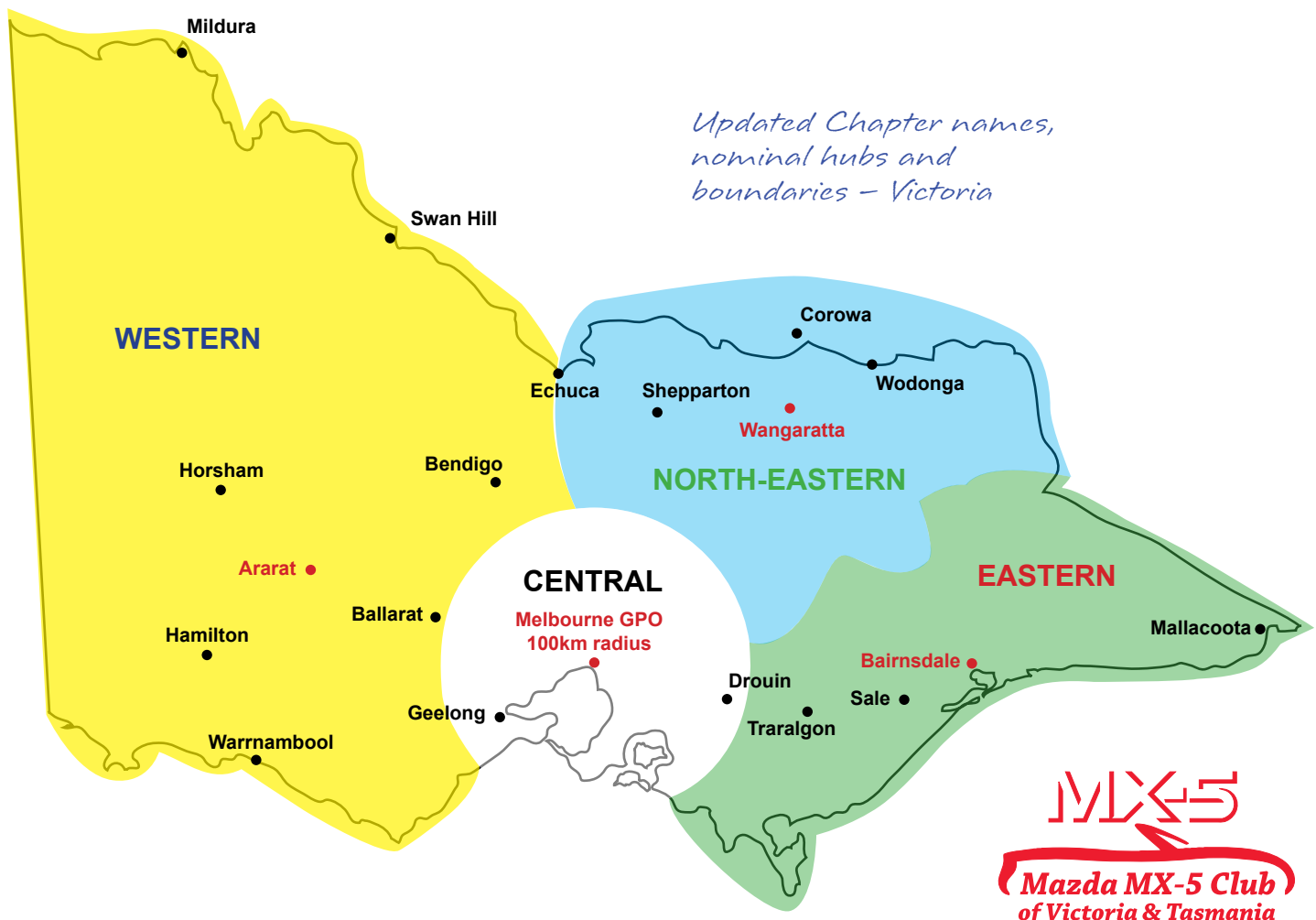
Ron has already become well entrenched in the Club's culture and workings and is well aware of the work involved.

Ron's contact details are:

tel: 0422 490 786

e-mail: central@mx5vic.org.au

If you'd like to know more about Ron, he is featured in this month's "Club Grill" on page 30.





Initiative #3: Update the Chapter names, nominal hubs and boundaries

The Committee has endorsed changing the names of the Chapters to reflect their larger geographical “territories”.

The new Chapter names are:

- » **Central**
- » **North-eastern Victoria**
- » **Western Victoria**
- » **Eastern Victoria**
- » **Northern Tasmania**
- » **Southern Tasmania**

Some of these new names remove the current “city” names used previously (ie, Ballarat and Hobart), but the Committee feels these names are more inclusive of the wider areas the Chapters cover.

Victoria

Central Chapter is based on the Melbourne GPO, and covers a radius of 100km.

Eastern Victoria Chapter is nominally based in Bairnsdale, and covers the area east to Mallacoota and south of the Great Dividing Range.

North-eastern Victoria Chapter is nominally based in Wangaratta, and covers the area north-east of the 100km Central boundary, north of the Great Dividing Range and including the NSW border region east of Echuca.

Western Victoria Chapter is nominally based in Ararat, and covers the area west to the SA border and north including the NSW border region west of Echuca.

Tasmania

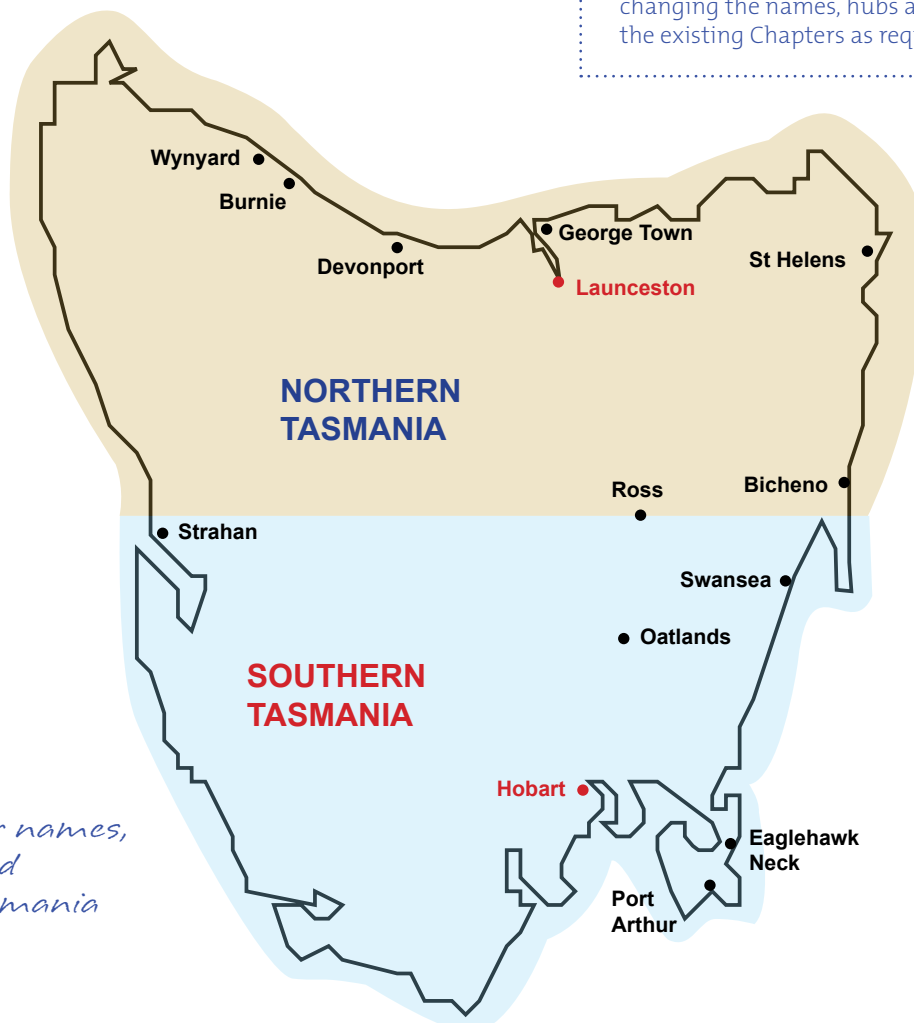
Northern Tasmania Chapter is nominally based in Launceston, and covers all areas north of Ross*.

Southern Tasmania Chapter is nominally based in Hobart, and covers all areas south of Ross*.

(* Ross was chosen because it has become the traditional middle “meeting point” when the two Chapters get together.)

Of course, the Chapter boundaries are predominantly for Club management and for the awarding of points for Club awards. They are not walls, and any member is very welcome to attend any event hosted by any Chapter!

- There is *no requirement* of the Chapter leader to reside in the nominated Chapter hub.
- The Committee recognises that setting the above Chapter names, hubs and boundaries does not preclude adding new Chapters or changing the names, hubs and boundaries of the existing Chapters as required in the future.



Updated Chapter names, nominal hubs and boundaries – Tasmania

Welcome to the future ...

Initiative #4: Change the title of the Chapter leaders

The Committee has decided to change the title of the Chapter leader to **Chapter Captain**, both to signify the “new beginning” and to reflect the importance that the Committee places on these leaders in the new Club structure.

Each will be known as “Chapter Captain – XX”, when “XX” is the name of the Chapter; eg, John Gleeson will be known as “Chapter Captain – Western Victoria Chapter” etc.

The Committee decided that, from now on, there can be only one Chapter Captain in each Chapter.

Formalise the role of Chapter assistants

There are already members in each of the Chapters who support their Chapter leaders, assisting with planning and leading events. The Committee would like to formalise this support by allowing (asking!) the Chapter Captain to appoint a maximum of two “Assistant Chapter Captains” to help out.

These Assistant Chapter Captains should be prepared to stand in as Chapter Captain if required (eg, while the Chapter Captain is on holiday) and ideally be ready and willing to take over the leadership when the current Chapter Captain is ready to move on.

In the interests of “succession planning” for long-term Club stability, the intention is that an Assistant Chapter Captain would eventually replace the incumbent Chapter Captain (with the previous Captain acting as Assistant for a year to help them settle in), and then they would act as an Assistant for the next Chapter Captain who succeeds them.

[The Committee is adopting a similar succession method for key positions on the Club Committee, such as President and Club Captain – Motor Sport.]

Names of Chapter members volunteering (or being volunteered) as Assistant Chapter Captains need to be submitted to the Committee for ratification before they are formally appointed.

Please don't stand back ... If you feel that you would like to take up a formal Assistant role, please have a chat with your Chapter Captain.

Prepare guidelines for the Chapter Captains to help run their Chapters

The Club Committee has now delegated to the Chapter Captains the responsibility of managing the life blood of the Club: day-to-day member operations, the development and provision of runs, recruiting new members and acting as primary Club representative to the membership in their Chapter.

The Committee will, in consultation with the Chapter Captains, develop operating principles on what is expected of the people who fill these positions.

Essentially this will involve writing down and standardising what the Chapter Captains already do, so that we are doing the same things the same way across all parts of the Club.

Dave Collins (below) has undertaken to put together these guidelines and present a draft to the Committee for ratification at its June 2012 meeting.

Co-opt the following members as Chapter Captains

- » Central: **Ron Macdonald**
- » Eastern Victoria: **Grant Butler**
- » North-eastern Victoria: **Ron Gillick**
- » Western Victoria: **John Gleeson**
- » Northern Tasmania: **Bruce Harvey**
- » Southern Tasmania: **John Waldock**

Our sincere thanks go to all those who have agreed to become or continue as Chapter leaders.



Special thanks also go to John Hadrill, formerly Co-Convenor of the Hobart Chapter, who will continue as Assistant Chapter Captain - Southern Tasmania Chapter.

Meet the Chapter Captains opposite ...



Dave Collins (left) is a bit of dynamo and has a clear vision for how the Chapters and Committee should interact.

While he's fairly new to our Club and new to the Committee, Dave has previous car club experience (including a role as a club treasurer and vice president), has been president and treasurer of a school council, and is currently involved in body corporate matters.

Dave's Club e-mail address is social2@mx5vic.org.au

Ken Beaton, founding Convenor of the Northern Tasmania Chapter, has decided to step down from this role and hand over the reins to Bruce Harvey, effective immediately. The Committee has endorsed this change of leadership.

We thank Ken most sincerely for all his efforts with the Club in Northern Tasmania, which go back some 13 years. He was long the unofficial leader of the MX-5 pack in that part of the world, even before he got the tap on the shoulder to formalise his role as the inaugural Chapter Convenor back in 2008.

Ken will not be lost to us, however. Despite travelling a bit more in the future, he will remain in the background to help Bruce and the rest of the Chapter with anything they need.

So, thanks Ken, for all your leadership and hard work. You leave big shoes to fill.



Ken Beaton
1990 Classic Red NA



The Chapter Captains



North-eastern Victoria
Ron Gillick
2002 Sunlight Silver NB

Lives: Corowa, NSW
Wife: Marg
Time in Club: 7 years
Tel: (02) 6033 0253 (ah)
E-mail: north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au

Ron is the inaugural Convenor for the North-eastern Victoria Chapter, which was formed in April 2007.



Western Victoria
John Gleeson
2001 Supreme Blue NB

Lives: Ballarat, Victoria
Wife: Noellene
Time in Club: 4 years
Tel: 5333 1113 /
0418 501 811
E-mail: western@mx5vic.org.au

John was the inaugural Convenor for the previous Ballarat & Western Victoria Chapter, which was formed in April 2009.



Eastern Victoria
Grant Butler, Life Member
2006 Copper Red NC

Lives: Drouin, Victoria
Wife: Saeko
Time in Club: 10 years
Tel: 0403 929 315
E-mail: eastern@mx5vic.org.au

Grant was the inaugural Convenor for the previous Gippsland Chapter, formed in October 2011.



Central
Ron Macdonald
1998 Grace Green NB

Lives: Frankston, Victoria
Partner: Wendy
Time in Club: 2 years
Tel: 0422 490 786
E-mail: central@mx5vic.org.au

Ron is the inaugural Chapter Captain for the new Central Chapter, formed in March 2012.



Southern Tasmania
John Waldock
1990 Classic Red NA

Lives: Lauderdale, Tasmania
Wife: Michelle
Time in Club: 4 years
Tel: 0409 658 716/6248 1319
E-mail: southtas@mx5vic.org.au

John was co-Convenor (with John Hadrill) of the previous Hobart Chapter since April 2009. The Chapter was formed in February 2008.



Northern Tasmania
Bruce Harvey
2009 Sunset Gold NC

Lives: George Town, Tasmania
Partner: Cheryl
Time in Club: 5 years
Tel: 0427 656 074
E-mail: northtas@mx5vic.org.au

Bruce was previously co-Convenor (with Ken Beaton) of the Northern Tasmania Chapter, which was formed in June 2008.

Welcome to the future ...

Initiatives #5 & 6: Formalise the titles given to the Club Captain - Motor Sport and Club Captain - Social

These were mostly “housekeeping” requirements to tidy up a small anomaly between the official titles of these office bearers as they appear in our Statement of Purposes & Rules (constitution) and the names that the Club has since adopted.

However, there is a significant change to the role of **Club Captain – Social**.

Now that Melbourne-based members have their own Chapter and separate leadership, the responsibility for organising runs and events for Melbourne has been removed from the Club Captain – Social (and from the Committee).

In future this role will be involved principally in organising “Club-wide” events, such as the annual awards presentation, the AGM, new members’ nights, inter-Club events such as the biennial SA/Victoria weekends etc.

Christmas functions etc will be the responsibility of the Chapter Captains.

Janette Todd has accepted this modified role of Club Captain – Social, and **Robert Downes** continues in the (unchanged) role of Club Captain – Motor Sport, with **Daniel White** as his assistant.

Initiative #7: Appoint the Vice President as the key Chapter contact point

As the new Club structure removes the Committee from the day-to-day management of the Melbourne-based membership and puts all the Chapters on an equal footing, it is necessary to create a role on the Committee to be the central point of contact for all the Chapter Captains.

This person will be the conduit to bring news, requests and issues from the Chapters to the attention of the Committee, and to provide feedback from the Committee and other guidance and support to the Chapter Captains.

Given the importance of the Chapters in the day-to-day running of the Club, it is vital this “Chapter management” role be filled by a senior person on the Committee, and there is no-one more appropriate than the Vice President.

The Vice President’s duties have been extended to include (but are not limited to):

- » be the primary manager of the Club’s Chapters through the Chapter Captains, and to support them in every way to ensure they are able to achieve and are meeting the aims of the Club. Examples include assistance with advertising and promotion, information material, adequate support in magazine and website, sponsorship, CB radios;
- » ensure adequate support is available for the Chapter Captains – eg, helping to identify assistant/s and successor/s;
- » provide a conduit for information, issues, performance between Chapter Captains and the Club Committee;
- » work with Chapter Captains to ensure all Club runs and other Chapter-based events operate as per Club operating principles (eg, event preparation, calendar notification, CAMS permits, safety, magazine, website for history).

Appoint Dave Collins as the interim Chapter contact on the Committee

Our current Vice President, **Don Nicoll**, has his hands full with his duties as **mxtra** editor, and it’s impractical to change this before we have a “cabinet reshuffle” after the AGM.

In the meantime, **Dave Collins** (see page 8) has accepted this important Chapter management role and will be the Chapter Captains’ key contact for the next few months, until the end of the current membership year.

Dave’s Club e-mail address is social2@mx5vic.org.au

Initiative #8: Future Committee/ Chapter meetings and Tasmanian visits

It is important to maintain regular face-to-face contact between those responsible for managing the Club.

The Committee endorsed the following:

- » **Victorian Chapters:** meet with the Committee twice per year – in August (or the first Committee meeting after the annual Committee election), and in January. Dates and venues for these meetings will be confirmed as required;
- » **Tasmanian Chapters:** every second January, starting in January, 2013, a representative of the Committee (not necessarily the President) will visit the two Tasmanian Chapters. In every alternate January (starting in January 2014), the Tasmanian Chapter Captains will come to Victoria to meet with the Committee and other Chapter Captains. Dates and venues for these meetings will be confirmed as required.

Reasonable travel expenses will be met by the Club. ■



Social-lights

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

See you at the new members' night!

Thursday, 22 March - Carlton

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 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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Membership

Current membership count:

509

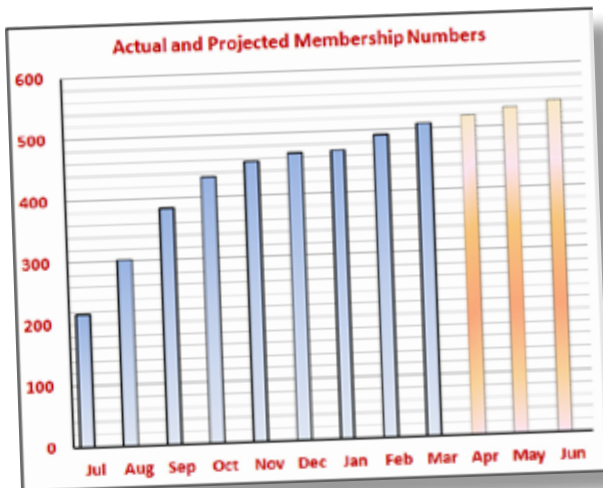
■ Will Campbell – Membership Officer membership@mx5vic.org.au

G'day all ...

For the first time in the Club's history, we have cracked the 500-member mark!

I would like to welcome these 15 new members to the fold:

As has been pointed out previously, the growth in membership in the current year has been phenomenal. For those with a mathematical or statistical bent, I've fitted a trend line to the available data as shown in the accompanying graph. If the trend is to be believed, I reckon we should



have around 540 members by year's end.

No bets, but it will be interesting to see how the prediction fares!

See you out and about ...

Will

Central Chapter

John Balazo	1990 White NA
Robyn Conrad	2007 Metropolitan Grey NC
Dave Graham	2004 Ebony NB
Grant Healy	1995 White NA
Tony and Troy Heasley	2002 Titanium Silver NB
Raoul Liggett	1998 Grace Green NB
Tim Meaden	1999 10AE
Geoff Wallis	1995 Classic Red NA
Cary Warren	1990 Classic Red NA
Steve Willder	2002 Silver NB

Eastern Victoria Chapter

Claire and Jenna Garner	1999 Green NB
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North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Adam Ronke	1990 Blue NA
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Western Victoria Chapter

Neal Brownrigg	2001 Silver NB
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Scene about ...



■ Photos: Ron Gillick, Ron Macdonald, Bob de Bont, John Waldock



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Chapter news ...



Rocks and Rolling Hills ... 26/2/12 | Western Victoria

■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photo: John Gleeson ■ Run organiser: John Gleeson & Barry Barnett



*Talk about a great day.
Perfect weather for a run
with the roof down.*

Starting time was 9.30am. Seventeen MX-5s lined up outside our place in Ballarat, our starters coming from Ballarat, Geelong, Horsham and Melbourne. John gave the usual talk and instructions and welcomed newcomers, Pamela & Tony Stoffels, Jason & Liam Wright, David Ralph and prospective member Beau McLennan.

Away we go towards Yendon. This is a great road as there are gum trees, twists and sweepers all while travelling through lovely farming country. Everyone keeps bunched up, nice and tight, which is great for the leader and the tail-end car to keep in contact by radio.

We pass through Ballan and head down my favourite valley into Greendale. I just love this view as you descend to turn right at the hotel and then climb upwards to head to Myrmiong. On to the Pentland Hills Road past the Plough Inn (great meals) travelling beside the Western Freeway then merging before the left turn towards Gisborne. Past the huge Merrimu Reservoir on the Diggers Rest-Coimada Road, the speed limit drops to 60kmh through the best curving section of this road. The MX-5s are hard to

hold back. They, and the drivers, are raring to go!

Left at Toolern Vale and on to Gisborne for a coffee and toilet break and to meet with Barry Barnett, who organised the second leg of this run. We also are joined by three more cars.

John introduces Barry, a fairly new member, who passes out the run sheets and explains where we are heading. 11.30am and off we go again towards Mt Macedon. This is a fantastic road in an absolutely beautiful area. We twist left, right and left again. It's great! Not much traffic either. I am really enjoying this run; I hope everyone else is as well.

Barry warns us via CB not to put the foot down through Tooborac as the local police strictly enforce the 70kmh speed limit. We reach Heathcote at about 1pm. This was to be a toilet break, but for a few it is lunch time, so we decide to have lunch on the nice grassy areas. One of the advantages of a picnic lunch, you can stop and eat when and where you like.

Back to the line-up of MX-5s at 2pm and away we go again. We pass through Mia Mia. On a downhill section towards an old one lane timber plank bridge, we take it pretty slowly as the surface is broken up a bit. Then it's power on as we head up over the hill. (Barry you have done a great job with this run.) On to Reservoir Road

and through Harcourt we go. At about 3.15pm we pull into the car park near Castlemaine gardens. Everyone gathers around for a chat and a group photo before branching off in all directions to head for home.

Barry had suggested having a look at the XXXX Antique Complex on Johnstone Street. This was fantastic. There is antique furniture and restored garage items including dozens of petrol bowsers. Well worth a look.

Lawrie is elected to lead the five remaining cars back to Ballarat for our usual wind down tea at one of the local hotels. When getting close to home it looked like rain ahead. Just a short way to go and it started to spit. We all know if you keep moving you do not get wet with your top down. Then down it comes!

Things were OK while moving but we came up to a Give Way sign and had to stop. Lawrie headed for some trees, we all followed. It was hilarious, five cars in pouring rain trying to put their tops up. We were nearly drowned! We were still laughing the next day.

Thank you to all who came along and made it the great day that it was. Again!

(Ed. Thanks to Noellene for contributing this report when the original author, Lockie Story found himself indisposed. We wish Lockie all the best)

Navigational nightmares on the Ex-

Central Chapter | ■ Words: Don Nicoll ■ Photos: Ron Macdonald

Nineteen cars congregated at the start of the Ex-Presidents' navigation run on Sunday, 19 February.

The location for departure was opposite the only island in the Yarra River. Fortunately this cryptic piece of information was not cited on the flyer; instead precise details were given for the location of Café Kanteen on Alexandra Ave near the aforementioned island (Herron). Unfortunately this was the last piece of precise information we were to receive for the day ... oh, except for the final destination of the run, at Eastern Beach in Geelong.

Past Presidents **David Henry** (1991-1995) and **David James** (1999-2001) had cooked up a navigation run that visited several out-of-the-way locations west of Port Phillip Bay, not least of which was the Maude telephone exchange (it has a GREEN door) and an overgrown tennis court in East Somewhere (the surface of which was weeds plus (?) but who cares what as long as you had WEEDS) amongst other significant landmarks. David Henry was unable to make the day ... something to do with a valve re-grind (his own, not his car's) – or at least that is how David James described it to those enquiring after his cartographic companion.

Unlike a convoy run, little can be related about the route taken on this occasion. When your navigator has confirmed that he has the clues clearly in hand, the route sorted and all one has to do is plant the right foot, it can be a little disconcerting to discover another MX-5 coming in the opposite direction. It's even

more disconcerting when you are happily tootling along, following someone else, only to see them continue straight ahead when your navigator calmly asks for a sharp left at the next intersection. Suffice to say, we started at the right place, found the majority of the "vias" (technical term for landmarks to be visited along the way) and ended up at the destination on time (by parking for a few minutes to ensure we weren't early, only to discover that, despite threats to the contrary, it mattered not!). There were at least 19 versions of the route and all were correct.

The day proved a great success, certainly if the applause was any measure when the crews from 18 of the 19 cars were brought together to hear how they had fared. I hasten to add that the 19th car, containing Jeff and Jennifer, did finally front at the finish, just a little later than the rest and, in so doing, missed out on the gongs.

There was much mirth as the answers to cryptic clues and the weird questions were forthcoming: the surface of the tennis court at East Somewhere was irrelevant to Dave Collins because he couldn't find the bloody tennis court, and did you know that one of the two prisons in the same locality was in fact the primary school? So what if Essendon lost the 1990 grand final, who says that Fiat stands for "fix it

... or when is west really east and vice versa?

again Tony" and why would you know what an ISS was, unless you were a space nerd (and we have lots of them in the Club)?

And so to the results. The current President, navigating for the Vice President (in an attempt to win their second

The briefing will be over soon, Lois ...



David James (back to the camera) briefs the eager participants

Presidents' navigation run



navigation run on the trot), found themselves retrospectively disqualified for phoning the Ex-President during the run to point out (*with only minimal abuse*) that there was an error in the run notes, namely that the approach to a certain landmark could not possibly be from the east nor east, surely it had to be west nor west? The Ex-Pres sought refuge in the fact that all cars had made it to the finish and completed the questionnaire, so everyone must have sussed the deliberate compass errors!

The prizes were lavish. First, all navigators received a Mazda "40th anniversary of the rotary engine" key ring in recognition of their extraordinary efforts in overcoming the aforementioned compass collateral. Secondly the drivers also received a key ring for ... driving!

First prize overall went to **Glenda Wise** in her Copper Red NC. Her surname certainly helped on the day. Glenda walked away with a lovely bottle of red from Chateau Liquorland. Second prize, a bottle of bubbly, went to **Greg and Lyn Jordan**.

There were two third placers. Genuine hard graft by **Roger and Tom Loveless** won them a Mazda washing mitt. The second washing mitt was awarded to "Zoomy" (**Rob and Ros Eastwood**) for hard graft of a different kind. In the flyer there had been a suggestion that bribery of the Ex-Presidents was encouraged and they had donated a bottle of red as down payment on a rostrum position. We think it was a different red from the one awarded to Glenda. There was also a bottle of wine for lucky last, **John Hayhurst** on this occasion. And a Mazda backpack went **Gail and Dave Collins** for the funniest answer ... that the original MX-5's chief designer, Tom Matano, was actually a game show host (not to be confused with Tommy Hanlon Jr!).

All of which left us to wonder what we should do with the camera, the second pencil and the idea about north, south, east and west which we had all been asked to bring along for the run.

All scepticism aside, special thanks go to David Henry and David James* for organising an event which provided fun, sun (try sunscreen next trip Ron) and good company. We must also wish Mark and Denise Szutta, from Phillip Island, a long and happy association with the Club, this being their first experience of a Club run.

Finally a special mention goes to a couple who hired an MX-5 for the day (in advance of purchasing their own MX-5) just so that they could check us out ... even Murray was on his best behaviour despite much provocation from Mr James. ■



Clockwise from above:

- The day's winner, Glenda Wise;
- Rule 6 – no using the interweb-thingy;
- Past-President David James.



Listening to David (again), as we await the results



Cathedral Rock, and Lorie

Explain to Murray again about that retrospective rule that no-one knew about .. ?



... still talking!

**Ed: have you noticed how it seems to be almost compulsory for Club Presidents to have two first names ... David Henry, David James, Ian Morris, Will Campbell, Murray Finlay ... ?*

Great Ocean Road

Chapter news ...

Summer's last blast! 25/2/12 | Northern Tasmania

■ Words & photos: Kelly Berggren ■ Run organiser: Rob and Marg Davies

Saturday dawned clear and bright; perfect for a great run with good people.

It was good to know that the gods of rain weren't going to curse us just because I was out washing our cars at 8am!

10am saw us all meeting up at the 50's Diner in Deloraine for coffee, which was an amazing place full of restored old petrol pumps, signs, cars and rock memorabilia (even had an exhaust manifold bolted to the loo wall as a hand rail!).

Coffee was great and we also had some lovely guests from the mainland joining us: Bronwyn and Geoff Roche with their NC, which was a real pleasure.

We headed off on to the back roads to Longford, through Golden Valley, passing Bracknell, Bishopsbourne and Cressy. It's not common to get a day in Tassie when you want the top up because it's TOO sunny, but this was it!

We stopped at Woolmers Estate (nearly 200-year-old World Heritage colonial property) just outside Longford for a picnic lunch, under the welcome shade of the ancient oaks. I think all the cars, our chairs and blankets nearly fitted in the shade of just one tree!

Onwards toward Symmons Plains raceway via Chintah Road and in no time we were there! The 10 cars from the run joined up with some more to have a run around the track! We all took a tour together first to get a feel for things, then proceeded to line up in the pits for a solo time trial each. Two practice laps then a timed lap each (and of course we got a little bit competitive...!).

Carl took the early lead with the *Megane Cup*, but that didn't count of course! The boys got into it, trying to get below one minute 20 seconds and of course some of we girls had to join in too!

I must say that taking such a responsive car as our MX-5 around a beaut track like Symmons was a real pleasure! There was a tight 'S' bend, a long straight, super tight hairpin, lightly twisted back straight, turning into a sweeping left turn before the home run past the pits. Everyone watched from the stadium deck as we raced around, chatting and laughing and trying not to get



sunburnt! We had a couple of runs each, trying to get into the racing driving style (NOT taking it easy on the gas, engine or brakes!) to improve on our previous times and get the award for *most improved*.

I knocked 3.5 seconds off my time so I was happy with that! Times for the 10 cars can be broadly divided in four groups – the best time of the day being set by an SP at 1:13. This was followed by a brace of NCs at 1:18. NB drivers were around 1:20 and the NA guys and gals around 1:24 for the flying lap.

It was an excellent run – thanks to Rob and Marg for the organisation. At the post mortem, there was a strong feeling that another visit to Symmons was essential if everyone was going to improve their times further. ■



Woomargama run ... 12/2/12 | North-Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Ron Gillick ■ Photos: Ron & Marg Gillick ■ Run organisers: Bill & Elaine Hines



Great weather, great route and great company made this one of the best single day runs we have ever enjoyed. It would have been an even greater day if we had had more participants but, unfortunately, we had only three cars in the convoy. But that did not detract from our enjoyment of the day.

Setting off from Wodonga, we headed east towards one of our favourite areas: the road along the Murray River upstream of the Hume Weir. Crossing the weir via the Bethanga Bridge we were soon on some winding roads which took us through Bethanga, Talgarno and then along the edge of the weir. With two years of good rainfall, the weir has been near 100% capacity for most of the time, but recently some of the water has been released downstream for irrigation and to top up other storages. But even though the weir is no longer full, it is still a picture compared to the drought years, when it was down to 5% of capacity.

As you near the upper reaches of the weir, the country becomes more hilly and you pass the point where the Murray River ceases to be part of the weir, becoming a river in its own right again and here the road winds along its bank.

Having driven this road many times, we had noticed a monument complete with bronze plaque attached on the side of the road out in the middle of nowhere. I had always assumed that it was just one of those monuments which says that some explorer or other had passed by this spot many years ago. Bill and Elaine knew better though and pulled off in to the parking area. On inspection the plaque announces that on the property around this spot, the Murray Grey breed of cattle was first bred.

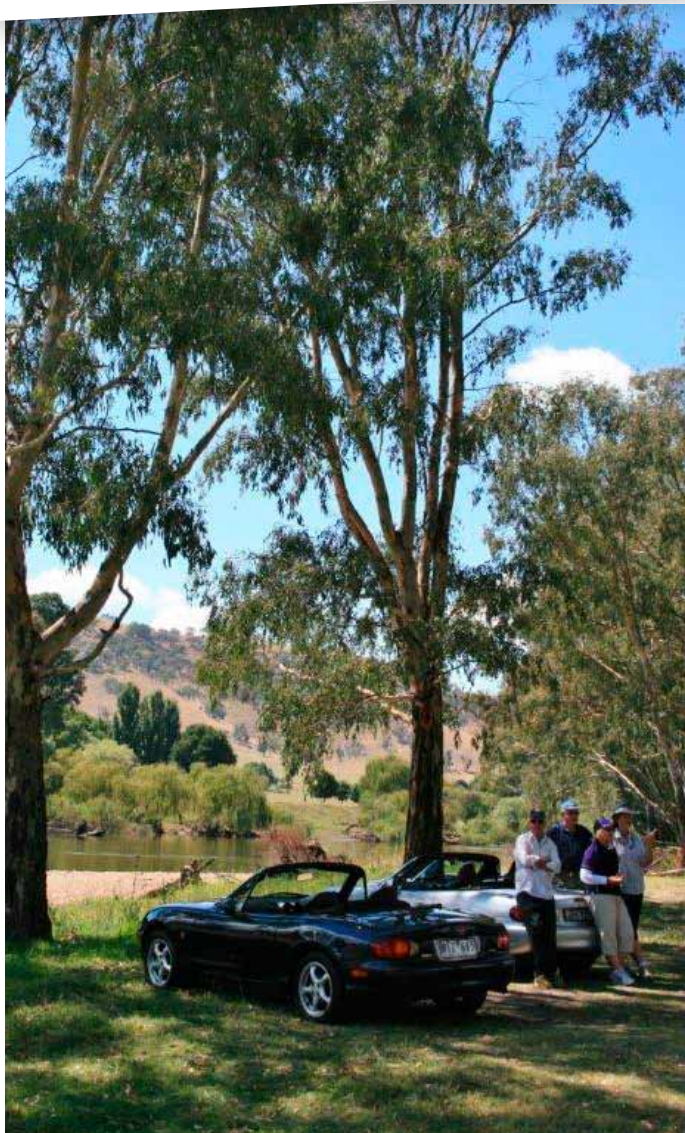
Our next stop was at a tranquil spot beside the river where Bill and Elaine sometimes bring their caravan for a couple of days' relaxation. The river at the moment is not carrying much water and is a shallow stream running over a bed of river stones. After a short break, photo taking and admiring of the scenery, it was back on the road for the short drive to our lunch spot.

Crossing the river just before Walwa we entered the picturesque little town of Jingellic. Calling it a town is probably an exaggeration – hamlet might be more accurate – but it is the prettiest little spot and is now on our list of places to revisit. We pulled up at the pub, which sits on the banks of the Murray, chose our meal from a typical pub menu and sat in the shade of the trees to enjoy the view and a conversation which covered many varied subjects.

With the meal finished it was time to head off to our final destination of Holbrook for a coffee and a look at the submarine which, as those who have driven the Hume Highway will know, sits in a park beside the road. There is a reason why there is a submarine in Holbrook which is many hundred kilometres from the coast, but I won't bore you with the story here.

However, a late decision along the way saw us change our plans and accept Bill and Elaine's very kind offer to go to their home at Woomargama for coffee instead. They have a beautiful property of some 200 acres, which comes with their very own mountain. After coffee, cake, more conversation and a guided tour of Bill's other toys, an FJ Holden and a very old Anglia, it was time to head home.

This was the first run that Bill and Elaine had put together and they did a fine job of it. Our thanks to them both. ■



Chapter news ...

Running to Strathgordon ... 11/2/12 | Southern Tasmania

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

A bit of history first (skip to the fourth paragraph if history bores you!).

Strathgordon is in the south-west of Tasmania and was primarily set up as a Hydro town when the Lake Pedder dam was built in the early 1970s.

It's now a pretty quiet place, with one shop and a handful of residents. It's also a *cracking* road to drive and, personally, I have been hearing for years what a great challenge the road can be. So, originally we decided to go there when President Murray first visited the chapter at the end of 2009. All went well, except we had to turn back a little before we reached our destination, as Murray had a flight to catch (I thought that a little soft of him!!) We tried to get there last year, but between losing keys and snow (in October no less!) we still hadn't made it.

So, here was another chance to get there,

and we weren't going to waste the opportunity.

The group assembled as normal with quite a lot of cars for Hobart (12 or so, a great turn out as it happens). We left a little early, as it's approximately a 360km return trip and we wanted to leave ourselves some time for the picnic. We picked up Allan Pryer along the way, making us all wait while he purchased his second breakfast of the day (*some have speculated he is a Hobbit as he is small and eats seven times a day*).

We drove through the Derwent Valley, with its ubiquitous hop farms, passing the famous Salmon Ponds. The weather, being lovely, made the morning even more of a pleasure. We headed on to Maydena, observing with some discomfort the antics of mad interstate motorcyclists attempting to overtake on double lines around blind corners (more of them later!).

We stopped for a short time at Maydena, being careful this time to keep my keys in my pocket. I was going to bring flowers to place on the spot where Caz left my keys last time, but one must draw a line

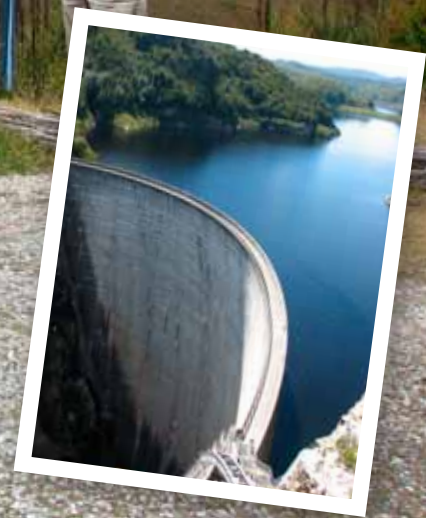
somewhere! So we left Maydena and entered the South-West Wilderness, which is breathtakingly beautiful on such a day with clear blue sky. The road is undulating with a variety of bends, corners and rises to make it sometimes a real rollercoaster ride. The drive was lots of fun and we soon arrived in Strathgordon, where we headed to the lookout.

I was really surprised when, about five minutes after our arrival, a good friend of mine, Scott, arrived with his family in tow. On reflection, I probably shouldn't have been that surprised – it's Tasmania after all!

Anyway, after another chat we headed off to the Lake Pedder Dam, impressive and quite stark in its own way. After we climbed all over it (vertigo sufferers notwithstanding) we headed back for lunch on Ted's Beach. Ted wasn't there, but he did make a nice picnic shelter for us, which we made good use of while we quaffed wine and ate rare delicacies (the Hobbit having his fourth meal of the day by this stage).

As it was getting on, we had a little peek >

John Waldock at Lake Pedder



North-east Chapter: 5 years up!



■ Words: Ron Gillick

On a warm Autumn day in April 2007, 10 members of the Club met in Shepparton for a get-together to form the Club's first Chapter, North-Eastern Victoria.

Those in attendance were President Murray and First Lady Alyssa, Ross & Jacquie Tinkler (Benalla), Warwick Gibbon (Bendigo), Ian & Val Bruce (Deniliquin), Stuart James (Leneva) and Ron & Marg Gillick (Corowa).

The meeting had followed a call from Murray for volunteers in regional areas with a view to forming Chapters, so that country members could become more involved in Club activities and conduct their own runs and so on. Up to that point the more remote country members had had little or no involvement with the Club except to receive the monthly *mxtra*.

After volunteering for the job (*and there being no other volunteers*), I was provided with a list of members residing in north-eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales. After discarding some of the names from the list due to them being too remote from our area, I contacted those who were left. Of those contacted some were not interested, but a few were keen and the Shepparton meeting was arranged.

Not being well versed in the way things should be done, and this being more of a get-to-know-you, I did not organise a run as such and we ended up meeting for a morning tea, followed by a round of mini golf and finishing with a picnic lunch in the park. If I had only known then how much more fun it is to go for a drive in a convoy of other MX-5s I would have done things much differently, but we live and learn.

After an enjoyable day we determined that there was a future for a North-Eastern Chapter and I'm happy to say that, of the local members who attended that first day, all except one couple are still active participants in the Chapter.

Having just commenced a new job which required me to work every weekend, it proved to be a little difficult to get things going initially, but eventually I was able to get a weekend off and our first Chapter event was organised. This was a two-day

run which we called the "Tastes of the North East Run" held in November 2007. With several visitors from the metropolitan area joining the locals, we had 10 cars in attendance. It was a weekend of tasting the foods and wines of the region interspersed with some drives through some of the beautiful north-east.

One of the most memorable things for me from that first run is the thing which I think typifies this Club: meeting other members on these runs and, in many cases, forming lasting friendships with some of these people whom we would not have met if not for our great little cars.

Since the formation of the Western Victoria Chapter we have formed a close relationship with them, and have had the pleasure of their company on many of our runs. We have also been well supported by Melbourne-based members. Because the number of members in our Chapter is not large, we are most appreciative of the support of members from other areas on our runs.

We have also received great support from the Club's Committee as a whole, and from some individuals from the Committee. I shouldn't single out anyone but I will. Our thanks go to Murray for the constant support and encouragement, Steve Dunlop for driving all the way to Wangaratta, and back home, one Sunday morning so that we had the opportunity to buy some merchandise and John and Janette Todd for your support and friendship.

Thank you also to the Chapter members who are always happy to assist with anything which needs to be done. Several of the members have taken on the task of organising runs themselves. Last, but not least, thanks to my wife, Marg, who does a lot of the work that I get the thanks for.

We're celebrating our anniversary with a run to Mt Buffalo on 15 April. Details are in the Club calendar.

Here's to the next five years! ■



The Hobbit, looking for Eleveses ... a "sand-wich", perhaps?



That's not c-c-c-c-c-c-cold!

at the beach, some brave souls wading in to test their ability to survive freezing water. We did the obligatory splashing of hapless Hobbits, while they weren't looking, before heading back on the road to Hobart. We came across the same motorcyclists again, but who were now filming themselves riding along this magnificent road. I'm sure their efforts will appear somewhere on Youtube.

Thanks to the Chapter for a really enjoyable day.

PS: I should mention that we did have a Twilight run organised for Saturday, 25 February. But only three of us turned up and rightly so, as the temperature was in the high 30s (*Ed. the poor dears, it must have been unbearable!*). We all decided to retreat to Mike Williams' place and quaff wine and admire some of his cars. It's a tough life here in Hobart! ■



Motor Sport Torque

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

Round 6 at Phillip Island - Saturday, 4 February

Approximately 50 MX-5s (yes, 50!!) competed in what turned out to be a hot day and as such, lap times were not at record pace.

Nevertheless, there were some close results, namely in Open Class with Steven Cook and Owen Boak; Standard NC with Randy Stagno Navarra and Robert Hart and Standard NA with Noel Heritage and myself, in each case separated by less than a second.

Congratulations to Steven, Randy and Noel and the other Class winners on the day.

My sincere thanks to Daniel White who, having "lost his clutch" earlier in the day, lent his radiator to us after I had the misfortune to blow the plastic tank off the top of our radiator.

The Alfa Club tried a new idea where one Run Group of novices was permitted to have an instructor for all sessions on the day. The feedback was all positive.

New Members' Night Thursday, 22 March

I would like to see some of the Motor Sport Team there to answer questions for other members interested in the Club motor sport activities. Details are on p 11.

Annual Motor Sport meeting – City Mazda, Friday, 11 May

Please put this in your diary and let Daniel or me know of any agenda items you wish to have discussed at the meeting.

Dyno day at RTR in Dandenong – Sat, 26 May

Open to all members at \$50 per car. Limited to 40 cars. This is a "no refund" event. See the flyer for full details; you can register via the Club events calendar.

DECA Day, Shepparton – Sunday, 24 June

Open to all members with no CAMS licence necessary. Enjoy a fun day on the skidpan. Details to follow.

"Sh*t-Box" Rally – April

Peter (PRINCEY) Phillips and his Princess, Pam (Cupcake), are competing in this charity rally to raise money for cancer research. *mxtra* published a letter from Princey about the event in January. If you would like to donate to a worthy cause please call Princey: 0428 569 264.

Until next month ...
"drive responsibly at all times"

Robert #26

Motor sport calendar

See the full calendar for details

2011-2012 Championship

April

29 Rd 8: Sprints, Sandown

May

11 Annual Motor Sport meeting

2012-2013 Championship

June

30 Rd 1: Sprints, Phillip Island

August

4 Racecraft training, Winton

5 Rd 2: Sprints, Winton

September

9 [TBC] Rd 3: Sprints, Sandown

October

13-14 Winton 6-Hour
(non-Championship event)

November

4 [TBC] Rd 4: Sprints, TBC

December

2 Rd 5: Sprints, Winton

Results - Round 6	1st		2nd		3rd	
Standard NA	Noel Heritage	» 2:06.695	Robert Downes	» 2:06.931	Nelson Zea	» 2:11.435
Standard NB	Stephen Downes	» 2:05.023	John Downes	» 2:10.070	Murray Seymour	» 2:13.742
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 2:00.850	Robert Hart	» 2:01.797	Jeremy Fredersdorff	» 2:04.856
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 2:04.095	Max Lloyd	» 2:07.452	Paul Murphy	» 2:07.781
Modified	Russell Garner	» 1:58.208	Craig Healy	» 2:02.059	Dean Monik	» 2:02.064
Restricted Open	Paul Ledwith	» 1:58.447	Brendan Beavis	» 2:01.495	Teruo Delacroix	» 2:10.192
Open	Steven Cook	» 1:51.732	Owen Boak	» 1:51.879	---	

Championship standings after Rd 6 - Phillip Island Sprints, 4 February, 2012

(corrected points)	1st		2nd		3rd	
Overall Champion	Peter Phillips	» 60	Robert Downes	» 57	Russell Garner	» 53
Standard NA	Robert Downes	» 57	Noel Heritage	» 45	Nelson Zea	» 30
Standard NB	Stephen Downes	» 50	John Downes	» 21	James Young	» 13
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 46	Lindy Anderson	» 29	Robert Hart	» 24
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 60	Paul Murphy	» 31	Max Lloyd	» 27
Modified	Russell Garner	» 54	Craig Healy	» 33	Phil Munnings	» 27
Restricted Open	Brendan Beavis	» 42	Paul Ledwith	» 30	Daniel White	» 29
Open	Owen Boak	» 34	Steven Cook	» 33	Christine Boak	» 27

2011-12 Championship | Round 6 Phillip Island Sprints - 4 February, 2012



■ Words & photo: Tim Emery

After adding a few kilograms of ballast during the festivities over the Christmas break, Round 5 of the Motor Sport Championship saw the majority of regular competitors back at the Island.

Backing up after a fantastic showing of local and interstate MX-5s (more than 55!) at the previous round in December, this round saw another impressive entry of about 50 cars, again reaffirming the health of the Club's motor sport group.

After a the usual early morning game of waiting to see which entry gate waiting line will get in first it was off to set up and get out on to one of Australia's (if not the world's) best tracks.

'Team Downes' was looking slick as ever, setting up in their team compound (hired garage) and, when quizzed, Robert's response was "it's a great idea to keep out of the sun, you should get some guys together and hire one yourself". "I've got a better and cheaper option ... we'll all come and use yours," I replied. Not sure if Robert saw the funny side!

The weather forecast was looking great and had the potential for some great times. It's not often we get a chance to go back-to-back at the same track and, out of all the circuits, I am sure everyone will agree it's the one where the only way to go faster is to do more laps. Last round saw three lap records broken in Restricted Open (Paul Ledwith), Standard NC (Randy Stagno Navarro) and Standard NA (Robert Downes), so a slightly warmer day would prove an advantage ... or not.

It was great to see some newcomers boosting entry numbers as well as some returning, Travis McInnes had dragged along his father-in-law and uncle, and David Wilkens returned with his 'Hybrid' NA/NB8. Maybe we need a new 'Hybrid' class!

As the day progressed and the track warmed up, experimenting with tyre pressures was the order of the day, with a lot of people chasing and improving on back-to-back times from December. Daniel White unfortunately succumbed to a clutch/gearbox issue early on in the day and was back on the trailer. Robert Downes was feeling the heat and popped the top off the radiator, but thanks to a donor car's parts, 'Team Downes' was back out without missing a session.

After another brilliantly run event I once again experienced the most rewarding part for me of any race weekend: taking the numbers off my car, loading in my gear and driving it home!

PS: on my drive home I noticed a few Porsches on their way to the Island for their track day. Some of them did not have as good a day as others! ■



A few things you won't see at an MX-5 motor sport event!

Punting an MX-2.5 around the Island

■ Words: Graham Wilson ■ Photo: Jess Murphy

Once again we all had a ball (I think) at Phillip Island. It was a hot day leading to many having slower times than usual.

In the light of some people asking about my driving lines and some instructors telling their pupils to just follow me to see the lines, I thought it may be of interest (maybe??) to try to describe how I approach this circuit.

Please remember that these are MY lines and may not suit all cars, plus I have made some allowances for my disabilities of a completely fused spine and arthritic hips.

So here goes ...

Car: Mazda MX 2.5 [Mazda 121 "Bubble"]
Driver: Captain Slow [Graham Wilson]

We'll assume we are alone on the track (*that far ahead of the rest!!*). Coming down the straight flat, in my car about 145kmh is the maximum here, and probably reading a novel to pass the time. Keep to the left and, as we approach **Turn 1**, look through the bend to pick up the line. **Golden Rule:** don't look at a bend ... LOOK THROUGH IT

Now I don't need to even lift off here, let alone brake, so I FLOW through the bend, coming out at about 152kmh.

Let the car drift to the left side of the track to "double-apex" **Turn 2**. Just as we get to the left side ripple strip on entry, a quick heel-toe to third gear and then in – drift a bit – and back in with maybe a bit of throttle steering if necessary.

Again drift out to the right and as we pick up the right side ripple strip, a shift back into fourth.

Now it's foot flat on the floor, clipping a latish apex on the left and holding the foot flat until just after the "100" braking

marker. Then a firm SQUEEZE on the brakes, and heel-toe straight into second gear. I believe that shifting down through all gears in sequence is wasteful of time and effort.

Turn 4 has a VERY late apex, but as soon as you are at this point power is applied as much as traction will allow. I have to quick shift into third as I am very near the rev-limiter.

I am virtually straight for the deepest point of **Turn 6**, then lock the wheel over to flow through this turn, again, looking *through* it, not at it. A drift to the right ripple strip, then over to the left one and grabbing fourth, before lining up the ripple strip at "Hayshed".

I lent not to let the car drift much to the left after this bend, bringing it back to the right side before turning into "Lukey Heights", hugging the left side, foot flat, about 110kmh in the "Bubble". Heavy braking and straight into second follow, finding myself nearly, but not quite, at the far left of the track, following the left side before letting it drift over to the right, foot still flat.

Just before the final turn I hook fourth gear [about 7200rpm] and slice through the bend in the longest arc I can manage before settling down to read the next chapter in my book as we head down the straight.

This gave me a best time so far of two minutes 19 seconds, which isn't too bad seeing the car has such a low top speed. As I said in my last article, in a low power car you cannot afford to lose a second, because you cannot make it back up.

Does this then feel fast? I don't think so, but you had better ask Noel Heritage that one, as he has been in with me. Usually a good fast lap feels slower than an ordinary lap.

SO think ... FLOW. And LOOK THROUGH.

See you all at Winton. ■



Mud skating in an MX-5



KYB Victorian Motorkhana Championship

2011 Presentation Night

The 2011 KYB Victorian Motorkhana Championship presentation night was held at Sofia's in Camberwell on 8 February this year.

Dinner was followed by the Group 5 and KYB VMC presentations to class winners and the Victorian Motorkhana Champion. The MX-5 Club was represented by our three regular competitors and presented with:

Pam Collum	Winner – Novice Class
Nik Falkenbach	3rd – Novice Class
Bob de Bont	2nd – Class B

Out of the 22 clubs represented throughout the year, the MX-5 Club Motorkhana Team came fourth in the Club Championship. ■

The first round of the Victorian Motorkhana Championship for 2012 was held on 12 February and hosted by the Pakenham Auto Club on their club grounds.

The year kicked off well with our motorkhana team numbering four cars and six competitors. The regulars were back: **Nik Falkenbach**, **Pam Collom** and **Bob de Bont**. We welcomed back **Mark** and **Dale Fitzgerald** as well as Ben Sale, who was doing a bit of photography and filming along the way. We also had a couple of spectators who dropped in for a look and to provide some moral support as well as to take some great photos (*thanks Garry, Kerry, Ron and Wendy*).

This time the omens were looking much better with little rain falling in Pakenham over the preceding days resulting in the ground being dry and hard. Unfortunately the large number of competitors, including a number of juniors resulted in an extended delay before the drivers' briefing.

The first two tests were run in excellent conditions with many of the regulars hitting their straps straight away. It was great to finally get the year started with a couple of good runs. Unfortunately that's where our luck ran out. The large number of juniors and reversal of the running order created some confusion, resulting in a long delay before commencement our third test. Light rain arrived as the Class B competitors started the test, instantly transforming the hard, dusty surface into something which resembled an ice skating rink. By the time we moved to the fourth test it was now raining, making the surface something akin to ice

and offering only slightly more grip (not again).

We re-grouped under one of the transport trailers to discuss progress and witness a number of *Special* drivers returning, covered in mud and resembling drowned rats. The event was called off as it would be impossible to continue.

It was decided to pack our gear quickly and head to the BP roadhouse for coffee. The access road had previously been gravelled allowing our merry band of muddied MX-5s an easy trip to the freeway where we were greeted with a downpour which fortunately washed off most of the mud.

Results:

The team blocked out the results for *Class B*; unfortunately all but one was at the wrong end of a strong field with Bob winning the class.

Ben and Dale secured second and third in the *Novice* category and Pam securing second in *Ladies'* category.

Due to a new class and category system the Team as a whole scored exceptionally well propelling the MX-5 Club to a strong third in the Club Championship after the first round for 2012. ■

~ Bob de Bont



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 2002 Mazda MX-5

- fully documented Mazda service history to 110,000km. Independents after that (all with dockets)
- dual air bags, ABS brakes, air cond, power steering, factory cruise control
factory alarm/immobiliser, central locking/remote keyless entry, remote keyless boot release
6-speed manual, leather interior, great boot space, very fussy current owner, 6-disc in-dash CD player, sports pedals, sill scuff plates.



Asking price:
\$15,500 neg.

Contact Peter (Club member, Eltham) – 0403 070 362

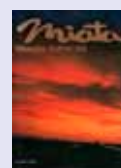
Club library ...

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

Tools



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

Contact merchandise@mx5vic.org.au

Bushing tool, for servicing or replacing your suspension bushes.

Contact president@mx5vic.org.au



Club stickers



Help promote the Club with one of our new windscreen stickers.

- » 300mm wide x 15mm high
- » available in black-on-white or white-on-black
- » Cost is \$2 + postage.

Contact Steve Dunlop,
merchandise@mx5vic.org.au.

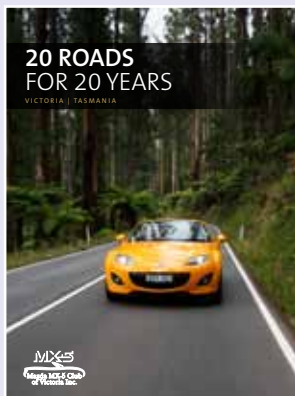
"20 Roads" book

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.



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.



Alan Bennett's

MX-5 crossword #3

1		2		3		4		5		6
		7								
8								9		
10						11		12		13
14		15		16				17		
		18								
19						20				

Across

- 1 Iron plus water plus air does this, corroding away (5)
- 4 The automatic gear if you do not want to change it yourself (5)
- 7 The shape of a wing or blade that assists aerodynamically (7)
- 8 American for petrol (3)
- 9 A very long time but not in neon or other lights (3)
- 10 The top comes off, retracts, folds away (11)
- 14 50% of MX-5 owners are women, this is the rest (3)

- 17 Mostly nitrogen and oxygen, it requires conditioning in hot weather (3)
- 18 When travelling, dizziness and nausea make me feel unwell (7)
- 19 Just made of bitumen or asphalt but good when windy for driving on (5)
- 20 A sudden movement of 17 across (5)

Down

- 1 Circular in shape, for an engine or a finger (4)
- 2 There are four on the high seas (6)
- 3 A decoration that is stripped of the past tense (6)
- 4 Real sports cars have two, and when driving neither should be ajar (4)
- 5 Running standing still, not doing anything (4)
- 6 British sports car that helped inspire the MX-5 (4)
- 10 The curvature of the road (6)
- 11 Pulling from the front (6)
- 12 Putting your foot down just slows you (6)
- 13 Mistakes (6)
- 15 Three MX-5s in the series. NB the middle one is missing, not in order (4)
- 16 Can be weapons and trailing but definitely not legs (4)

S	T	S	U	D		S	D	V	O	R
R		E	N		W	N				E
O		K	C	I	S	R	A	C		B
R	I	V		W		A		N	E	W
R		R		O						V
E	L	B	I	T	R	E	V	N	O	C
						P		O		
N	O	E		R		I		S	V	D
V		L	I	O	F	R	I	V		N
L		D		O		T		E		I
E	V	I	R	D		S	T	S	U	R

World's lightest bumpers

HIROSHIMA, Japan - Mazda Motor Corporation has developed, jointly with Japan Polypropylene Corporation, resin material for vehicle parts that maintains the same rigidity as parts made with conventional materials while achieving significant weight reduction.

Using this material, the parts manufactured are thinner than those using conventional resin, resulting in a significant reduction in the resin required to manufacture parts.

When the material is used for both front and rear bumpers, it contributes to weight reduction of approximately 20%.

In the bumper production process, this reduced thickness allows for a shorter cooling period for molding, and by using computer-aided engineering (CAE) technology, the fluidity of the resin material has also been optimised.

As a result, bumper molding time, previously 60 seconds, has been halved to 30 seconds, leading to major reductions in the amount of energy consumed in the production process. ■

Award for Mazda's SKYACTIV-G engine

HIROSHIMA, Japan - Mazda Motor Corporation was honoured at the 9th New Japan Society for Promotion of Machine Industry (JSPMI) awards with the New JSPMI prize from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for its development of the highly efficient SKYACTIV-G petrol engine that achieves an ultra-high compression ratio.

Mazda claims the SKYACTIV-G engine achieves the world's highest compression ratio for a regular gasoline mass production automobile engine of 14.0:1, resulting in a fuel efficiency and engine output improvement of 15% compared to existing models. The engine started to be installed in new models in 2011 and delivers excellent fuel economy and responsive driving performances.

The New JSPMI prizes are given to companies, universities and research institutes and their researchers for outstanding contributions to the progress and growth of the machine industry through research, development and commercialisation of their achievements.

The Minister's prize from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is granted to the most remarkable achievement. ■

Giving you car the “ring of confidence”



■ **Words & photos:** Ron Macdonald, www.gracies-place.net

As the NB model ages, a few little niggly problems start to arise.

One of these is yellowed or cloudy headlight lenses. This of course would have some effect (though probably minimal) on the output of the light, but the annoying thing is the way old lights detract from your otherwise shiny beast.

Before you run off and spend \$350 a side for new headlights, consider the following quick and easy cure. NB headlight lenses are polycarbonate not glass, so the first thing to remember is when a keen salesman offers you headlight protectors (also made of polycarbonate) you can tell him to use them as a suppository!

But I digress ... being polycarbonate lenses, over time they oxidise and get a build up of junk on the OUTSIDE of the lens. The cure? **Toothpaste!**

Go to the bathroom, get a tube of toothpaste (not the gel stuff), apply it to a wet Chux or rag and polish the outside of the lens (toothpaste is a very mild abrasive). Rinse and repeat



if necessary. It only took me about five minutes each side and Gracie now has sparkling eyes. In summary, the total time for this job was 10 minutes **and the cost was \$0.00** (Ed. Coles must be giving toothpaste away this week!). Doesn't get any easier than that. ■

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... is proud to offer all members of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria a big discount (up to 15%) off their full range of merchandise.

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Phone: 0414 630 024 or 9439 1466 (ah)

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(NB: only Peter Rutherford or Hayden Dally are authorised to give Club discounts in-store.)

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Moulded carpets for the Mazda MX-5



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Newton Commercial have been producing original and specialised interior trim for the past 33 years.

For the last 12 months, we have been developing specialised tools to produce moulded carpet sets for the ever-popular MX-5 range of Series 1 cars. We have developed these sets for both the right-hand and left-hand drive cars with the idea that you, the enthusiast can fit them with relative ease. Originally, Mazda produced these carpets as a one piece set to cover the whole floor of the cockpit. In production at the factory this was the best way as the dashboard and centre console section were fitted after the carpets. We have devised a set a carpets that are made in two pieces (LH & RH sides) so that you will not have to take half the cockpit area apart to fit them.

As can be seen from the photo (right), these pieces are strongly moulded to fit the footwell and tunnel area exactly. We also supply a felt sound deadening kit to be fitted first. We include a comprehensive pictorial fitting instruction guide.

The kit includes the bulkhead carpet that fits behind the seats and also a moulded rear parcel shelf carpet.

The carpet material is made of current British automotive specification with a semi-hard waterproof backing. All necessary cuts and holes are cut out to aid easy fitting.

The cost of this exclusive kit from Newton Commercial is £188.00 exclusive of VAT, plus UK carriage costs. If you are a

European or Worldwide customer and order via our website we will be able to give you the cost of carriage within 24 hours of your enquiry.

Seat covers, door panels and trim accessories will be available later this year.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact sales@newtoncomm.co.uk



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Introducing ...

Ron Macdonald

Central Chapter Captain

Name? Ronald John Macdonald (yes ... Ronald Macdonald!)

Age? As old as my gums and a little older than my teeth (54)

Born? Yes, contrary to popular belief I was born – Ferntree Gully Bush Nursing Hospital

Current abode? At my place (Frankston)

Profession? Hmm, where to start, too many to mention but currently setting up my own business.

Partner? Wendy (I've got my eyes closed) Clark

Pets? A bathmat with legs called Muttley

Fave food? Pretty much anything (except seafood – yuck)

Can you cook? Expert cook (have yet to poison anyone)

Favourite tippie? A nice glass of wine or bourbon (white lightning when I lived in Kentucky)

First drive? At about 14 I drove my brother-in-law-to-be's HD Holden around Mornington Tip

First car? The only Holden worth owning, a 1964 EH

First fender bender? In the EH, forced off the Walhalla road by a logging truck; only slight damage though

Everyday driver? Unfortunately the company I had been working for didn't have much of a sense of humour and took back the company car (100 series Landcruiser) when I quit, so "Gracie" is my current daily

drive, but not for too much longer ...

Current MX-5? "Gracie", my 1998 Grace Green NB8A

MX-5 improvements?

Gracie is still stock mechanically but now sports a S/S style bar, sports muffler, grille, 477 MHz radio and a few wanky bits

MX-5 dislikes? They definitely need a sports muffler (way too quiet)

Why an MX-5? I wanted an MGB ... well, until I realised they are crap. My first drive of "Gracie" made me a dyed-in-the-wool MX-5 man. Mazda hit the nail right on the head with their Jinba Ittai design language

Fluffy dice? No fluffy dice, but I do have a few wanky things like monogrammed tyre valve caps

Passions besides the MX-5? Photography of any type, but I do specialise in scantily-clad women. Also my MX-5 website www.gracies-place.net.

Favourite TV show / movie / book? Bones / Ghandi / A Fortunate Life

Dream wheels (money no object)? If money was no object I would need two: Aston Martin DB9 Volante for a toy and a Bentley Flying Spur as a daily drive.

Would you drive a Daewoo or

SsangYong? If you are supplying one free of charge I may consider it (I could always use it as a trade-in on the Volante)

Favourite other Mazda? The Minagi (CX-5)

If not a Mazda (gasp!) what? See 'dream wheels'

How long in the Club? Joined September 2010 (a week after getting Gracie)

How many MX-5 Club runs? 20! I haven't missed a (now) Central Chapter run since November 2010 and I've "played" with a couple of the other Chapters too ...



Favourite Club run? No particular favourite run; anytime I can get the chance to throw Gracie around a corner or two it's a good run, though I do love both Turtons Track and Myers Creek Road

Funniest thing seen on a Club run?

When photographing the run briefing of a recent event I captured a well known male Eastern Chapter member standing there sporting a very fetching pink handbag. He did protest that it was his wife's, however I think it matched his eyes perfectly

Done DECA? Not yet

Ford vs Holden? No allegiance to either ... bogon machines!

What's playing in your MX-5? Usually just Gracie's growl as she powers up through the gears but, when in the mood, something loud and rocky

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Have never seen the point of grown men chasing a bag of air around a paddock

Final comments? The second best thing I have done in recent times is joining the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania (the best was acquiring Gracie). Over the past 17-odd months Wendy and I have met some great people and been on some magnificent MX-5 roads. As you will have seen from the number of runs we have been on, we are fairly active members but, as the old saying goes, you only get out of the Club what you are prepared to put into it. I encourage everyone to get fully involved in the Club ... I assure you it will be to YOUR benefit! ■



A new option for the MX-5 owner

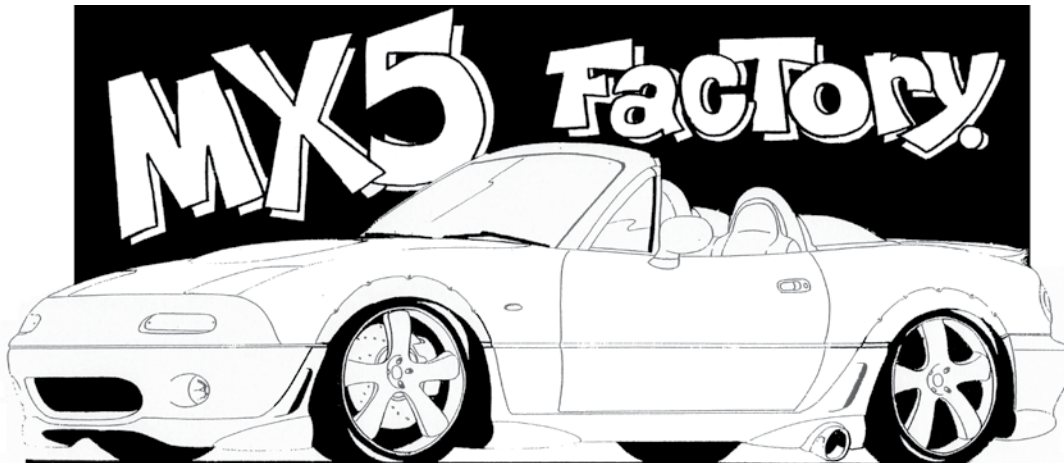
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