

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

**In this edition:**  
Smooth equals fast  
A hot weekend in Tassie  
Paradise lost ... and found

**What are ewe  
looking at?**

**A weekend in the wild, wild west**





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*We're not sheep, we're in convoy! MX-5s head to the wild west.* Photo: Marg Gillick



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# Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President

*G'day all!*

## We need your help!

**Last month we outlined a new direction for the Club, involving a greater emphasis on the Chapters and a more "big picture" role for the Committee.**

We talked about the way forward, and outlined a new structure for the Club which aims to put more responsibility for the running of the Club in the hands of the Chapter Captains and their assistants.

However, this structure essentially streamlines the Club's day-to-day management, positioning us well to cope with what we expect to be our continued growth in numbers and activities.

The next step in the Club's evolution is to *plan* for this future growth so that, as best we can, we anticipate the challenges we might face and resources the Club will need, both across the board and within individual Chapters.

For some time now, four of our dedicated Committee members – John, Don, Robert and Will – have been meeting as a separate Financial Sub-committee to review key issues facing the Club, including the cost of running the Club and the revenue we derive from various sources.

One of the problems their review identified was that income from membership fees, and charges for advertising in *mxtra*, had not increased to keep pace with increases in the cost of delivering the quality of services our members had come to expect ... we were in fact living on our hard-earned reserves.

The Committee has now rectified both of these issues, resulting in a rise in *mxtra's* advertising rates and small increases in each category of membership from 1 July. All fees will be adjusted – modestly – over the next few years to reflect better the cost *and value* of membership. (Please bear in mind that membership fees have remained largely unchanged for the last few years!)

[I should interrupt myself here to announce formally that, following feedback after last year's AGM, when a proposal was tabled to scrap Country membership, the Committee took the proposal back off the table for further review. As a result, Country membership will remain available.]

The next step from the review is to prepare a business plan for the Club ... it's fine to say you're "going forward" (thanks, Julia) but, as they say, *if you don't know where you're going then any map will get you there.*

The sub-committee has identified five "streams" that need to be fleshed out to form the foundations of this plan:

- » Membership
- » Communications
- » Corporate
- » Motor Sport and
- » Finance/Budget

## And this is where you come in ...

The Committee has a couple of key people assigned to examine each of these "streams", but we would like to look for additional input, guidance and recommendations from among the members to help us put together the most comprehensive plan that we can.

For example,

- » the Membership "stream" would benefit from some external ideas on what attracts members, what makes them stay, what we should offer to remain attractive to MX-5 owners etc.
- » the Corporate group would welcome input from a Club member who understands our responsibilities as an incorporated body.
- » does anyone know of a potential Club house? (We're happy where we are for meetings, but we have nowhere to store or display Club paraphernalia.)

There are lots of interesting topics that would benefit from skills you might exercise daily and take for granted. The involvement need not be great; it might be a phone call or a "virtual meeting" ... it's just a matter of gathering ideas to be included in the plans.

If you feel you have something to offer, or would like to become more involved with the planning, please contact VP Don Nicoll (see page 3 for his contact details).

## Future committee positions

You'll see on page 6 that Janette Todd has flagged that she'll be stepping down from the Committee in two years' time and wants to "groom" her successor – with one year as her assistant and the following year as her "boss". The same

*For your diary ...*

## See the full calendar for details

### April

22 North Tas: Fish, Chips & Chocolate

29 Western Vic: 3rd anniversary run

### May

6 Central: Petanque at Lovegroves

15-17 Club: Mid-week adventure

20 South Tas: Picnic at Ross

20 North Tas: Picnic at Ross

26 Club: Dyno Day

### June

3 Club: President's run

10 South Tas: Cygnet run

24 DECA driver training

### July

8 South Tas: Ausmas run

22 Club: 2012 Awards Lunch, Woodend

### August

4 Central: Steiglitz run (Saturday)

12 South Tas: Tasman Peninsula

succession planning is already in place with the motor sport group.

It makes great sense to have this sort of rolling succession going through the Committee, both to keep new blood and fresh ideas coming through and to avoid the "black holes" being left when a Committee member leaves and no-one else really knows what their job entailed or how to replace them.

The AGM and Committee elections are still several months away, but I urge you to consider how you could put something back into this wonderful Club, and think about standing for the Committee.

It's an exciting time in the life of the Club, and a great time to be part of the action!

From personal experience, I can tell you'll get a lot more out of it than you put in.

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

*Murray*





# Motor Sport Torque



■ Robert Downes – Club Captain - Motor Sport

## Round 7 – Winton: 3-4 March

For quite a few it was a full weekend, having participated in or been an Instructor on the Driver Training day on the Saturday, as well as the racing on the Sunday.

It was pleasing to see some of our regular competitors wisely investing in their driving skills as against further modifying their vehicle. Although the track was wet all day, the “correct lines” and “smoothness” were still the top priorities. Several members undertook the Juniors Training under the control of the well-credentialed Graeme Wilson.

Thirty-one people enjoyed the Saturday evening meal together (there is much more to the Club motor sport program than just driving quickly around the track!).

The weather improved on Sunday with the three Standard Class and Restricted Open lap records literally *smashed* and many competitors having big excursions off the bitumen.

## Round 8 – Sandown: Sunday, 29 April

This is the final round of the 2011-2012 Championship. All members are reminded that entry to the track is free and it is a great opportunity to see for yourself what happens at a typical raceday, meet the drivers and have your questions answered. Please feel free to come along and make yourself known.



**Remember our Club Smartphone calendar**

See [www.mx5vic.org.au/smartphone/events.html](http://www.mx5vic.org.au/smartphone/events.html) for the smartphone version of the Club's events calendar.

You can type this URL 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.

## Annual Motor Sport Meeting – City Mazda: Friday, 11 May

Please pass on your agenda items to either Daniel or myself and RSVP to our e-mail address ([captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au) [Robert] or [captain2@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain2@mx5vic.org.au) [Daniel]).

The address for the meeting is **City Mazda, 14-28 Montague Street, South Melbourne.**

## Dyno Day: Saturday, 26 May – RTR in Dandenong

Please **book now** through the Club website as spots are strictly limited to 40. It is open to all members and it does not necessarily have to be your MX-5.

## DECA Day – Shepparton: Sunday, 24 June

Please put this event in your diary so you don't miss this most enjoyable day. Watch out for the flyer in **mxtra**.

## 2012/2013 Championship

### Round 1 + NSW/Vic Interstate Challenge – Phillip Island: Saturday, 30 June

With our NSW friends gaining more experience at the Island, it will be an even harder task to retain the **Interstate Challenge Trophy** ... but the standard and depth of the driving skills in our Club continues to improve, so I look forward to another great event.

### Round 3 – Sandown: change of date

Round 3 of the 2012-2013 Championship has been changed from the previously-announced tentative date of 9 September. **It's now confirmed as Sunday, 19 August. Please lock it in!**

Until next month ...  
“drive responsibly at all times”

Robert #26

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, City Mazda (South Melbourne)

### 2012-2013 Championship

#### June

30 Rd 1: Sprints, Phillip Island

#### August

4 Racecraft training, Winton

5 Rd 2: Sprints, Winton

19 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

### Motorkhana 2012-2013

#### April

15 Rd 2: Deniliquin

#### May

13 Rd 3: Pakenham

#### June

17 Rd 4: DECA, Shepparton

#### July

14 Rd 5: Huntly Saleyards (Saturday)

#### August

5 Rd 6: Mt Gambier Saleyards

#### September

1 Rd 7: Huntly Saleyards (Saturday)

#### October

13-14 Australian Championship, Queensland



# Membership

Current membership count:

520

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

*G'day all ...*

After we crashed through the 500-member mark last month, I would like to welcome another 12 new members to the fold:

### Central Chapter

Nicole Amorosi	1991 Classic Red NA
Darren Borg	1999 Black NB
Peter, Nicholas, Jennifer & Jessica Dee	2008 Silver NC
Brian Marks	2002 Titanium Silver NB
Paul Pettitt	2000 Classic Red NB
John Van Cleef	2011 Sapphire Blue NC

### Eastern Victoria Chapter

James Lang	1990 Classic Red NA
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### Western Victoria Chapter

"Beau" (Edmund) McLennan	1999 Grace Green NB
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### Northern Tasmania Chapter

Bill Morgan	1998 Evolution Gold NB
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On your behalf, I wish them a long and fruitful association with our Club.

*See you out and about ...*

*Will*



# Social-lights

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

*Would you like to be an integral part of your Club? Then read on ...*

I am currently in my second term on the Committee looking after the Club Social portfolio. This term is due to expire in July 2014 at which time I will be stepping down from Committee duties. I will have been on the Committee for six years by then in a role that I have thoroughly enjoyed.

With thoughts of succession planning in mind it is now time for someone else to step up and take on this exciting role within the Committee. We need you to put on the training wheels and "P" plates (motoring pun totally intended!) – the idea being that for the Club year 2012/13 I will be Club Captain – Social with you as my able Assistant; then, in 2013/14 we reverse the roles before I step down completely as we enter 2014/15.

If you would like to know more then please give me a call on 0448 833 321. The AGM is coming up in just a few more months so ideally you will be prepared for action in June/July and we can hit the road together in August.

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

*Janette*

## Scene about ... new members' night

■ Photos: Ron Macdonald





# Scene about ...

■ Photos: Ron Macdonald, John Waldock, John Gleeson





# Smooth equals *fast* ...

■ Words: Gary Prescott ■ Photos: Jess Murphy, mx5pics.com.au



**With floods engulfing northern Victoria, Saturday was looking ominous as rain fell all Friday night in Benalla.**

Results - Round 7	1st		2nd		3rd	
Standard NA	Robert Downes	» 1:14.407 <sup>1</sup>	Noel Heritage	» 1:14.804	John Stone	» 1:17.423
Standard NB	Steven Downes	» 1:14.398 <sup>1</sup>	John Downes	» 1:16.814		
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 1:12.515 <sup>1</sup>	Robert Hart	» 1:13.110	Colin Denman-Jones	» 1:14.705
Clubman	Tim Emery	» 1:14.214	Max Lloyd	» 1:15.402	Paul Murphy	» 1:16.224
Modified	Russell Garner	» 1:10.586	Robert Parr	» 1:11.018	Dean Monik	» 1:11.523
Restricted Open	David Wilken	» 1:08.741 <sup>1</sup>	Brendan Beavis	» 1:11.376	Daniel White	» 1:12.294
Open	Steven Cook	» 1:08.378	Owen Boak	» 1:09.636	Chris Boak	» 1:12.854

<sup>1</sup> New Club motor sport group lap record

## Championship standings after Rd 7 - Winton Sprints, 4 March, 2012

(corrected points)	1st		2nd		3rd	
<b>Overall Champion</b>	= Peter Phillips / Robert Downes / Russell Garner / Stephen Downes » 60					
Standard NA	Robert Downes	» 60	Noel Heritage	» 45	Nelson Zea	» 35
Standard NB	Stephen Downes	» 60	John Downes	» 28	James Young	» 13
Standard NC	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 56	Lindy Anderson	» 32	Robert Hart	» 31
Clubman	Peter Phillips	» 60	= Paul Murphy / Max Lloyd » 34			
Modified	Russell Garner	» 60	Craig Healy	» 33	Dean Monik	» 28
Restricted Open	Brendan Beavis	» 44	Daniel White	» 35	Paul Ledwith	» 30
Open	Steven Cook	» 43	Owen Boak	» 41	Christine Boak	» 33





**Arrival at Winton on Saturday morning for our training saw a very wet track and very soft looking grass around it.**

Regardless, those of us doing the racecraft training met up with our instructors and practiced our race lines and low grip driving techniques. A dry line appeared mid-morning but soon disappeared with rain increasing in the afternoon.

The driver training participants had a perfect day for experiencing braking on the limit, slaloms and other car control situations in wet conditions. One student had the advantage of an MX-5 and motorkhana experience, employing the handbrake as a driving aid to get around the slaloms!

A couple of sessions on the main track gave many young students their first taste of track work.

The first day finished with a big crowd at the *North Eastern Hotel* in Benalla that evening for a great meal and good conversation, but it was early nights all around in preparation for the next day's early start.

**Sunday brought clearer conditions** but the track was still damp for the first few sessions.

The Group One cars had the challenge of getting their extra power down but they helped by drying the track for the rest of us! The lack of grip off the racing line saw quite a few spins off the sweeper and some very muddy cars as a result! The recovery vehicles had a bit of work to do with MX-5s sunk to the rails.

Group Three comprised mainly NAs and NBs and saw healthy competition once the track completely dried. A good little stoush developed when the two Downses, Fitzzy, Max and myself found ourselves on the same bit of track – loads of fun but not so good for getting PB lap times. I discovered that I am slow when being chased and faster when chasing.

I had to keep reminding myself of Owen's advice from the day before about keeping it smooth ... *smooth = fast*.

As usual the MX-5s outlasted many of the other makes, to keep racing until the last session.

Then, the only thing left was to face the biggest challenge of the weekend: *negotiating the other drivers on the Hume Highway on the trip home.*

**Thanks to the organisers and officials for a great weekend. ■**





# Chapter chatter ...

## Victoria's twilight Grand Prix ... without the fuss (or the funds!)

17/3/12 | Central

■ Words: Bronwyn Roche ■ Photos: Ron Macdonald, [gracies-place.net](http://gracies-place.net) ■ Run organiser: Janette & John Todd



While Bernie Ecclestone fights hard to get the F1 Australian Grand Prix to run a night race, the Mazda MX-5 Club already has a great track record of twilight runs ...

On the March Grand Prix weekend, John and Janette Todd organised our own 'world class' event with a track full of long straights, tight bends, steep climbs and drops, fantastic scenery and loads of variety.

Approximately 18 cars with their respective drivers and passengers were on the starter's grid at Essendon on a sunny St Patrick's Day, including new members Cary Warren and Troy Heasley who brought along his dad, Tony – Troy is still on his L-plates so couldn't get there without his supervising passenger!

Under sunny skies we headed west and were quickly out into the countryside.

What a difference the rain makes. What is often a scene of dry stony paddocks at this time of the year was lush and green, making the huge granite outcrops look like a planned landscape.

The countryside west of Melbourne often appears flat but it is punctuated by deep gorges carved out by the rivers and usually involving a steep, curly road down to a single-lane bridge and back up again (MX-5 heaven!).

Mt Macedon loomed in the distance as we wound our way through country towns such as Clarkefield, Monegeeta and Romsey before a quick pit stop in Lancefield. The group managed to stay in convoy with few interruptions – an advantage of the twilight run time ... plus good organisation from the Todds and tail-end-charlies Alyssa and Murray Finlay.

We headed off again to a series of left-hand turns, which would surely



have been a *blockie* in Melbourne, but mysteriously we didn't cross our previous path at all. Must be to do with those classic country roads that can change



Geoff Roche, Ian & Karen Bradshaw







Troy & Tony  
Heasley

direction sharply many times before posting a 60kmh bend sign on the very last corner.

We drove right past Hanging Rock, illuminated by the late afternoon sun. I thought I'd try to get a photo but all of you who are passengers know how hard it is to get action shots as the driver turns, brakes and corners through the countryside. (I managed to get several nice shots of the windscreen edge.)

It was up, up and over Mt Macedon where we all noticed the temperature drop as the real estate prices increased. The road was suitably twisty and enjoyed by all the drivers.

The route took us past many grand gate posts marking similarly grand country estates as well as historic towns, Victorian-era pubs and old bluestone bridges.

In the deep bush on the other side of the mountain we came across a very secluded private race track complete with starting gates and a very long straight. We stuck to the bitumen and left the race tracks for the horses ... and the Formula One guys.

We exited the last bend, hit the home straight and headed into Gisborne. As the sun sank even lower on the horizon the MX-5 grid girls (local cockatoos) welcomed us and the chequered flag fell at the picnic site. We were all winners.

The two Ballarat crews had a quick cuppa and headed for home. Those guys really travel big time! Those who could stay set out their picnic rugs, fired up the BBQ and avoided the traffic gridlock of that other car event. ■

PS: Thanks to Noellene Gleeson from Ballarat for prompting those of us who haven't had a go at a run report to give it a try.



◀ L-R: Dave Collins, Tyrone Dark, Judy Searl, Don Nicoll, Jeff Searl, Brian Jackson





# Chapter chatter ...

## Tarraleah Dreaming ... 11/3/12 | Southern Tasmania

■ Words: Mike Williams ■ Photos: John Waldock ■ Run organiser: Mike Williams

For some reason, not completely obvious at this remove, I'd volunteered to organise the March run by the Southern Tasmanian Chapter.

The destination had been decided earlier so it was not the most onerous of tasks.

As usual we gathered behind the *Three Little Ducks* on Bellerive Quay on a typically beautiful early autumn morning. There were seven cars (regulars John Hadrill was interstate and Alan Pryor had competing demands) lined up at 10 o'clock – actually there were six as we were a little late ... nothing like setting a good example! After a brief preamble, mainly focussing on the intricacies of CB radios on which Ross's expertise left the rest of us suitably dazzled, John Waldock led us out with Liz and me bringing up the rear.

We wended our way through suburbia then up the west bank of the Derwent to a brief stop at New Norfolk, after which we followed delightful MX-5 roads past the Salmon Ponds, Plenty and Bushy Park (the hops were in full flower and about to be harvested to be sold all over the world to flavour our beer).

After passing through Glenora and Westerway, at which point the road to Mt Field National Park and Strathgordon separates, we pushed on through the lovely little village of Ellendale before crossing Lake Meadowbank by the Dunrobin Bridge. The lake is formed by the lowest of the dams forming the Lower Derwent hydro-electric scheme and is very popular for water skiing and fishing.

The next few kilometers saw us pass through the farming township of Ouse, then into the forestry and hydro country of the middle and upper reaches of the Derwent. Cluny, Replse, Catagunyah, Wayatinah and Liapootah dams and power stations are nearby, albeit out of sight, but the prevalence of these hydro

schemes is a fair indication of the nature of the countryside ... plenty of ups and downs, winding sections and long uphill drags as we made our way towards the Central Plateau.

After about 120km we approached Tarraleah, passing along the Tarraleah canal and hilltop pipes that convey about 25 *cumecs* (cubic metres/sec) of fresh Tasmanian water from Lake King William to the Tarraleah power station built during the Depression (the 1930s one, not the 2008 version). Down into the Nive Gorge we wove until we stopped at the picnic area between the Tarraleah and Tungatinah power stations. It sounds industrial but it's set in lovely country.

Having devoured our various picnic lunches and discussed everything under the sun – or so it seemed – including the fact that I've just bought another car (completely disassembled) which takes the total to 10 (or is it 11?), John called us together for a slightly more formal chat.

He spent some time taking us through the discussions that he and John Hadrill have had with the *powers-that-be* in Victoria and the implications for us of the various changes that have been agreed. This covered things like the change in annual subs, changes in names and titles, the greater focus on regions and so on. It all seemed pretty sensible and very much in line with our general approach so it all went down well.

We were only occasionally interrupted by Jo going *ooh* and *aah* over some old British bikes passing by (lovely noises) and then making rude comments about some more contemporary examples with heavily raked front forks and close-fitting helmets. It's the old(ish) biker in her I suppose. At least it



^ Line-up at Tarraleah





^ The group listens attentively as Jo talks (again) about her silver SE ...



^ Mike challenges Jo's claim that her car doesn't use petrol ...



^ Jo checks out how much better MX5s look in red ...

diverted the rest of us from giving her a hard time about the cleanliness of her car (although I happened to notice her surreptitiously remove some dubious looking substance from her boot at the New Norfolk stop).

The group found their own way home with some stopping for coffee at Tarraleah and others proceeding according to their whim. We had a great time chasing David and others back down the hills towards Ouse. This is truly great driving country with virtually no traffic and pretty decent roads (mostly anyway).

We're now looking forward to next month's event which will be a late run (destination uncertain) culminating in a spit roast at Ross's. It will be mainly a social event and we hope to encourage some new starters to dip their collective toes in the Club water. ■



^ Cliff's new black hardtop ... looks a treat!



# Chapter chatter ...

## Summer's last blast!

With our members spread throughout the northwest, northeast and the mid-northern parts of the top half of Tasmania, the Blueberry Barn Café has always been a favourite of our Northern Tasmania Chapter owing to its location roughly in the middle of the spread. Another reason is that, to get there, everyone has an interesting drive through a choice of Tasmania's excellent secondary road network.

*Black must be the new red* as there were no fewer than four of the highly-polished examples in the car park, so it was fortunate that we had some silvers, golds, coppers, reds and yellows to break up the "zoom".

Attending his very first run was new member Bill Morgan who had only just taken delivery of his very smart Evolution Gold NB the day before. We also welcomed Robert Humphries, whose black NC has not seen the sun much because of business commitments as well as Tony and Louise Hewitt who had come for the day in their 35th Anniversary Nissan 350Z. After coffee and chit-chat on the deck at the cafe, instructions were issued, drivers and passengers were belted in and we set off.

The first section of road was the Holwell Gorge that leads to Beaconsfield. This is a very popular Targa stage and although we were running it in the reverse direction; many feel that it is more challenging that way than the Targa direction used by the competitors.

Once into Beaconsfield we turned left off the main street for another reverse Targa stage, namely *Kayena*. This brought us out at the Batman Bridge from where we turned right back towards Beaconsfield and the next stage through Flowery Gully and Winkleigh to bring us to Exeter and a comfort break.

From Exeter the "zoom" headed out on the B72 through Glengarry and thence on to the Birralee Road. It was at this point we were only about 5km from where we had started at Frankford, but we had had a lot of fun traversing the circle to get to this point!





## 25/2/12 | Northern Tasmania

■ **Words:** Cheryl Murray & Bruce Harvey ■ **Photos:** Kelly Berggren ■ **Run organiser:** Bruce Harvey

The next turn was a left heading towards Selbourne, followed by Rosevale, Bridgenorth and eventually Legana. Just after the turn Karl and Kelly had a moment when “Bambi” and a couple of friends decided the grass was greener on the other side. Leaping the fence and charging across the road right in front of the car it was only the MX-5’s ability to stop as well as it goes that prevented venison from being an unexpected addition to the lunch menu. (Room here to add an *Oh Dear*.)

Nearing Legana one of our own frustrations surfaced – why is it that you always catch up to a slow-moving vehicle *just as the road gets interesting and overtaking opportunities are few and far between?* I fully respect the right of anyone to be on the road, but recently we have had more than one instance of this happening so, if anyone knows if there is a mantra or prayer we could use to avoid this, we would be grateful.

Lunch was only a couple of kilometres away and, once through Legana, a right turn down to the Tamar River soon had us at the famous and historic *Rosevears Hotel*. Our table was reserved and once drinks were ordered along with lunch from a fabulous menu we spent the next two hours eating drinking and talking.

Nobody was that keen on an ice cream and, with the Albert Park GP due to start in only two hours’ time, the decision was made to finish the run at Rosevears and let everyone make their own way home.

Another fantastic day out in Northern Tasmania shared with great company. ■





# Weekend in the wild, wild west!

*Grampians run ...* 24-25/3/12 | Western Victoria

*I would love to say the morning was clear and sunny ... but this was Ballarat!!!*

Three cars from the Central Chapter, two from the North East joined the locals at Chapter Captain John Gleeson's home, making 11 for the first part of our journey to "Lockie's Place" in Mockinya, south of Horsham.

Away we went with tops down and the mist approaching ... rumour has it that drivers in Ballarat are the worst in Victoria, so the first challenge was to get from one side of the city to the other. We were waved past a sad little sedan with its front missing, just as a reminder that this is probably true.

Four more cars met us at Beaufort where there was a scramble to get tops up as a shower came over just as we pulled up. Coffee and supplies were purchased, then it was tops down again (despite the mist) for an interesting run through exciting sounding places like Lexton, Amphitheatre (I always imagine gladiators living here!!) and Elmhurst, then on to Landsborough where we stopped for lunch.

Landsborough is usually dry, brown and dusty but rain over the past couple of weeks had made everything green through a large part of central Victoria. The sun was peeping through as we continued on to Stawell to regroup outside "The Home of the Easter Gift". We re-joined Highway 8 and continued to Dadswells Bridge where the *Big Koala* featured in lots of photos and ice creams were devoured.

Roses Gap was next on the map which was reached on another excellent road for these great little cars. Then we were down onto flat country again and finally arrived at Lockie's place, or *Rosebank* to give the property its correct name.

There was lots of noise and dust as the MX-5s were rounded up near the woolshed and we were welcomed by Lockie and Tracey along with the dogs Tammy and Dottie. The spit roast was on the way thanks to Lockie's son Matthew, while Tracey and Noellene were in charge of catering. We toured the farm admiring a vast collection of vehicles and all manner of treasures, including impressive slabs of timber and mallee roots, stored in a variety of sheds and outhouses.

As night approached everyone gathered in the 100-year-old woolshed to enjoy pre-dinner drinks and a chat while the dogs kept their eye on the roast. Soon we were feasting on beef and pork with all the trimmings. The dogs also enjoyed their share as they begged for a little piece from everybody and a couple of gate-crashing possums dropped in to join the fun.

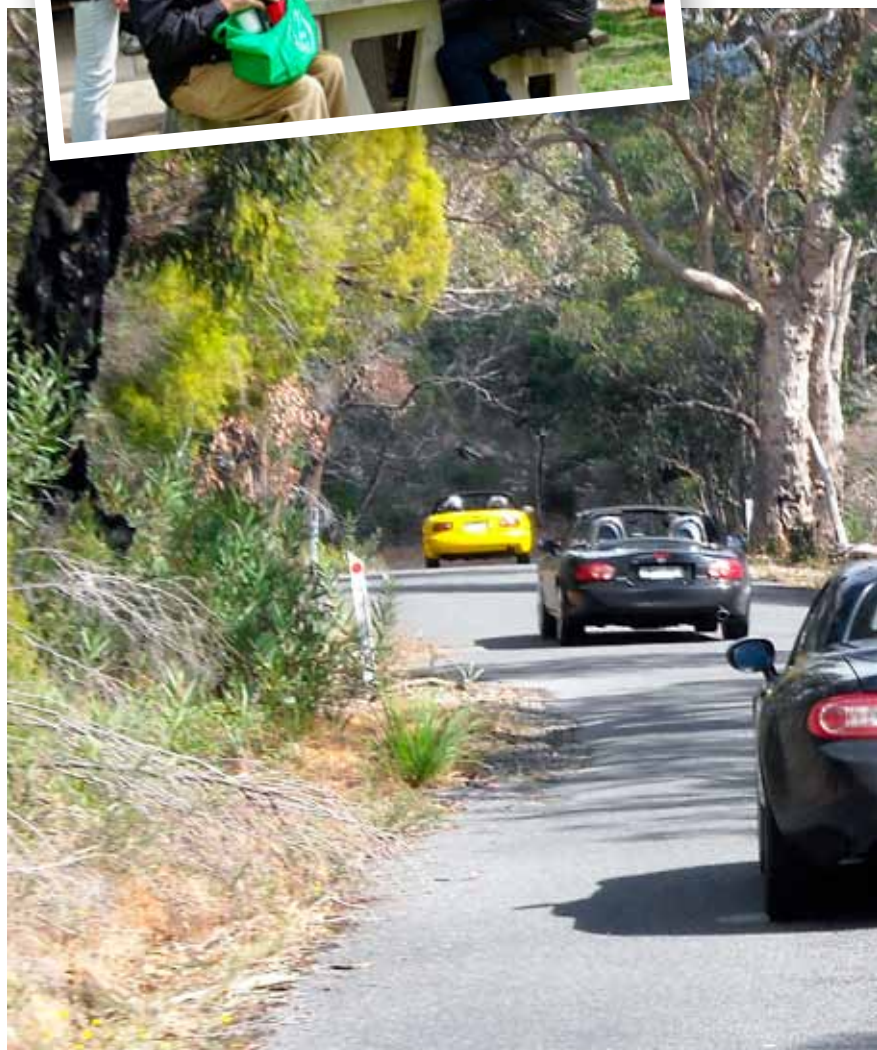
A huge thanks to Lockie, Tracey and Matthew for their hospitality and to the Western Chapter for an enjoyable day. ■



◀ Western Vic  
John Gleeson  
Lockie story.  
✓ The ladies on



◀ (from left): R  
enjoy some, e  
▶ Paying homa







■ **Words:** Day 1 - Marg Gillick Day 2 - Lockie Story

■ **Photos:** John Gleeson, Geoff Roche, Karen Bradshaw, Marg Gillick ■ **Run organisers:** John & Noellene Gleeson, Lockie Story

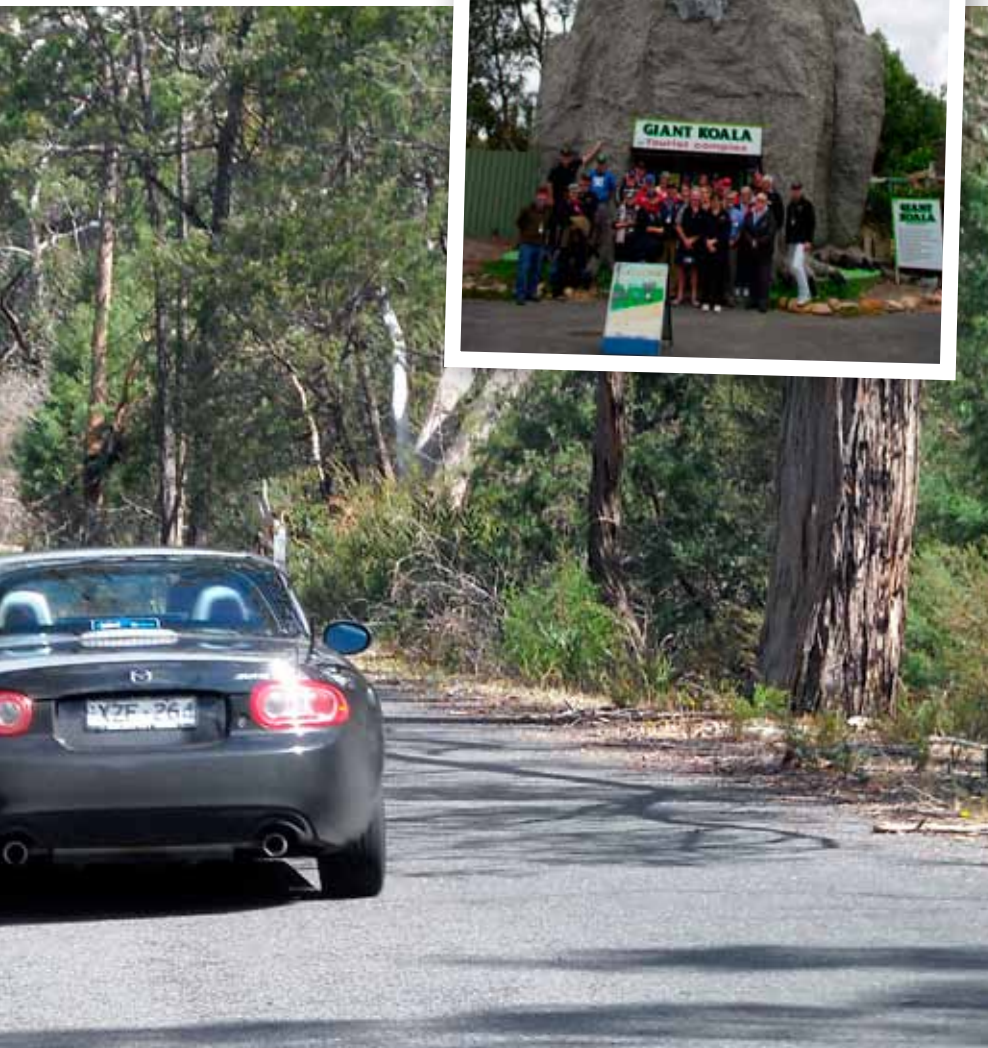
Victoria Chapter Captain  
(left) and our host,

organise dinner ...



on, Tyrone, Marg, Will, Coral and Pam  
r, non-mist.

ge to Dadswells Bridge's giant koala.



*So ... after what I consider  
a fun night in my woolshed,*

everyone gathered here again at around 9am for the trip "over the top" to Halls Gap for breaky. I took the lead in *Molly* and Tracey brought up the rear in our new MX-5, *Rose*.

The road to Halls Gap is one of the most MX-5-friendly roads there is, especially since its rebuild after the floods wiped parts of it out. The weather was brilliant and we were fortunate that we didn't encounter even one vehicle in front of us to hinder our progress.

Arriving at Halls Gap, we spread out and found breakfast at one of the various establishments on the Boardwalk. There was time to explore some of the shops before we met again at Lake Belfield and saddled up for the trip to Dunkeld via the Victoria Valley.

Once all 16 cars were settled in, we headed south with the sheer cliffs of the Grampians on either side. On two occasions I came perilously close to adding new kangaroo stickers to *Molly's* guard. The first was a large doe that waited in hiding until I came along, then wandered out on to the road. If not for the fact that I had caught a glimpse of her and braked before she jumped, it would have been "pop goes the kanga". The second was a much smaller roo that jumped out, then thought better of it and reversed direction and jumped back into the scrub. Just because I am paranoid about kangaroos *does not mean that they aren't out to get me*.

We took the turn off on to the Victoria Valley Road which, again, has been designed with MX-5s in mind, stopping at a lookout giving a panoramic view back up the valley. Then it was back on the road and into the Victoria Valley proper where the range splits, allowing farming between the two ridges before closing together at Dunkeld between My Abrupt and Mt Sturgeon.

Prior to leaving Belfield I had given each car a sheet to complete, with some facts to gather and things to find. These included finding a nail, a pin, an echidna and a loose sock. It also had questions to be answered including when was the MX-5 launched and in what colours, how many 'roos had hit *Molly*, assorted MX-5



# Weekend at Lockie's ...

facts and how many Japanese cars I had on the farm.

The winners of this little exercise were Geoff and Bronwyn Roche with John and Sue Hines coming in second, both receiving small prizes. We had coffee at Dunkeld and then split up to make our own way home. Tracey and I continued on to Ballarat for our daughter Emma's birthday and stayed the night there.

On the way home, *Molly* lost all power just out of Stawell and the engine stopped. I coasted to a safe part of the road side and got out to see smoke coming from the boot. I opened the boot to find flames coming from the battery box area. I grabbed my drinking water and extinguished the flames and, after stupidly burning myself, discovered that the battery clamp had come loose and shorted across the battery, getting so hot that it set fire to the boot. There was no major damage done and I was able to drive the rest of the way home without further incident. This remains a mystery to me, as in the well over the 100,000km I have travelled in *Molly* I have never once touched the battery or the clamp. Might be worth checking (for everyone)?

**A few facts about the Grampians and Halls Gap:** the Grampians are the most southern and western end of the Great Dividing Range. They were explored in 1836 by Major Thomas Mitchell and named by him after the Grampians in Scotland where he was born.

The area was favoured by stock thieves right up to the turn of the century because of the myriad places to hide. When gold was found in Stawell, a timber milling operation was started in Halls Gap and the first pub opened in 1876. After that Halls Gap became a favoured holiday destination for the well-to-do and is still one of Victoria's favourite tourist destinations.

This trip can be found in the Club's **20 Roads for 20 Years** book and is a fantastic one- or two-day drive. Great roads and heaps to see. (Watch out for the 'roos!)

Thanks to everyone who went out of their way to make this weekend easy for me.

*Believe me when I say: it was appreciated. ■*







# A hot weekend in Tassie ...

■ Words & photos: Geoff & Bronwyn Roche

▲ *Crossing Australia's oldest bridge at Richmond, Tasmania*

## *Who knew Tasmania had heat waves?*

Setting sail for a week of touring the Apple Isle, we travelled overnight on the Spirit of Tasmania. With the MX-5 parked safely on the lower deck completely surrounded by motorbikes, we enjoyed a very calm crossing.

Preparing to disembark from the boat in Devonport the next morning, we put the roof down. Unfortunately the 60 Harley motorbikers parked next to us on the ferry decided to give their bikes a rev up ... *our hearing took a couple of days to recover!*

Good timing meant the Northern Tassie Chapter had a run on the day we arrived and we were lucky to be met in Devonport by Ken and Ruth along with Keith and Sandra, who took us on the 'back roads' to Deloraine, the starting point for the day's Club run.

Heading across the beautiful Mersey Valley farmlands, home to very contented cows and incredibly green grass, the road contained plenty of 90° turns. Using a two-way radio for the first time we discovered that the most frequent call in North Tassie is for 'road kill'. The amount of both live and dead wildlife was

noticeable and we had to be continuously on the lookout.

The rest of the friendly crew gathered in Deloraine at a fabulous 1950s-style café before we all headed off on a very hot day's run around the base of the soaring Western Tiers range.

The afternoon was spent at the Symmons Plains race track where the well-established myth about red cars being the fastest proved to be just that – a myth! The fastest on the day was Rob in his black NB, no doubt assisted by his previous racing experience on the same track (and perhaps the turbo). *We had a blast.* To round off a great day we also caught the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra concert in the Launceston city park that evening.

The following day was another scorcher. We headed for the hills along some more fabulous roads that are used in the Targa Tasmania event. Steep climbs, sweeping, tight and curly bends along with great views – just perfect for MX-5s.

The trip back to Launceston via the Tamar Valley travelled along both sides of the estuary. This run is detailed in the Club's

**20 Roads for 20 Years** book and is a *great* drive.

The next day the weather turned south and so did we, experiencing our first taste of rain at lunchtime (more like a tropical downpour) in Triabunna. Whilst enjoying freshly cooked local fish and chips we took refuge from the rain in the public shelter. As we all know, travelling in an MX-5 often leads to curious (or is that envious) bystanders approaching to chat about the car. Triabunna was no exception. We ended up sharing the shelter with identical triplets from Victoria celebrating their 50th birthdays with a Tassie trip along with their older sister and all their partners. It was a bit odd talking with a group when nearly half of them looked exactly the same!

Touring down to Port Arthur along the Tasman Peninsula, we stayed a couple of nights before heading to Hobart. We were lucky to find a B&B whose owner allowed us to *park in his lock-up garage* – this was a bonus as there is little in the way of off-street parking around the city centre.

John Hadrill from the Southern Tassie Chapter had tipped us off on another



# A hot weekend in Tassie ...

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*Clockwise from top: along the Prosser River; a hot lap on a hot weekend at Symmons Plains; one of the many level crossings in the Mersey Valley; following Bruce Harvey; Geoff Roche (right), with Keith & Ken, the Tassie tourist guides.*





great run south of Hobart. A zoomy day was spent touring down along the d'Entrecasteaux Channel to the Huon Valley. They don't call this the Apple Isle for nothing; the trees were literally groaning under the weight of the apples ready to be picked. The Huon Valley run is also in the **20 Roads** book.

It's always fun to travel to new places and in Tassie there are so many great roads to suit MX-5 touring, interspersed with little towns featuring cute names like Penguin, Cygnet and Snug. Flowerpot and Sandfly were our standout favourite town names.

Freycinet Peninsula is a stunning National Park on the East Coast and another stop-off point. The cost of premium petrol on the Peninsula at Coles Bay was also stunning: \$1.89/litre (ouch!).

In Coles Bay we were lucky enough to revisit one of our favourite seafood restaurants, *Madge Molloy's*. The owner operator is a fisherman who catches the fish in the morning and cooks it up that night – typically fresh Tassie produce.

The road back to Devonport took us along the Prosser River road near Orford and then up and over St Mary's pass. Another couple of twisting and sweeping MX-5 roads. These roads are just *everywhere* in Tassie.

The last day was drizzly and reluctantly we travelled back to the ferry terminal with the roof up. We were glad the motorbikes parked next to us on the ferry trip had tie-downs to hold them in place as it was a somewhat bumpy ferry trip home to Melbourne.

Over the years we have travelled to Tasmania many times but this was our first trip in the MX-5. We travelled 1,987 kilometres over the eight days and enjoying every single kilometre. We loved the roads (clearly designed with MX-5s in mind), the lack of traffic, the scenery, the local produce and we especially enjoyed meeting up with our friendly Tassie Chapter counterparts.

We'll be going back.

**For anybody thinking of going down to Tassie in their MX-5, we highly recommend it. ■**



*Boats, bikes and beautiful views ...*



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# A handy hint



## tech talk

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

*Many times during the cooler months we get a sunny day that just asks for the top to come down, but the air is still a tad "fresh".*

Usually what we do is leave both the windows up and put the heater on our feet. The warm air then rolls up and things are nice and toasty.

There is one problem with this, however: the air being sucked in from the back of the car (even with the standard wind blocker) tends to swirl around the cockpit often making it like a gale force wind inside the car.

The easy way to avoid this is to drop the driver's window (leave the passenger window up). This gives the air a means of escape so it doesn't go round and around in circles.

Give it a try; you will find there is far less turbulence inside the car than when you have both windows up, but not as windy as having both windows down. ■

## A chick's car?

There are many non-MX-5 owners out there who justify not being an MX-5 owner by advising all and sundry that it's a "chick's car".

Now of course MX-5 owners (of either gender) know full well it is not a "chick's car" (or a guy's car for that matter) ... it's a DRIVER'S car.

For those who might be offended by the "chick's car" mantle may I suggest you take a leaf out of the book of a Miata (MX-5) owner in the deep south of the United States.

I read that he pulled in at his local Seven Eleven just as a "good ole boy" pulled in alongside in his "truck" (ute). On alighting from the Miata he was reminded by the ute driver that he was driving a "chick's car".

The Miata driver replied, "So what you're driving is a *man's* car?"


"Yup," came the reply from the ute driver.

The Miata man then advised that, yes his car was most definitely a "chick's car" and he had picked up several of same because of the car.

He then posed the question to the ute driver, "How many *men* have you picked up?"

I believe the conversation concluded with the ute driver walking off with a fairly good head of steam pouring out of his ears. ■

*~ Ron Macdonald*



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# Paradise lost ... and found

■ Words & photos: Jeff Isaac

“ It’s for the joy of driving, that you get up before daybreak when the mist is still covering the land and the milkman’s horse is still asleep in the shafts. The street lights twinkle in the haze and the dew sparkles on the grass while most people are still warm in their beds. ”

So said *Sports Car World* in the '60s. The crackle of the exhaust, the whine of the gears, the satisfying snick of the stubby gear lever, and the wind in your hair knowing you are at one with the car. No superfluous weight or size.

## **Sports cars. The ultimate in personal transportation. Intoxicating. Addictive.**

Growing up, I aspired to sports car ownership. The sight of an MG or Triumph or Austin Healey, the sound of a sports car engine was like a piece of crisp brown toast against a piece of soggy bread compared to the mundane and boring range of passenger cars I knew then.

I *had* to have a sports car. I yearned to go to this party that was starting. *But how?*

They were far more expensive than more “sensible” vehicles, and a lower income made the gap appear even larger. I had come close to owning one of these cars numerous times, but the lack of finances, the lack of approval by others and the need to borrow money leading to further disapproval, stopped me.

It was just too hard.

There was a beautiful chocolate brown 1950 MG TC with cycle mudguards, 16” wire wheels, steel-framed body and much chrome that attracted my attention. *How I wanted that one!* I looked at the sale price and then looked at my bank balance.

Not enough gold.

Some things are just too hard to bear. After spending much time with the previous owner and helping him work on it, my heart sank when I saw someone else drive it away.

At every opportunity, I would attend events where sports cars were present. I would drool over their low, rakish lines, their shiny bodies sparkling in the sunlight. I would marvel at their minimalist bodies and dream of driving one where I would be transported to another time and place, and find myself in the cockpit of some open fighter plane; at one with the machine. I mean, who needs two tonnes of steel to get around?

The exhilaration of the open roadster bodies, their chrome wire wheels, and they were so low! *I had never seen anything so exciting.*

I loved MGBs and Sprites and Triumph TRs. I came so close so many times, but the words kept coming back. *They're glorified motor bikes, they're selfish cars, they're dangerous cars, they're cars for maniac drivers* etc.

I absolutely loved the Lotus Elan with its fiberglass body and sweeping lines, pop-up headlights, twin-cam engine, fully independent suspension and four-wheel disc brakes. Of course, if I couldn't afford a lowly Triumph or MG, there was no way a Lotus would ever sit in my driveway.

In reality, the MGB was probably the sports car I aspired to most. Most importantly, it was affordable, had reasonable performance and had features such as wind-up windows and a heater! It also had a distinctive exhaust note that was the best around and probably still is. You can pick an MGB anywhere by its exhaust note. Most also had the optional wire wheels which looked far better than the standard disc wheels.

I couldn't even afford one of these though, so I weakened ... I compromised.

I started a love affair with hot Holdens and muscle cars. These I could afford and at least they looked more sensible. It was easier to deflect criticism. So I ended up drifting away from a world of colour and excitement to a beige, “sensible” world of bland buzz boxes and houses and children and responsibility and ...



Once, when I worked as a motor mechanic in the '60s, the employees' car park was filled with red and white MGAs, red and green MGBs, blue Austin Healeys, red and green Triumph TRs, and a brand new Mark 3 Austin Healey Sprite in British Racing Green with optional wire wheels and detachable hardtop.

Next to these, my old FJ Holden looked fat and stodgy; *like a lumbering wombat next to a firefly.*

One day, a workmate asked me to drive his Sprite from just outside Lilydale to his home in Ringwood East. He didn't need to ask twice! This Mark 3 Sprite was his and it looked and sounded fantastic. It drove even better. Returning home in my old FJ was like driving a block of flats in comparison.

I thought that this dream of mine would never be realised. I resigned myself to my world of sensible transportation, my world of tin tops (cars with a roof), even though some had V8s. I continued to read of these stories of other people with sports cars and their adventures. It went on to my bucket list. *Maybe one day ...*

**When the MX-5 was first released, you can imagine my excitement.** With a look unashamedly like a Lotus Elan, with pop-up lights, twin-cam engine, four-





## One member's long and winding road to Jinba Ittai

wheel independent suspension, and four-wheel disc brakes, I was hooked. So were many others; and it was a *real* sports car with rear-wheel drive, unlike some other pretenders. Sadly, I was in the middle of family responsibilities still, and I couldn't afford one anyway. In some ways it was more of a tease, so I thought, dream on.

Time passed, and when our children married and left home, we found ourselves rearranging things to suit our very different lifestyle. Over time, I realised my wife, Cindy, *actually liked* sports cars and didn't just tolerate my interest in one. Consequently, we started looking for a sports car without delay! We looked at MGBs which we found were really the only earlier sports cars we could live with. Most were really too small, too basic, or harder to get in and out of (important as you get older!). We then decided to look at MX-5s, not expecting we could afford one. *Imagine our surprise when we found they were more affordable than an MGB!*

We then discovered that the MX-5 had quite a bit of space, without being ungainly. With a body design similar in appearance to a Lotus Elan, it was icing on the cake for both of us, really. Modern ergonomics and features were also pretty compelling. We considered the MGF for a similar price, but decided Japanese reliability had a lot going for it.

On a bright and sunny day, we tried a green one – an NB – and loved the driving position. We then found a white NA with a chrome roll bar and body kit; very nice. Then we found a red one and instantly fell in love. *Red and sports car* should always be found in the same sentence! We took this one for a drive and when we dropped the top ... oh boy! There's something about driving in a convertible that owners of normal cars will never experience. The intimacy with the environment; the wind in your hair; the sound of birds and other wildlife; the warm sun on your back; the stars at night and the night sky. The crisp crackle of the exhaust, especially echoing against embankments, the popping on the overrun just like a proper car, the immediacy of the feedback, and with the early MX-5s like ours, the first sensation of the pop-up lights, are all things that drivers of ordinary cars will never know.



Our MX-5 came with a Momo steering wheel and 17" mags with low-profile tyres. These really stiffen the ride, but talk about a go kart with doors! They really suit the car and it looks fantastic. We have since added a sports exhaust from the catalytic converter back so it now *sounds* like a real sports car too. Other improvements planned are underbody braces (our car is a 1989) and a new top with NB glass back window.

We call our MX-5 our stress reliever. Whenever we can, we take the opportunity to cruise around topless (the car, not us!)

It has only taken me 44 years or thereabouts to realise my dream of sports car ownership. This seems to be a common story in the Club. I don't care if people think I am in the middle of a mid-life crisis; I tell them to come and join me.

**What a sports car though!** I have ridden in a handful of sports cars during this time. On reflection, I think about four, so that makes one short ride every 11 years or so. The other cars included an MGB, Austin Healey 100/6, Sprite Mk 3, and a Clubman. All very exciting, but to actually own one of the best (if not *the best*), most advanced sports cars of all time, is something very special.

I would probably have never dreamed I would actually own a sports car with stunning good looks with flowing lines and curves, pop-up lights, twin-cam sports car engine, four-wheel independent suspension with wishbones and coils, four-wheel disc brakes, five-speed all synchro gearbox with stubby gearlever, and rear wheel drive. *All this and air conditioning too!*

**Life doesn't get better than this! Long live the MX-5! ■**

*Ed: Jeff is quite the artist as you can see from the drawing of his car. Apart from drawing many cars for car club enthusiasts, he has also completed illustrations for charities, eg, Peter Brock's racing Commodore when he retired the first time in 1997. If any Club member would like an illustration of their car, have a chat with Jeff on 0432 183 402. Cost is relative to the detail involved.*



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# Aussies iced again!



## Russia goes up 2-0 as Australian journalists fail to convert in MX-5 Ice Race

RUSSIAN journalists have reinforced their reputation as the world's finest ice drivers by defeating a team of Australians in the Mazda MX-5 Ice Race for the second consecutive year.

Billed as a grudge match between the two top teams at last year's promotional event in Sweden, this year's running again pitted six of Australia's best automotive scribes against Russia's top writers in identical race-prepared MX-5 convertibles.

However, unlike the 2011 event – in which the Australian team finished a close second to the crack Russian team in the final after outpacing the other 18 teams from 28 countries – the locals dominated the 2012 event on a more compact 1.3km track in central Russia.

This year the Russians leveraged their home turf advantage on a frozen artificial lake in Ekaterinburg, Russia's fourth-largest city about 1600km east of Moscow – on street-legal Michelin winter tyres rather than the grippier narrow spiked racing tyres used last year in Sweden – to score resounding victories in both the team and individual finals.

The two-car, six-member Australian team, which was invited to the two-nation 2012 rematch by Mazda Russia after last year's spirited competition between the two countries, was again led by last year's stand-out performer and *GoAuto* contributor James Stanford, as well as *Drive's* Toby Hagon, *Carsales'* Mike Sinclair and Italy-based Australian Michael Taylor.

Glenn Butler and I filled the final two spots and, after the fastest 12 Russian 'pilots' were announced after their series of elimination qualifying sessions, it was time for the Australians to qualify.

*GoAuto* was the quickest of the Australians after the first session, despite never having driven on ice before, let alone in a left-hand drive MX-5 on lightly-studded winter tyres with limited visibility behind other cars and the temperature hovering around -8°C.

After the last of three practice/qualifying sessions, just 0.003 seconds separated *Drive* and *GoAuto* as the quickest of the Aussies, many of whom spent more time waiting to be towed out of the snow berms that surrounded the super-slippery 12-turn ice circuit than they did actually practicing.

However, the fastest visitors were still about a second slower than the best Russians.

The 50-minute teams final, in which the two Aussie teams were pitted against three Russian teams, provided the opportunity to learn from the locals, the fastest of whom appeared to abandon any traditional racing lines in search of the traction offered by the snow at the verges of the track – and sometimes even beyond, using the snow banks for extra traction under both braking and acceleration.

While the Aussies last year called on every ounce of engine performance to power-oversteer their spikey-tyred, rear-drive roadsters to a near-victory on a much faster and longer 5km course in Sweden, they quickly learned that keeping the road-rubbered wheels in line was the order of the day this year.

"Forget the racing line and go for the white," was the best advice provided to us by our professional Russian race trainers.

But in the end none of us could learn the technique quickly enough and, after maintaining third place for most of the final, a late-race spin relegated Australia's A-team of Hagon, Butler and me to fourth, with 'Australia B' not far behind in fifth.

The event was completed by an Australia-versus-Russia 'Super Final', in which the three fastest Russians took on the three fastest Aussies (in our case Hagon, Taylor and myself) in a winner-takes-all 15-minute final.

This Super Final ultimately turned out to be far more exciting than our earlier pace suggested, with fastest Aussie Hagon holding sway in second for almost half the race until he pushed too hard and was relegated to last after becoming wedged on a snow bank.

That saw *GoAuto* become the best-placed Aussie finisher but with points awarded down to sixth place, our third (Pettendy), fourth (Taylor) and fifth (Hagon) positions scored two fewer points than the home team's first, second and sixth, handing another win to the Russians.

No, Australia didn't make the same impact it did in last year's race, but we didn't disgrace the flag and Mazda Russia is already talking about a third icy MX-5 meeting between the two nations.

*Ed: rumour is that next year's challenge will be in Australia's outback!*



*Marton Pettendy*



Report by Marton Pettendy of John Mellor's "GoAuto News" in Ekaterinburg, Siberia - March 2012

# VW's MX-5 rival "still alive" ...

■ Words: John Mellor's "GoAuto News" ■ Photos: [www.roadandtrack.com](http://www.roadandtrack.com)

By Byron Mathioudakis in Geneva

**VOLKSWAGEN is still contemplating a Mazda MX-5 competitor, despite widespread reports of partner Porsche pulling out of the roadster project.**

Senior engineer and member of the VW board of management Ulrich Hackenberg said at last week's Geneva motor show that the company has working prototypes in development.

However, the green light has yet to be given as Volkswagen's bean counters continue to weigh up the business case for such a model.

"We have a lot of convertibles, but if you are asking about the nice roadster we presented (in 2009) ... I am working on it," Dr Hackenberg told Australian media at the show.

"I drove it (during) the last 'Summer Drive', but I don't have the agreement of the company that we will build it."

First flagged as the *Concept BlueSport* at the 2009 Detroit show, the two-seater open-top convertible was originally planned as an entry-level sports car in partnership with sister companies Porsche and Audi.

However, the Volkswagen board cancelled the project in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2009, concentrating instead on creating more efficient modular platforms that are electrification-compatible to underpin its next generation of core vehicle lines across the group's brands.

Porsche, meanwhile, has elected to build the *Macan* medium-sized SUV that is expected to become the marque's best-selling model worldwide.

As a result of such changing circumstances, Dr Hackenberg said VW must find a way to ensure profitability with the proposed roadster while going it alone.

"Porsche has the Boxster based on the 911's systems, but I think they are (currently) not looking for a smaller one," he said. "They (Porsche and Audi) were interested, but I am missing the volume. We need a minimum of 50,000 to 60,000 cars per year.

"But the car is fantastic."

On Volkswagen's overall model plans, Dr Hackenberg said prioritising is paramount as the company does not have an unlimited budget.

"We are in the phase where we bring out all the cars that we need for the next generation, so we have to prioritise. It is a question of budget, so we are not over-budget or out of budget."

The 2009 Concept BlueSport employed a mid-mounted rear-wheel-drive chassis powered by a 132kW/350Nm 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel engine.

Measuring in at under four metres in length, weighing less than 1200kg and boasting a front/rear distribution of 45/55, it is said to accelerate from 0-100kmh in 6.6 seconds, reach 226kmh, and – thanks to idle-stop and brake energy regeneration systems – still return just 4.3L/100km and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 113g/km. ■

VW's development boss reveals he is still working on the case for an MX-5 rival





# The world's oldest running car



... yours for a mere \$4.62m! ■ From John Rickard

This is the oldest motor vehicle car in the world that still runs ... on steam.

It was built one year before Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler invented the internal combustion engine.

The world's oldest running motor vehicle has been sold at auction for an astonishing \$US4.62 million, more than double the pre-sale estimate, as two bidders chased the price up in a bidding war.



The 1884 *De Dion Bouton et Trepardoux Dos-a-Dos Steam Runabout* drew a standing ovation as it was driven up on to the stage at an auction in Pennsylvania – to prove that this 127-year-old car really does run – and attracted a starting bid of \$500,000, which was immediately doubled to \$1 million.

Encouraged by the applauding crowd, the bidding went swiftly up to \$4.2 million – \$4.62 million including the 10% commission – before the car was knocked down to a unnamed buyer.

The Dos-a-Dos (Back-to-Back) Steam Runabout was built in 1884 by George Bouton and Charles-Armand Trepardoux for French entrepreneur Count de Dion, who named it *La Marquise* after his mother.

In 1887, with De Dion at the tiller, it won the world's first ever motor race (it was the only entrant to make the start line!) covering the 32km from the Pont de Neuilly in Paris to Versailles and back in one hour and 14 minutes (an average of 25.9kmh) and, according to contemporary reports, hitting a breathtaking 60kmh on the straights!

*La Marquise* has only had four owners, remaining in one family for 81 years, and has been restored twice, once by the Doriol family and again by British collector Tom Moore in the early 1990s.

Since then, it has taken part in four London-to-Brighton runs and collected a double gold at the 1997 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in California. ■

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# Who's on iFirst?

*If Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were alive today, their famous sketch, 'Who's on First?', might have turned out something like this:*

## Costello calls Abbott to buy a computer ...

**ABBOTT:** Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?

**COSTELLO:** Thanks. I'm setting up an office in my den and I'm thinking about buying a computer.

**ABBOTT:** Mac?

**COSTELLO:** No, the name's Lou.

**ABBOTT:** Your computer?

**COSTELLO:** I don't own a computer. I want to buy one.

**ABBOTT:** Mac?

**COSTELLO:** I told you, my name's Lou.

**ABBOTT:** What about Windows?

**COSTELLO:** Why? Will it get stuffy in here?

**ABBOTT:** Do you want a computer with Windows?

**COSTELLO:** I don't know. What will I see when I look at the windows?

**ABBOTT:** Wallpaper.

**COSTELLO:** Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software.

**ABBOTT:** Software for Windows?

**COSTELLO:** No. On the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses and run my business. What do you have?

**ABBOTT:** Office.

**COSTELLO:** Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything?

**ABBOTT:** I just did.

**COSTELLO:** You just did what?

**ABBOTT:** Recommend something.

**COSTELLO:** You recommended something?

**ABBOTT:** Yes.

**COSTELLO:** For my office?



**ABBOTT:** Yes.

**COSTELLO:** OK, what did you recommend for my office?

**ABBOTT:** Office.

**COSTELLO:** Yes, for my office!

**ABBOTT:** I recommend Office with Windows.

**COSTELLO:** I already have an office with windows! OK, let's just say I'm sitting at my computer and I want to type a proposal. What do I need?

**ABBOTT:** Word.

**COSTELLO:** What word?

**ABBOTT:** Word in Office.

**COSTELLO:** The only word in office is office.

**ABBOTT:** The Word in Office for Windows.

**COSTELLO:** Which word in office for windows?

**ABBOTT:** The Word you get when you click

the blue 'W'.

**COSTELLO:** I'm going to click your blue 'W' if you don't start with some straight answers. What about financial bookkeeping? You have anything I can track my money with?

**ABBOTT:** Money.

**COSTELLO:** That's right. What do you have?

**ABBOTT:** Money.

**COSTELLO:** I need money to track my money?

**ABBOTT:** It comes bundled with your computer.

**COSTELLO:** What's bundled with my computer?

**ABBOTT:** Money.

**COSTELLO:** Money comes with my computer?

**ABBOTT:** Yes.

**COSTELLO:** I get a bundle of money with my computer? How much?

**ABBOTT:** One copy.

**COSTELLO:** Isn't it illegal to copy money?

**ABBOTT:** Microsoft gave us a licence to copy Money.

**COSTELLO:** They can give you a licence to copy money?

**ABBOTT:** Why not? THEY OWN IT!

*A few days later ...*

**ABBOTT:** Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?

**COSTELLO:** How do I turn my computer off?

**ABBOTT:** Click on 'START'...



Photo: Ben Sale



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

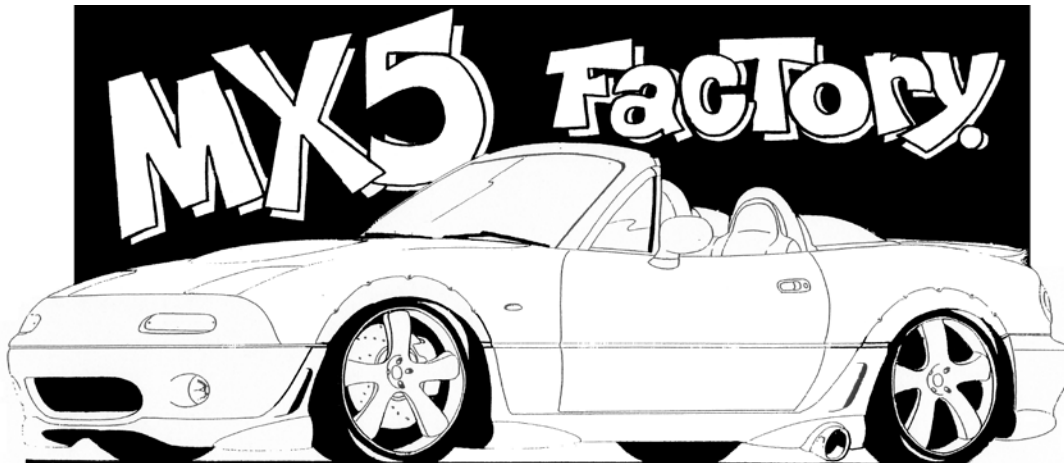
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