

mxtra

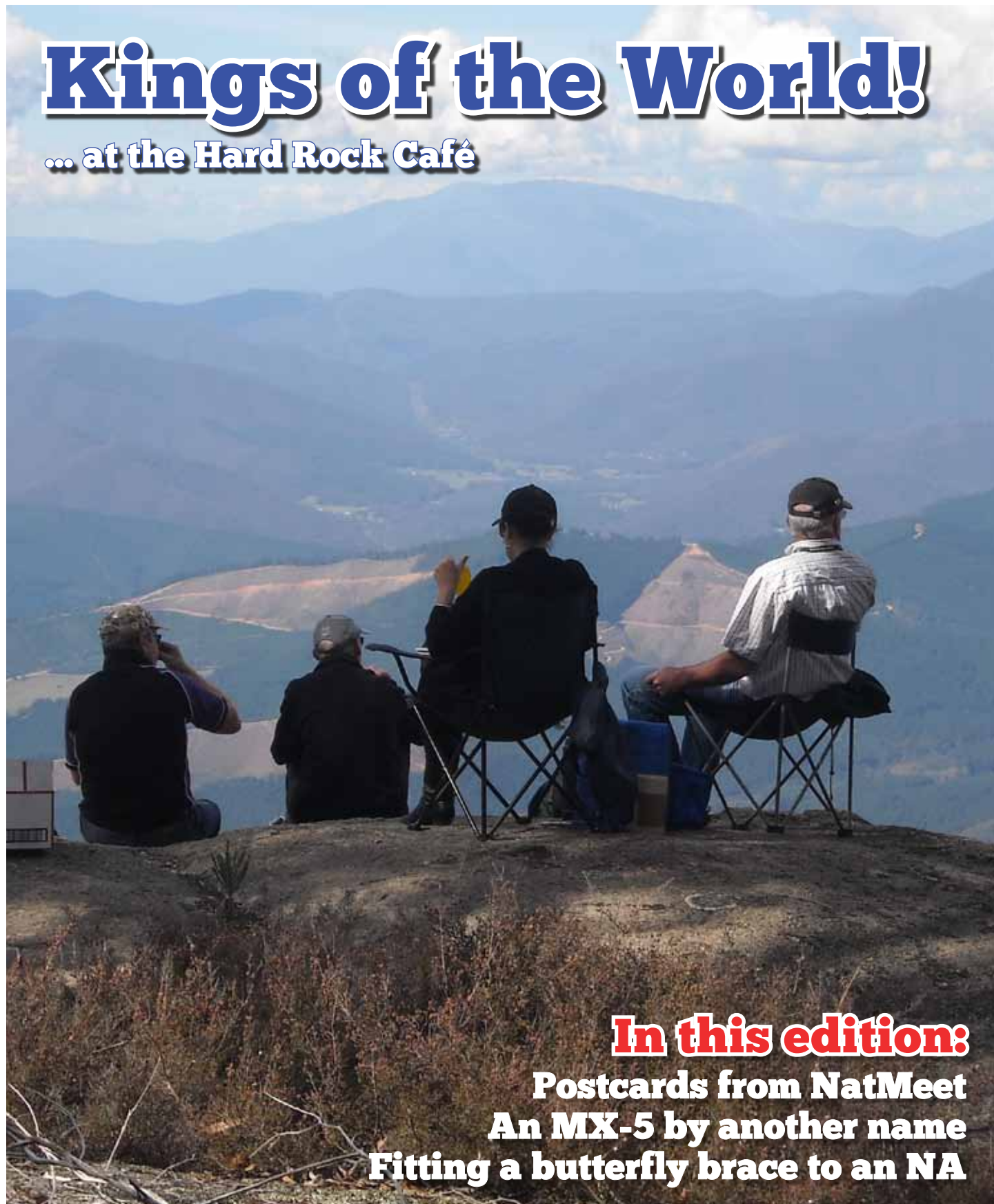
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www.mx5vic.org.au

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

Kings of the World!

... at the Hard Rock Café



In this edition:

**Postcards from NatMeet
An MX-5 by another name
Fitting a butterfly brace to an NA**



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contents



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features

- 16** Postcards from NatMeet X, Canberra
- 20** The pretty blue car is no handicap
- 21** Tech Talk: *Fitting a Flyin' Miata butterfly brace*
- 29** Alan Bennett's "toughened up" crossword
- 30** Himiko: *an MX-5 by another name*

Chapter chatter:

- 8** Central: *April fools, aliens and asparagus*
- 9** Eastern: *One "L" of a run*
- 10** Southern Tassie: *Roastin' Ross*
- 12** North-Eastern Victoria: *Lots of corners, not many turns*
- 14** Northern Tassie: *Fish & chips & chocolate run*
- 18** Western Victoria: *Many happy returns!*

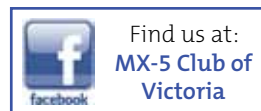
regulars

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 4 President's corner | 5 Motor Sport Torque |
| 6 Membership | 7 Scene about |
| 25 Club Grill: <i>meet Jeff Woolf</i> | 27 Market Place |

Cover image:

Lunch at the "Hard Rock Café" atop Mt Buffalo during the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter's 5th anniversary run.

Photo: Marg Gillick



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Murray's Corner ...

■ Murray Finlay – President

G'day all!

You know you're getting old when your kids celebrate their birthdays.

Last month we had two significant anniversaries – our North-Eastern Victoria Chapter turned five and Western Victoria turned three!

I was lucky enough to join 19 others for a magic run through the high country to mark the N-E Chapter's celebrations. Marg Gillick even brought a cake to the top of Mt Buffalo!



The Western Victoria Chapter had their usual hoot with a run that combined several of their favourite roads.

Congratulations must go to the Chapter Captains, all the members of both Chapters – and to the Committee and the other Club members who have supported these Chapters' events – for the strength and camaraderie they've developed.

Their success reinforces the Committee's view that the Chapters are the lifeblood of the Club.

The Club's overall appeal is broad and getting broader, with members ranging from the "L" and "P" platers reported on and pictured in this edition, to some aged 70+ participating in our social and motor sport events. As one of our seniors, Tyrone Dark, quipped on his run last weekend: "You don't have to be old to go slow and you don't have to be young to go fast."

Annual President's run This run on 27 May will be my last as President. It will culminate with a BBQ at Mazda Australia and a look over their collection of old Mazdas dating back to the 1960s. It would be great to see lots of familiar faces there. The RSVP for that event is soon: 21 May.



Tassie Tour *It's back!* After a four-year break this normally biennial event will be on again after Easter in April in 2013. You'll see a flyer in this month's magazine with all the details. It's open to all Club members, but *numbers are limited so you'll have to be quick.* I've not been lucky enough to get to one of these adventures, and I'm always very jealous when I look through the photos. Thanks to Joan Read, Bruce Harvey and Janette Todd for getting this up and running.

Business plan Following our call last month for members to assist with our business plan development, we've had one volunteer for the "corporate" stream, but so far no others.

The "streams" that need to be fleshed out to form the foundations of this plan are:

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

If you have some expertise to offer, please contact VP Don Nicoll (see p3 for his details).

CX-5 drive day Being long-term Mazda customers, Alyssa and I were invited to a CX-5 drive day at Werribee Mansion last Saturday.

It was great to get an opportunity to learn something more about this all-new Mazda model, and even better to drive it. We drove in convoy, led by Mazda's driving instructors, around a very sedate loop that didn't really give much insight into the claims that the CX-5 extended the MX-5's *Jinba Ittai* heritage into the SUV market, but it was very nice to drive.

We drove both a top-of-the-range petrol model and a more basic diesel version. Both were very comfortable but the diesel got my vote for its extra power and torque. If you're in the market, I recommend a test drive.

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

Murray

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

May

- 15-17 Club: Mid-week adventure (fully booked)
- 20 South Tas: Picnic at Ross
- 20 North Tas: Picnic at Ross
- 20 Western Vic: Halls Gap/Avoca run
- 26 Club: Dyno Day
- 27 Club: President's run (note change of date)

June

- 10 South Tas: Cygnet run
- 17 N-E Vic: Jingellic run
- 24 DECA driver training & fun day

July

- 8 South Tas: Ausmas run
- 22 Club: 2012 Awards presentation, Woodend
- 22 Central: run to Awards lunch

August

- 4 Central: Steiglitz run (Saturday)
- 12 South Tas: Tasman Peninsula



Remember our Club Smartphone calendar

The smartphone version of the Club's events calendar is at www.mx5vic.org.au/smartphone/events.html

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.



Motor Sport Torque



■ Robert Downes – Club Captain - Motor Sport

Round 8 – Sandown, Sunday, 29 April

This was the final round of competition for the 2011/2012 season and although overall MX-5 numbers were down, it was another great day of racing with good, dry weather.

There were several new members making their “competition debut” and several opting to have an instructor in the car for guidance. Special thanks to Pam Phillips, Joan Read, Robyn Conrad, Greg Savage and Teruo Delacroix and the usual Club members that assisted with scrutineering.

I was particularly impressed with the drives of Robert Hart and Gary Prescott. Stephen Downes was 0.09 seconds off James Sanderson’s very impressive long-standing Standard NB record and David Wilken “stunned” the competition with a 1.28 in his “NA8B”. David continues to impress with his innovative ideas and his “aerodynamics package” was something to see.

Throughout the course of this year’s Championship, I have noticed a considerable lift in the driving skills and the depth of talent amongst the competitors in addition to a healthy camaraderie in the group.

Dyno Day – Saturday, 26 May, RIR Dandenong

You need to book and pay now through the Club website. Bookings have been a little disappointing and we are happy if you book one of your friends or family.

DECA Day, Shepparton – Sunday, 24 June

Come and have “plenty of fun” on the skidpan. You do not require a CAMS Licence or any special safety or car preparation. It is all low speed first and second gear driving and will not damage your vehicle.

2012/2013 Championship

Round 1 & Vic/NSW Interstate Challenge, Phillip Island – Saturday, 30 June

This should be a very close fought event – please bring your “A” game to the island! All competitors are reminded that they need to complete a new Declaration

form for the new season to be eligible for Championship points.

Club Annual Awards Function – Sunday, 22 July

I urge all competitors to support this Club function.

Phillip Island 6-Hour – Saturday and Sunday, 4-5 August

Approximately 10 drivers have formed two MX-5 teams to compete in this event and we are optimistic considering the Club’s impressive past performances in six-hour events.

Driver Training & Round 2 – Winton – Saturday and Sunday, 4-5 August

Competitors looking to improve their lap times are encouraged to do the Racecraft Training on the Saturday. It is a very worthwhile investment of your time and money.

Safety

Over the past month, two Club members have probably avoided personal injury when their vehicles have left the track and hit a tyre wall. In each case, the driver was using a multi-point “driving harness” and not the standard lap-sash seat belt. For the sake of a couple of hundred dollars, it is truly a very sound investment.

Until next month ...

“drive responsibly at all times”

Robert #26

Motor sport calendar

See the full calendar for details

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

May

13 Rd 3: Pakenham

June

17 Rd 4: Pakenham

July

14 Rd 5: Huntly Saleyards (Saturday)

August

5 Rd 6: Mt Gambier Saleyards

Apologies and big thanks from Tim Emery

I just wanted to pass on firstly my apologies to ‘Run group 3’ at Sandown for the ‘delay’ due to my incident. I know how much grief the ‘Lotus Guy’ was given for a similar delay, but at least i did ‘leave the track quickly’.

I also wanted to thank and acknowledge for the fantastic support and help that was given instantly by members of the MX-5 Motor Sport ‘Team’ ... from another MX-5 (Stephen Downes, I think) in my run group coming in to pass on to my wife that i was out of the car and OK, to Robert Downes making sure all the correct Club procedures were followed, Daniel White loaning me his

tow car and trailer to get my car home and then Teruo Delacroix and especially Greg Savage covering off all the CAMS reports and again making sure I was OK. Both the President (Murray) and Vice President (Don) were in touch with me within hours making sure I was OK.

To everyone else, thanks for your support and assistance after a fairly scary ‘incident’. Stay tuned for an **mxtra** article about how important it is to have the right safety equipment!

Thanks everyone ...

Tim Emery (Car #135)



Membership

Current membership count:

529

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

G'day all ...

I would like to welcome the following new members to the fold:

Central Chapter

Jace Bird	1990 White NA
Leon Bogers	2000 Heritage Green NB
Jamie Carns	1990 Classic Red NA
John Cullen	2002 Titanium Silver NB
Neil Earey	2002 Titanium Silver NB

Southern Tasmania Chapter

Robin Tanner	2002 Titanium Silver NB
Garry & Maureen Whittle	2006 Galaxy Grey NC

I would also like to welcome past member, **Jacqui Sanderson**. Jacqui has been a stalwart in our Club and was a committee member for several years. Now her children are a little older, Jacqui's ready once again to enjoy Club activities!

See you out and about ...

Will



An apology from the Editor (a rare event, so please enjoy!) ...

Those of you with an eagle eye may have noticed that last month we published a short comment on a "Chick's Car" which had been kindly donated by the Central Chapter Captain, Ron Macdonald.

What we didn't tell you was that it was identical to the article that we published on the same subject in the January 2012 edition of **mxtra**.

Now, we make no apologies for repeating articles from years ago, particularly technical stuff, but I guess even the most "memory-challenged" of us (=me) can recognise something from three months ago (I think?). The only saving grace is that I picked up the mistake before any e-mails came in asking if we were running out of new material for the magazine.

For those of you outraged at the duplication, please feel free to stick a picture of your favourite car over the article together with my apology.

And Murray, who puts the magazine artwork together, must apologise to the Northern Tasmania Chapter ... in the same edition he managed to give Bruce Harvey and Cheryl Murray's article on the Tamar River run the same heading *and date* that had appeared on Kelly Berggren's report on the Symmons Plains outing the month before!

We just want to make sure you're awake!

Don

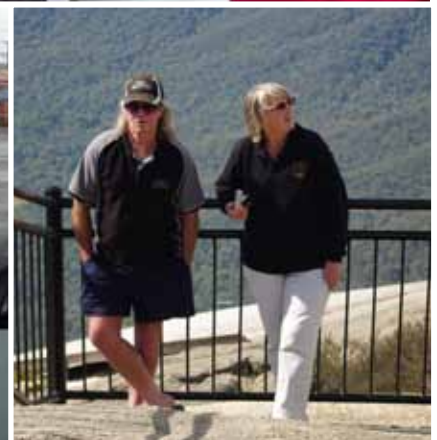
Uncanny resemblance?

Scale models of all sorts of roadsters, racers and RVs, made entirely from aluminium drink cans ... someone with too much time on their hands?



Scene about ...

■ Photos: Kelly Berggren, John Waldo, Ron Macdonald, Karen Bradshaw, Geoff Roche



Chapter chatter ...

April fools, Aliens and Asparagus 1/4/12 | Central

■ Words: Ron Diprose ■ Photos: Ron Macdonald/Wendy Clark, *gracies-place.net* ■ Run organisers: Judy & Jeff Searl

Some say ... it was April Fools' Day.

All I know is ... it was a great day to be out on Jeff and Judy Searl's Club run from Berwick to Phillip Island via the back roads.



Those aliens are really starting to annoy me!

We headed off on the Clyde road, flat and a bit of traffic around, through a few traffic lights but the group of 23 cars managed to stay together easily. The highlight at this stage was a sign on the roadside saying "stripper for sale". Interesting, I thought ... how would you price one of those, other than at an hourly rate, then I saw it was the name of a boat.

All went well until we arrived at Koo-Wee-Rup. Having failed to thoroughly read the convoy rules (*because of alien mind control*) and ignoring the protestations of the navigator, I followed the wrong turn of the car ahead. *Bother*. Stopped, made a U-turn, apologised to the four-or-so cars behind us that did the same, also to Ron and Wendy in the sweep car, then proceeded. Fortunately we were not in sheep country, but in Australia's asparagus capital.

The next highlight was on our way to Cardinia, where we passed what is sure to be Victorian Tourism's answer to the Big Banana, "The big pile of dirt" ... very impressive. *No Big Asparagus in Koo-Wee-Rup yet*.

Passing over an unwell possum we arrived at a great MX-5 road, interspersed with some fairly impressive potholes. Reminded me of a bloke I had worked with, of the same name, because everyone tried to avoid him as well. We enjoyed the fresh country air as we passed a chicken farm, more fresh country air later on the same road as we passed a dairy farm. A quick transit through Poowong, where incidentally the film "Kenny" had its first screening, then down through the twisty bits to Loch, watching out for cars stopped around the blind corner before the highway crossing.

We all stopped at Loch for a break and to meet up with the cars from the Eastern Victoria Chapter, including learner driver Troy Heasly who had driven from Melbourne to join the Eastern group at Yarragon, so he could enjoy an even

greater variety of roads. That would have to be one of the best driver training ideas ever. We enjoyed the break at Loch, a pretty town with nice cafés and a variety of small shops.

With all duly refreshed and the two groups together for the next stage, we hit the road again. Great fun on that section, even though the navigator's brake pedal did not work as she expected. However, the redundant centre pedal on my side showed its worth, when a truck used a gap in the convoy to turn across the road. The gap diminished rapidly as we arrived at the potential "scene of the accident". Luckily both stopped in time with no damage done. The navigator's heart rate may have jumped a tad.

All was going swimmingly until we arrived at some unexpected road works ... no matter, some proceeded slowly to avoid the dust; the racers on the other hand loved the slippery stuff.

At the end of the road works everyone waved to some farm kids enjoying the passing MX-5 parade. Then back onto the bitumen for some more great fun. As Jeff had said, the scenery was great and, as he also forecast, I have no idea as concentrating on the road was essential.

We came to the south coastal sand dunes near Kilcunda. Up the highway then turned toward Phillip Island. A huge illuminated sign by the road said *the police were enforcing speed*. Wish they had shown that earlier in the run, as sometimes in the twisty bits I suspected I was going a bit slowly!

According to the run notes this is where we left Australia. No passport control though.

We ended the run at Rhyll which is a Rhyll nice spot for a *Rhyll* nice lunch.

Some chose what looked like a nice restaurant, others a picnic or fish and chips at the shop which specialised in squids' tentacles (*at least I think that's what it said*) ...

Thanks to Judy and Jeff for organising a brilliant run. To quote the grandkids,

"UNRHILL BANANA PHYLL" ■

We were up early but had enjoyed a nice sleep in, because of the daylight saving change over. I even persuaded the navigator to come along on the run with that argument. With the car ready to roll we had the top down to enjoy the morning, even though the clouds were a bit dark.

Ten minutes from home we hit some rain near Calder Park raceway. Thought about stopping to put the top up *but we would have been wetter doing that than just continuing on*. Of course, five minutes later the rain stopped.

With the weather improving we drove across Melbourne, over the Bolte Bridge, through the Burnley tunnel, then along the Monash to McDonald's at Berwick. Luckily we picked the right McDonald's; some didn't, so Jeff Searl did a quick round-up run to the other one nearby.

A good crowd gathered, including the Boak girls, Isabelle and Emily, with mum and dad. Both looked great in their Club gear, and Emily also had a set of white fluffy earmuffs, handy on a chilly morning with the car top down.

With all signed in and refreshed Judy and Jeff (above) briefed the assembly, Jeff mentioned the great scenery later in the run (for the passengers' benefit) and advised the drivers would not have time to look. Judy asked for a volunteer to write the run report. Everyone stared at their feet for a minute or two, as usual, until a strange alien force raised my hand.



One "L" of a run! 1/4/12 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Grant Butler ■ Run organiser: Grant Butler

This run was a chance to have a joint run with the Central Chapter.

↳ Troy and Tony Heasley

The Eastern Victoria group of five cars left Yarragon and wound their way over the Gippsland hills to Loch for the rendezvous with the Central group, which had left from Berwick.

Our group, while small, had a standout car and owner: a beautiful Titanium NB, one of a hundred or so in Australia. The Titanium NB has always been a very desirable model for me ever since I saw it unveiled at the South Australian Natmeet I attended in 2002. Great colour, beautiful brown upholstery and those fabulous wheels.

That was the car but what of the owner? A very fortunate young man – Troy Heasley. So young in fact that he was on L plates! Troy was a very proud owner and clearly enjoyed driving the car. In the passenger seat was Troy's father Tony.

I must confess that I was a little concerned when I first saw the L-plated car and driver at the start of the run in Yarragon. The convoy had some wonderful twisting and challenging roads ahead and I did not want to waste them, as I am sure you will understand.

I need not have worried. Troy obviously has some driving talent and put the Titanium through her paces, well and truly staying with the convoy.

A coffee stop in Loch and meet up with the Central group, then across the ridge tops to Rhyll on the route Jeff and Judy had planned. Then more wonderful MX-5 roads leading us to lunch on the foreshore at Rhyll. The link up with the Central group enabled us to catch up with a few fellow MX-5ers we had not seen for awhile.

Overall, a terrific run. The joint Chapter runs are an excellent idea and we look forward to the next. ■



↳ "No, really, Captain!" ... Ron Diprose (left) demonstrates that old alien mind control to Ron Mac



↳ Joan and Ken Read

Chapter chatter ...

Roastin' Ross ... 14/4/12 | Southern Tassie

■ Words & photos: John Waldoock, <http://picasaweb.google.com/mx5hobart> ■ Run organisers: John Waldoock

Last year Ross and Inger very kindly offered to host a spit roast as an after-run event for the Southern Tasmania Chapter.

Not being totally silly, John Hadrill and I quickly said "yes" and locked in a date early in the year before Ross could change his mind.

So, with appetites ready, we all met at the usual Bellerive car park, though this time on a Saturday as we were having the above mentioned roast afterwards. Of course, being a Saturday, the local council had closed the car park to make way for a street market (why they do this when Salamanca market is open at the same time beats me!) and so we all had to scramble to find somewhere to meet nearby. Luckily the Chapter members are flexible ... I think they are used to things going wrong when I am the organiser!

It was really nice to see the usual suspects and a few new faces as well. Rob Tanner and his wife Dianne came along for the first time. Rob is the happy owner of a superb NB Titanium ... they *must* have had a good time as I have just noticed an email from Murray announcing their membership. *Welcome to the Club guys.*

It was also the first run for my son David, who has only just begun to learn to drive and I was really happy to have him along (I think the temptation of free food was the clincher).

We left a little after 2 pm, partly due to Jo Hirst who insisted on parking in a different place (I didn't realise SE owners could be so snobby). Allan P joined up with the convoy en route, giving some excuse about a petrol station attendant trying to make him pay twice for his fuel. At least he hadn't locked his keys in the boot ...

The run heads east and then north towards Oatlands, which is about 100km from Hobart. The drive is through back roads, some quite narrow but all challenging with undulating terrain and often sharp corners. We arrived without fuss in Oatlands, on strict instructions that we were having only a five-minute break. We left 20 minutes later (I think Jo inspected every car for stone chip



^ John Waldoock (left) holds the "i-Songsheet" while Allan Pryer gives the 12-string and the vocal cords a run, with Ross Crayford in support

damage) and made our way back via Mud Walls road, unfortunately a road quite degraded in parts but with some spectacular sections of winding, twisty tarmac as well.

It was at this stage that the mechanical gods reared their heads, as my car's temperature gauge began to rise. So I had to pull over and let things cool down, leaving the rest of the group to make their way to my place and then on to Ross' place for dinner. My son was quite happy, as this gave him a chance to drive *Feisty* (my car) home, which he did in quite a competent manner considering his relative newness to the game. We picked up the Chapter, and with my wife Michelle in tow in her new VW Beetle, we made our way to Ross' for dinner.

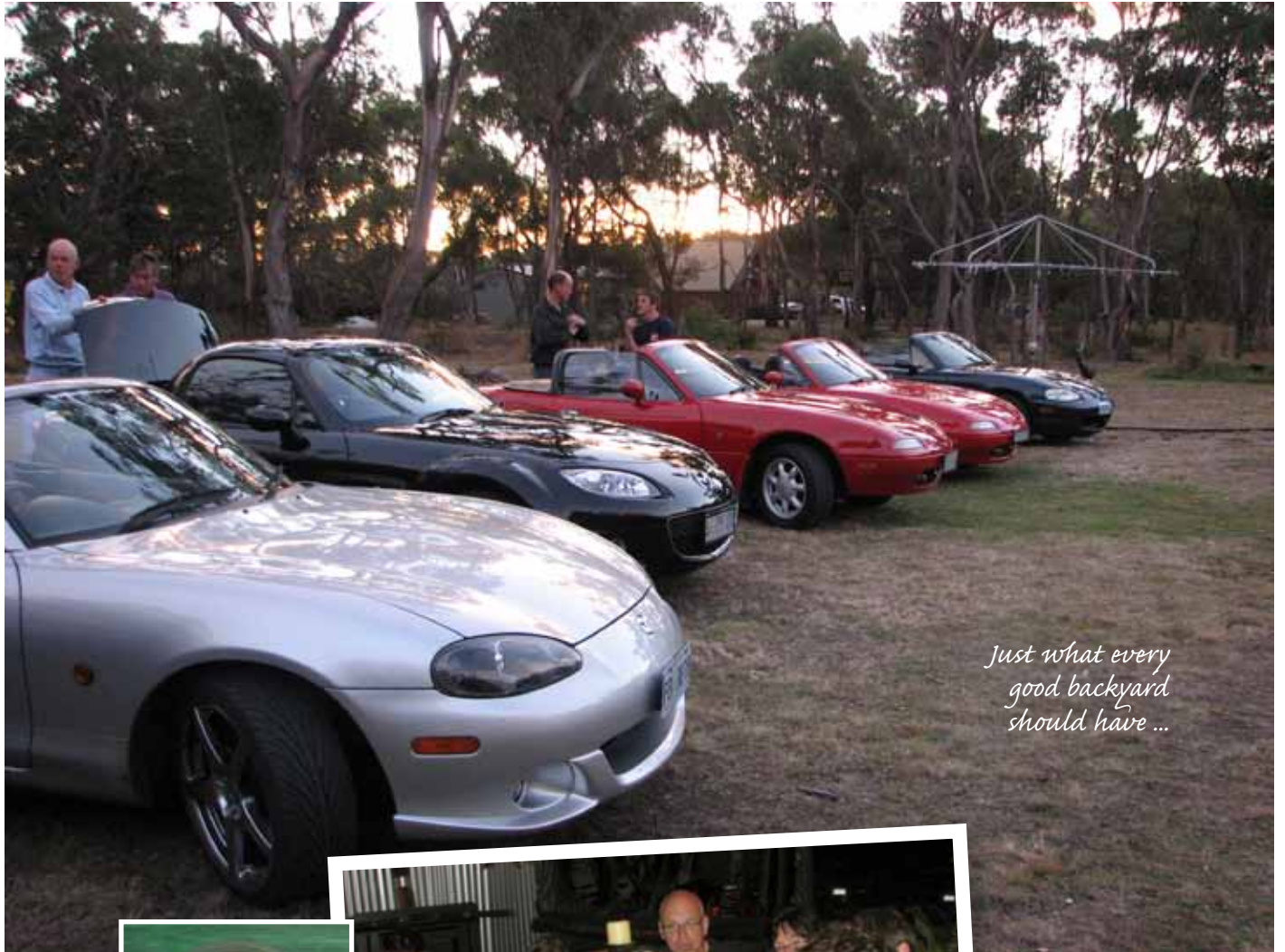
Well, what can I say? Ross and Inger really turned on a treat. The roast beef and pork were superb, being a meativore

myself I particularly enjoyed the meal (with apologies to any vegetarian club members!). We topped off the meal with ice cream and pavlova and then Ross fired up the espresso machine and treated us to coffee or hot chocolate!

We then started to talk about music, musical instruments and so Ross showed us his practice studio, and from that the 12-string guitar was hauled out and Allan P and Ross treated us to a few songs. Particularly well done, since it was totally improvised and the 12-string was almost untuneable.

I would like to finish by again thanking Ross and Inger for their hard work in putting on a really special meal and making the Chapter feel very welcome.

Thanks too to my wife, Michelle, for the pavlova and brandy for the chocolate cake. ■



*Just what every
good backyard
should have ...*



Chapter chatter ...

Lots of corners, not many turns ...

15/4/12 | North-Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Gerry Engwerda ■ Photos: Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw, Murray Finlay ■ Run organiser: Ron Gillick

Fabulous – the sort of day where you can put the top down right at the start and not have to think about it again for the rest of the run.

The start, incidentally, saw us at the *Java Café* in the main street of Yackandandah (yes, there is such a place), where the Ballarat people were introduced to sunshine and Ron briefed the group.

From Yackandandah we wound our way south to Mt Beauty, the sun shining, tops down on largely traffic-free roads interrupted only by the occasional Camry (why is it always a Camry?) that does not seem to come equipped with a rear vision mirror. *Do 13 MX-5s trailing behind you tell you nothing???* **Look behind you!!!**

Through the foothills and then just short of Mt Beauty we turned right and joined the Tawonga Gap road which was to take us towards Bright.

This is really the sort of road for which the MX-5 was born. Revs up, short, sharp straight stretches, flick corners and panoramic views as we climbed towards the top of the Gap, the car park and the scenic look out!

There we met a curious group of people who apparently thought we were either Audis or Porsches out on a day trip –

a natural enough mistake, I suppose! *Porsche drivers so often try to pass themselves off as MX-5 owners. It is becoming a problem and we need to speak to them about it.*

Bright was just coming into the autumn splendour for which it is justly famous! Give it another two weeks and it will be a sight not to be missed. The River Deck Café and the grassy surrounds near the river are well worth a visit, run or no run.

However we couldn't wait for Bright to grow into its full autumn magnificence so we set off for the uphill trek to Mt Buffalo Chalet and a much-needed lunch.

How great is this? After a few turns left and right the MX-5 seems to breathe more easily and become more spirited. Could be just my imagination of course but we were having fun. At least we did until we came up behind another Camry that, like the last one, could not see any reason why anyone would want to travel any faster than 80 under any circumstances.

Still, it gave us a chance to admire the scenery as well as the road ahead and soon we were at the car park at the Chalet.

What a magical run ... despite there being countless corners, there are only two "turns" on the 120km from Yackandandah to the Chalet ... the first from the Kiewa Valley Hwy on to the Bright-Tawonga road, the second on to the Great Alpine Road to head into Bright. [You do leave the Great Alpine Road at Porepunkah for the ascent to the Chalet, but that doesn't count ... you go straight on through the roundabout while the highway veers right.]

Having scouted out the location beforehand, Ron and Marg took as to a magnificent rock outcrop (which we dubbed the "hard rock café) where we had lunch overlooking the valleys below.

The word "stunning" really does not do this spot justice. It's the sort of view that, otherwise, you would probably only get from an expensive balloon ride.

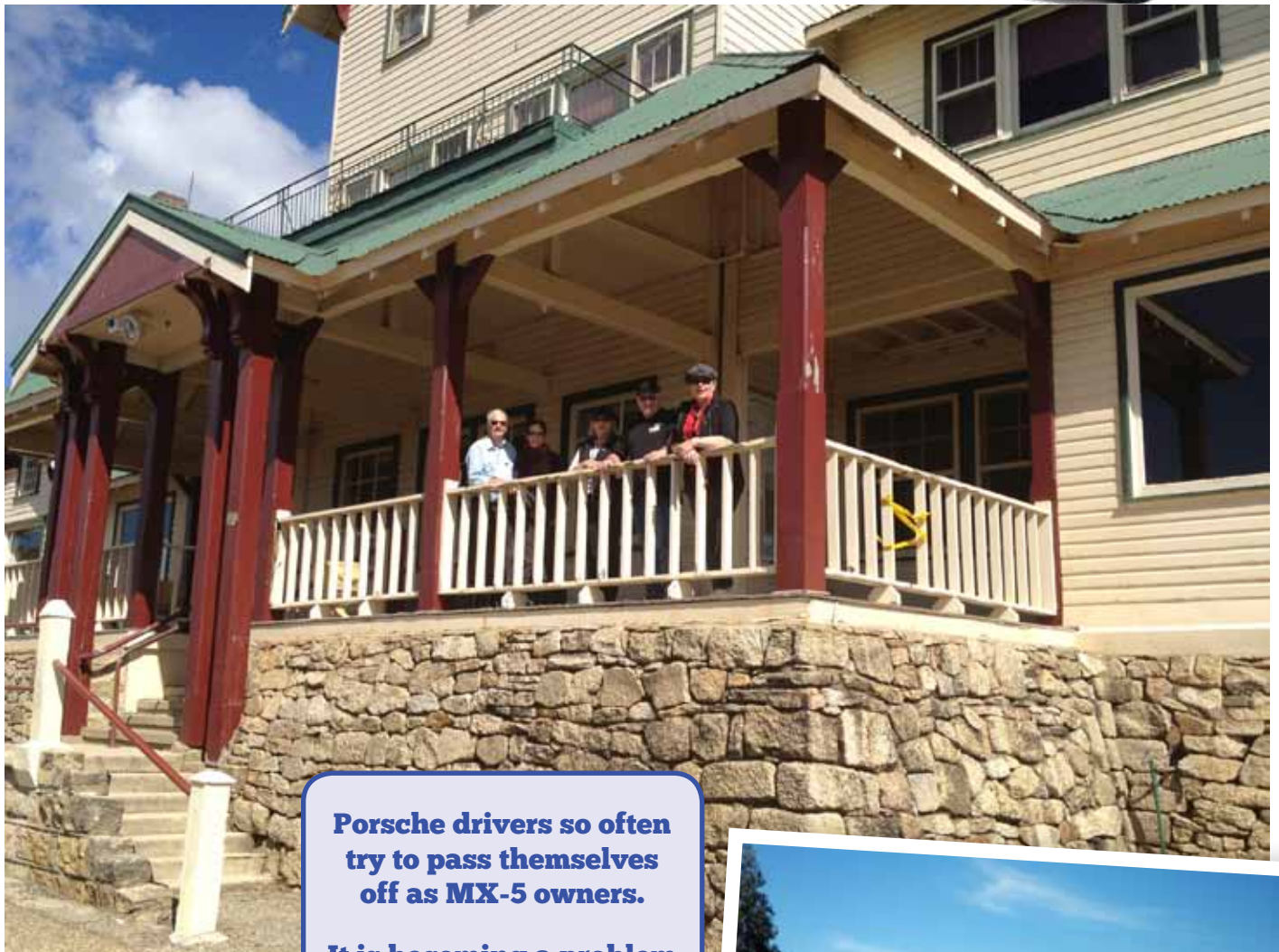
Absolutely fantastic – thanks to both Ron and Marg for finding it.



▲ Celebrating the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter's 5th birthday in grand style: (from left) Chapter Captain Ron, Ian, Beau, Gerry, Marg, Keren, Dawn, Alan, Jeff and John at Tawonga Gap. Mt Bogong is in the distance.



✓ Gerry, Ellie, Dawn, John & Noellene put dibs on the new clubrooms ...



Porsche drivers so often try to pass themselves off as MX-5 owners. It is becoming a problem and we need to speak to them about it ...

✓ Mt Buffalo



➤ Tawonga



Thanks also to all those people who came such a long way to attend runs in this part of the world. In particular, those people from Ballarat who are regulars at our runs: Ian and Karen Bradshaw, Noellene and John Gleeson, Dawn and Alan Everett, Beau McLennan, Jeff Woolf and Gwenda Parkinson. Ron Diprose who came all the way from Sunbury, Murray himself from Melbourne of course and the "locals" who didn't have to travel quite so far: Nigel Anderson, Ian and Val Bruce, Bill and Elaine Hines as well as Ron and Marg Gillick and my wife Ellie and me. Thanks to you all for such a great day.

By the way, the Chalet at Mount Buffalo is unoccupied and there are no plans to bring it back to life. Could it be the new home of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria? It's certainly central!

If everyone put in ... ■

^ Tawonga Gap



Chapter chatter ...



Fish 'n Chips and Chocolate run

22/4/12 | Northern Tasmania

■ Words: Ruth Beaton ■ Photos: Kelly Berggren
■ Run organiser: Ken Beaton

The raining was pouring down so we sheltered under the awning at Harris Scarfe in Devonport as we awaited the arrival of our fellow members from the Launceston area.

We had 12 starters, which was a great effort considering the forecast.

Ken led us up to Sheffield where the new murals were on display. We managed to park our cars amongst the cyclists and found shelter in the park for morning tea and Easter eggs and, by this time, the rain eased allowing us to chat over our morning tea while some purchased drinks and took in the murals.

After a welcome break we were led out of Sheffield in light rain towards Lake Barrington rowing course. The rain came pouring down and then we had fog so the drive was casual with good use of radios. We had a short stop at Wilmot to let everyone catch up and a quick toilet break before it was off to the famous Spellman's Bridge. Because of weather conditions it was a cautious drive down and out, passing campervans on the way.

Time was getting away from us so we had to make a dash to the highway to get to our lunch stop. On arrival in Burnie, around 1.30pm, it was time for a well-earned lunch break. Some of us went to the *Octopus Café* for fish and chips while others had a



counter lunch at the pub.

The weather cleared for the afternoon run which took us out of Burnie along the back road into Penguin and following the coast road to Ulverstone. On the outskirts of Devonport we split up, with some heading home while others called in to the Beatons' for coffee and a chat.

Despite the road and weather conditions it was another good day driving and enjoying our MX-5 friends. ■

^ *Michael & Karina Lindsay*
> *Michael Nolan ready to pounce on Ruth Bunny ... er, Beaton*



Postcards from NatMeet X, Canberra... 6-10/4

■ Victorian & Tasmanian participants, words & photos: Dave & Gail Collins, Bruce & Jenny Gray, Nils & Billie Powell
Other images: Simon Corston (WA Club)

Friday, 6/4

Here we were at our first NatMeet. Gail and I arrived on Thursday so no pressure to make the 7-hour-plus-stops journey. The accommodation at ANU was very good and food provided over the four days was excellent.

We took the opportunity in the morning for a beautiful walk (we were going to need the exercise) around part of Lake Burley Griffin to visit the Renaissance exhibition.

We arrived back to a hive of activity in the car park: buckets, hoses, clothes, shampoo, polish and vacuuming. Hoods and boots were open, mats were out, wheels were off!! Our beauties had to be ready for the Concours d'Elegance tomorrow.

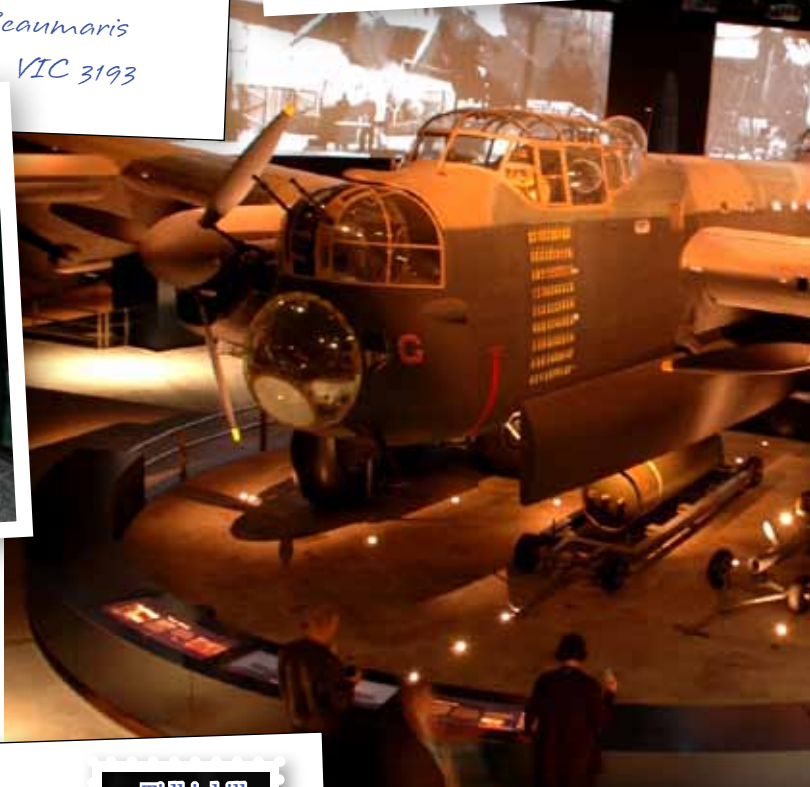
An elaborate barbecue dinner at ANU welcomed us, let the fun begin...

Gail & David



"mxtra"

Mazda MX-5
Club of Victoria
PO Box 7438
Beaumaris
VIC 3193



Saturday, 7/4

Under a sunny Canberra sky and en route to the Concours d'Elegance /Show & Shine, our MX-5s were photographed with the "new" Parliament House as the backdrop.

The sight of more than 80 MX-5s on the parkland between the Australian National Library and Lake Burley Griffin was a great draw card for the public.

Following judging we had a 130km scenic tour to the CSIRO/NASA tracking station at Tidbinbilla and some great zoom-zoom roads back to Canberra.

A tour of the Australian War Memorial and a once in a lifetime dinner under the World War II Lancaster bomber "G for George" finished our day.

Bruce & Jenny



"mxtra"

Mazda MX-5
Club of Victoria
PO Box 7438
Beaumaris





Sunday, 8/4

Track day. An early start for those into motor sport. But leisurely for those taking the scenic drive or going shopping.

With so many cars the run was staggered. Being #76, we and the other Victorians and Tasmanians were in the last group. The run to Wakefield Park was yet another beauty via Braidwood for the obligatory *caffè latte*.

Funkhana at Wakefield was indeed fun: a Le Mans start with an egg & spoon race, slalom with co-driver steering and bunny tossing whilst driving in circles. The winner had left the hand brake on!!!

Dinner was at the Australian Film & Sound Archive, 200 metres from ANU. Les & Dame Edna, Spiderman, Laurence of Arabia, Miss Fisher, The Red Queen, Charlie Chaplin and more on the streets, what a hoot.

Gail & David



mxtra
Mazda MX-5
Club of Victoria
PO Box 7438
Beaumaris 3193

Gala dinner under "G for George" in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Photo: Matt Wilmot (NSW Club)



Photo: Matt Wilmot

NatMeet 2012

Full on, Fun Filled, new and old Friends, Fantastic.

A big thank you to the NSW Club for putting on a great event. So much planning, booking, arranging, executing and it all worked like clockwork (so it seemed).

Thanks to all, who made it a wonderful first NatMeet for David and Gail and second for Bruce and Jenny, Nils and Billie.

2014 will be on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland – can't wait. If you have not been to a NatMeet we can highly recommend it.

Monday, 9/4

Breakfast, briefing and into the last group of 10 cars to depart for Bungendore. **Snapshot memories:** a bright, sunny crisp day; of big Canberra roundabouts free of traffic taken at posted speeds' tyres squealing – great fun; a big 4WD pushing hard to overtake our group... let him through (at the next steep hill he slows and vanishes: astern quite satisfying); GPS puts us traveling across a paddock so road must be new.

Bungendore arrives and passes, cross the Kings Highway at risk to life and limb with 110kmh traffic both ways. Wonder where the car ahead got to; catch him at cost of tyre rubber. Suddenly feel too old for this malarkey. Pleasant lunch at Gundaroo fixes this and back on song for the return to Canberra for the final dinner and prize presentations.

11.15 to bed. A couple satisfied with life, the MX-5 and the Club!

Nils & Billie



mxtra
Mazda MX-5
Club of Victoria
Beaumaris 3193



Photo: Simon Corston (WA Club)

Chapter chatter ...

Many happy returns (unless you're a helium balloon!) ... 29/4/12 | Western Victoria

■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw & Geoff Roche ■ Run organiser: John Gleeson

*Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday Western Chapter, Happy Birthday to you!!*

We are outside our home in Ballarat and the sun is shining. Yes ... **shining!**

MX-5s start arriving, 11 in all from Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Melbourne. Bronwyn and Geoff present us with a helium balloon with a large three on it. A very lovely touch. I had looped it on to our style bar while I locked the house, but as Johnny boy moved the car out the balloon went skyward towards Bendigo! Bye bye balloon ... we had it for about seven minutes.

John gives his usual welcome speech and off we go. Tops down, off towards Cressy to meet more MX-5s. This is when we realise RED is the colour of the day. Four reds left Ballarat and we picked up another three at Cressy including Alan and Dawn's newly acquired red NC. *How common!*

Now we have 15 cars. After a quick chat we head off through Beeac past the large salt lakes and into Colac for morning tea.

We pull up beside our last pick up who is talking to a local MX-5 owner. With 17 cars all lined up we created quite a bit of interest with people coming up and checking out the cars and taking photos. We say goodbye to the local guy (*he will be with us one day, watch this space*) and back into the cars for the best of the run still to come.

Ian leads us with David closely following as we head towards Beech Forest. Great roads, twisting and turning through valleys and hills until we reach our favourite part of the run, Turtons Track. This a very narrow road with tall gums and you almost drive *under* the tree fern fronds. It is beautiful ... not that you get to admire it much with the way we like to drive it because you go through one turn and head immediately into the next. This goes for 15km and everyone has a great smile on their face when they emerge at the other end.

It is about lunch time, so we head up to the West Barwon Reservoir for our picnic lunch. We like the picnic lunch because of the freedom it gives us to stop anywhere ... and it's great socially.

The guys also get a chance to check out each others' cars. John was very happy to show off our new addition,

a cold air intake. I might add he didn't mind showing off what it did to the performance on the run either.

Anyway it's "*head 'em up, move 'em out*" and we head to Skenes Creek. The traffic is light so we have a good run to the coast.

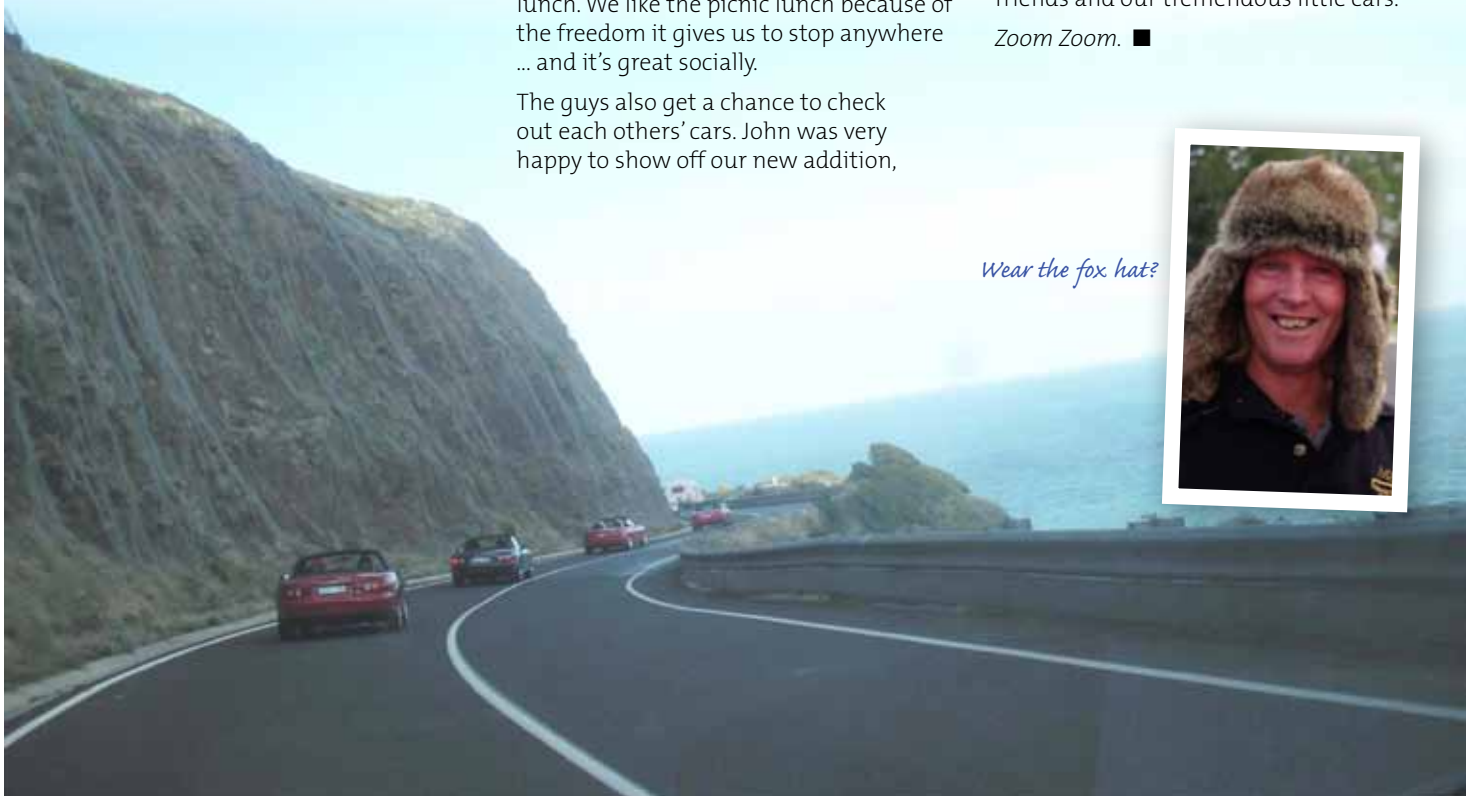
On to the GOR ... the ocean is really choppy, large waves hitting the rocks and a lot of sea mist. Then we strike two caravans. My God, don't they use their mirrors?! *Sixteen MX-5s plus others following and they drive past all the slow vehicle turn-outs.* Unbelievable.

We turn off at Lorne and head towards Winchelsea.

This run has been on the absolute best of roads and it keeps on going. We pull in at Winchelsea and say our goodbyes as each of us will head off in a different direction. Five cars head towards Ballarat, two to the Cape Clear Hotel and three to the Buninyong Hotel for tea and a wind down after a fabulous day with our MX-5 friends and our tremendous little cars.

Zoom Zoom. ■

Wear the fox hat?





^ A rare shot of Western Victoria Chapter Captain, John Gleeson (taken in a seven-minute window!)
 > Ian Bradshaw's shorts ..



^ Blushing red ...
 > ... and turning blue in Colac



The run home from the North-east

Nine Western Chapter members decided to spend a weekend with our North-Eastern friends for their Fifth Anniversary run on 15 April.

Three cars travelled to Corowa on Friday and three more on Saturday.

Saturday night Ron and Marg invited us all for a BBQ at their lovely home on the bank of the Murray River; believe me it does not get a whole lot better than that!

We had a great night. Thank you to Ron and Marg for your hospitality and friendship.

Sunday we headed off for the run. Gerry's report on this run is on page 12, so you can read all about the terrific time we enjoyed.

After the run on Sunday three Western cars had to go home but three were lucky enough to have the Monday to take our time heading back to Ballarat. Geoff, Gwenda, John and I decided to stay in Beechworth for the night. After booking into the motel we wandered around town and went to the hotel next to the motel for tea where they had a trivia night. Our very talented Gwenda won a bottle of wine and a stainless steel drink bottle. Then it was time to hit the sack as we were all very tired after our big day.

Next morning we walked up to the Beechworth Bakery for breakfast. Time then to get back into our MX-5s and head on to some of the best roads in Victoria. As Chiltern was only 20-something k's away we decided to have a look there and catch up on a bit of local history.

After an enjoyable wander around it was time to head for Wangaratta, tops down of course. The weather was perfect. At Wang we decided on a road [the long way home] that looked great on the map. It was the Whitfield-Mansfield Road and it was just magic. Terrific road high up in the hills, twists, bends, beautiful valleys, everything (as featured in the Club's "20 Roads" book).

Through Whitfield, Mansfield, Bonnie Doon, down to Yea, on through Strath Creek, Broadford, Kilmore then on to Woodend, Daylesford and home.

It was a magnificent day. At 6.30pm we pulled up outside home and the four of us got out of our cars and all agreed it was one of our best drives.

As Jeff said, this was one weekend we will be talking about for a long time. Once again perfect weather, wonderful company, terrific roads and of course great little cars.

Thank you to all our North-Eastern Chapter friends for another great run. ■

~ Noellene Gleeson

The “pretty blue car” is no handicap!

■ Words & photos: Bob de Bont



The second round of the Victorian Motorkhana Championship for 2012 was held on 15 April, hosted by the Deniliquin Sports Car Club (DSCC) and held at their club grounds.

The road trip north started on Saturday morning at 5.30am, with breakfast in Echuca before heading on to Deniliquin for scrutineering by 9.00am.

As has become the standard, the Sunday motorkhana was preceded by an autocross. This time it was a round of the Deniliquin Autocross Series resulting in a larger field and more local drivers on their home track.

With only one MX-5 entered in the autocross, a number of comments about the *pretty blue car* were endured ... however these were quickly dispelled once the times were posted; Bob achieving an excellent 12th outright and second in class against a number of specialist vehicles.

After a fun day it was off to the motel for a quick shower and dinner at the RSL.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny, so we dressed appropriately in shorts and tee shirt and prepared for the day with plenty of water and sunscreen.

With a total of 32 competitors for the round, Bob was joined by Mark Szutta

(Red NB8A), his son Alex and Tony. In all there were three MX-5s representing six of the seven entries in Class B. Unfortunately only one nominated to represent our Club.

The surface was dry and dusty, but provided good, consistent traction throughout the day. The dust added another dimension to planning the test as it required some management to avoid covering other flags in dust and ruining fast times.

In all we ran seven tests over the day and **Bob emerged from the dust with a very creditable seventh outright, 1st on handicap and first in Class.** Mark earned a fourth in class and Alex a first in Juniors.

The Club Championship took a bit of a hit this round, dropping us to fourth overall.

Round 3 is at Pakenham on 13 May.

More information is available from www.motorkhanavic.com.au or from Bob de Bont on 0402 345 562 ■

^ Mark Szutta

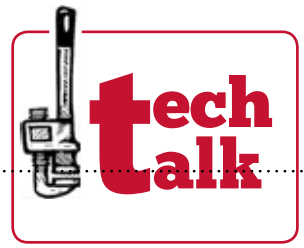
^ Bob de Bont in “the pretty blue car”

For information about the Australian Motorkhana Championship, see:

www.cams.com.au/en/Publications/Speedread/2012/April_2012/Australian_Motorkhana_Championships.aspx



Brace yourself!



■ Words & photos: Allan Pryer, Southern Tasmania Chapter

I'm not one for drilling holes in my car and have suffered pangs of regret now and then for making a sizeable opening in the firewall for a cold air intake some years ago.

And so it was that I 'ummed and aahed' for many months about the *Flyin' Miata* butterfly brace. Twenty-four holes is a lot and would be another nail in the coffin of my ability to return my Classic Red '93 NA to original.

Now there are many braces out there for MX-5s, some of which attempt to address things that were sorted by the time later models arrived. Amongst these are under-body chassis braces, seat-belt mount braces, front-strut braces amongst the options along with roll-bars and putting the hardtop on permanently!

My home is tucked at the base of the mountains in the northern suburbs of Hobart and the road to it becomes increasingly quaint and decreasingly smooth the closer you get to it. As any owner of a standard NA knows scuttle-shake and general vibrations are always lurking especially when roofless, and as our cars age this is likely to increase as the body "relaxes". At certain points in my area the sealed roads have become corrugated and I would seek out any path that might reduce the annoyance of the associated vibration.

Having studied no engineering I decided that braces that link the two sides of the car together at front or rear are attempting to address a lack of stiffness in the chassis that then allows the suspension structures to move. By applying a brace across these it at least prevents that but still allows twisting of the body as front and rear remain relatively independent. By applying more extensive body stiffening measures much of that should be reduced whilst at the same time at least partly, and at best totally negating the need for strut braces.

I consulted the various MX-5/Miata forums to get a feel for how effective the change was for those fitting either just the frame-rails or both those and the brace. Many said that just fitting the rails gave dramatic results and where the X-shaped cross-brace was added the difference overall was even



Photo: *Flyin' Miata*

more so. Now many of these take their MX-5s out for circuit work and these people want stiffness to the max! The rails and brace were often fitted to cars where roll-bars and other bracing were already in place. I was mindful that my use would mostly be out amongst the lovely twisty and undulating back-roads of Tasmania rather than as a track-day hero, and thus needed to know if it would change the nature of that experience too much. There is a school of thought that suggests that removing our cars' natural flexibility alters their behaviour for the worse where corners involve a switch of camber for example, and that some sure-footedness might be lost, especially in the wet. Food for thought, and not being that cheap all of this added to the picture of how worthwhile and what bang-for-buck was on offer.

Regardless, amongst the other rattles and vibration my car had developed an annoying squeak that was proving extremely difficult to locate, was not reproduceable when stopped and emerged only after driving on bumpy roads like those near my house. It seemed that such issues were only going to become more numerous in the face of all of this vibration.

Damn it! *I would buy the FM Butterfly Brace!*

As mentioned there are several parts to the *Flyin' Miata* butterfly brace kit. There are the two 'frame rails' which fit (all being well) over the existing longitudinal chassis rails that run either side of the drive-line. There is the butterfly brace itself which, as mentioned is essentially an 'X' shape within a trapezoidal frame. This is joined to the rails by additional structures *Flyin' Miata* refer to as "wings" (see left).

Fitting is going to take some time and patience and be prepared to "give a little muscle" and employ various "persuaders". The seats must come out and the carpet is lifted away from the work area although mine decided it wanted a closer look at the job -more later! Get the car up in the air as high as you can – those 24 holes will take some effort and will create a fair amount of turnings. You don't want to be struggling to hold the drill in place and deliver the necessary pressure amongst getting a face full of sharp metal (goggles are a must). As it was mine was only on axle stands, up two holes I think, and it was tight. The MX-5 is so light, beautifully balanced and stiff enough that if there is any height variation in the axle stand positions the car can somewhat unnervingly rock on the diagonal! You want a stable arrangement here to work on and I corrected the relevant stand by shimming the base with thin MDF (*thinks to himself: "if it's stiff enough to do that, why am I fitting this gear?!"*).

The fuel and brake lines are also released by removed their brackets. Positioning the rails prior to drilling is critical. There is little forward-back tolerance before the rear-most bolt-holes become too close to, or even bite into the bulkhead behind the seats. As a result they are positioned as far forward as they'll go without being forced away from the flat surface of the floorpan by shaped metal ahead of it. I thought I had my rails well forward but even then there was little room between the bolt heads and that bulkhead. The frame rails should fit snugly over the chassis rails. Mine were in excellent condition but even then it was a tight fit and required a little help with a rubber mallet. Any damage will probably mean some re-shaping with the trusty "*Jeremy Clarkson Universal Tool*".

... continued

Fitting a ... **Flyin' Miata Butterfly Brace** (continued)



Positioning the frame rails.
Photo: Flyin' Miata

Being a bit anal I agonised over the relative position of the two rails prior to drilling the holes. I didn't want a twisted installation as it were, so out came the vernier calipers as I tried to find reference points elsewhere on the chassis. Once satisfied I took to my baby with the drill. Rather than mark the holes, and after the fun of getting them in place and lined up, I left the frame rails in place. I was very careful not to open up the frame rail holes by catching the drill bit on them as I drilled. Having done that (sounds so easy) I cleaned up the edges of the holes with a file and applied some sealant around them.



Oh wait! I almost forgot my mate the carpet – drilling a front hole close to the transmission tunnel ultimately involved the fibrous carpet 'underlay'. Unbeknownst to the man underneath, the carpet had sagged back down so that the drill-bit dragged as much of the underlay into it as possible creating a twisted mass. Fortunately the carpet was fine and the underlay could be unwound

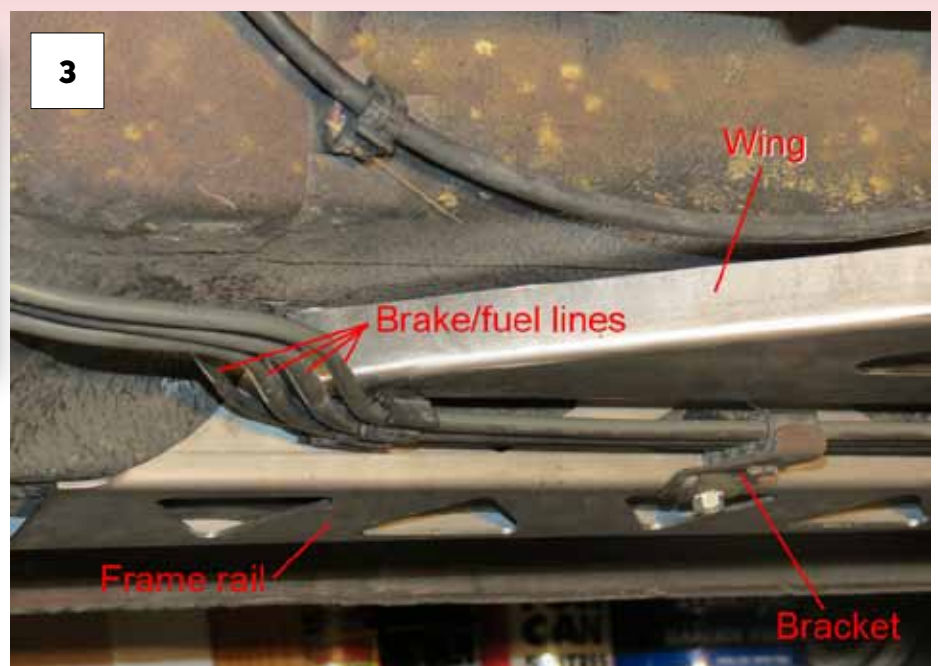
reasonably well. I learnt my lesson – pull both sides of the carpet up together and clip them over the central hatch.

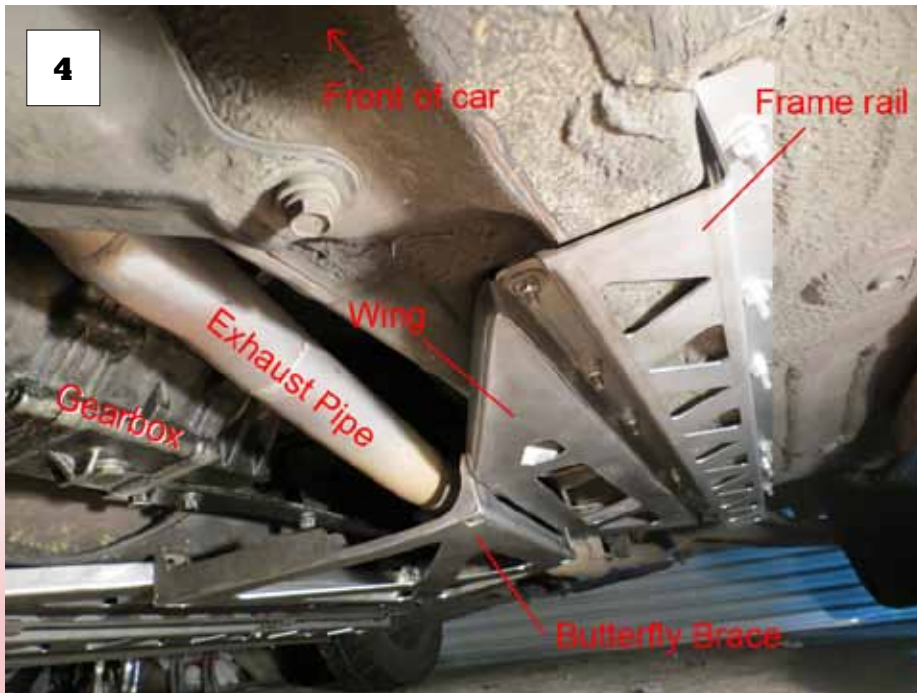
I then popped in the bolts (see pic 2) and gently tightened up the outside of the rails. The inside ones also hold the wings. *Flyin' Miata* suggest fitting the wings and brace as one unit so I bolted them together with the central brace as low as it would go to avoid problems with it fouling on the exhaust etc. when pushing into place. *Flyin' Miata's* idea was good but created some "excitement" when it came to fitting. The fuel/brake lines get in the way and don't quite nestle into the channel created by the frame rails and wings due to curving around too late at the front. The frame rail has mounts for the original brackets but the latter need their bolting points straightened to fit. A vice and hammer easily provided the necessary force and control to modify these parts with pleasing results (pic 3).

Getting the wing-brace assembly to squeeze into the gap between the frame rails was a major effort. There was no play anywhere else such that loosening the rails would help so it was all about controlled force. Initially I applied the mallet but noted that the brace was bowing due to the pressure from either side. I decided to use two old scissor

jacks to force the assembly into place whilst protecting the brace section by positioning them under it specifically. This worked well but a slight bow in the brace remained. I raised it up within the wings' slotted holes as high as it would go without being likely to have exhaust etc vibrate on it – it was hard up on an exhaust hanger mount. This provided more support overall for the brace but a little bow remains. Others in forums have mentioned this and *Flyin' Miata* admit it is a tight fit by design and weren't too concerned -as long as the intended function as a stiffening device is not compromised it should be OK. A voice inside says that whilst there is obviously tension in the system, "springiness" is not in the interests of removing the ability to flex, and I'm thinking it could do with a bit more strengthening (pics 4 & 5).

After everything was tightened, and this is fiddly amongst the fuel/brake lines, I took him for a run? No, I had to wait several days before a chance arrived – *aargh!* I had read that the difference was immediately apparent, but I'm sceptical of such comments and when I finally reversed out of the garage expected nothing to be apparent until some tasty corners were found. They were absolutely right! Even reversing felt strange. The car had a totally different feel. So stiff, so tight on our uneven driveway. As I drove off down the road it was like a different car, a new car.





The first test was the corrugated bit of road. The scuttle shake had not gone altogether but now the juddering and jarring was bearable. The usual array of small rattles bumps had reduced to minimal. However the biggest difference is in cornering. You do feel like you could get one wheel off the ground if the corner was so shaped but the behaviour is so precise and, as alluded to by forum contributors you can confidently put

the power down so much earlier. I have KYB AGX adjustable shocks and slightly lower King springs and coupled with this bracing you feel like you can really fire it into corners, achieve excellent turn-in and fire out again early. I might even turn up the shocks now. Having once been firmly in the corner of focussing on optimising engine performance I am a convert of sorting the whole suspension side of things. This cannot be over-rated.

Of course all of that has brought my attention to the brakes and how barely adequate they are when things improve elsewhere in the package.

Has this changed anything for the worse? Firstly the brace section will most likely be the lowest component under the car. I'd rather that than it be the fuel/brake lines, but they do seem a little exposed too. Humps and obstacles are then more likely to cause a problem especially with a heavier passenger on board. That said, with my slightly lowered configuration I was already running a higher risk. I might have to dial in a stiffer "shock" setting to counter!

In the forums there was mention of a greater tendency to "tramline" and relatively speaking I would say there is, but I'm not sure that hasn't come about just because a tighter/newer car would give that impression. How is it in the wet? I sense that this will be interesting with undulating corners where all four feet may be less well planted overall at certain points. As I get used to more aggressive dry cornering it will hard to compare with where I was in relation to this but I might be inclined to soften the suspension settings if I was intending on spirited driving in damp conditions.

Did it fix my annoying squeak? Alas, no, but it is much less likely to occur. (I will find the sod!)

At the end of the day I'm a nostalgic type and will always wonder if I've lost some purity of early MX-5 experience and overall I would say that some organic (ie, flexing) nature might have been diminished, but this is now a car which feels (preferably with better brakes) ready to take on anything.

With the even tighter, more direct feel of the handling now, and without all of the old rattling and juddering I won't be going back! ■

Flyin' Miata is a company in Colorado, USA, that specialises in "making Miatas accelerate faster, corner harder and stop shorter".

Find out more at www.flyinmiata.com

Please do your own research on the best solution for your car before making a decision on adding after-market bracing.

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The MX-5 Club Grill



Introducing the "Sunscreen Kid" ...

Jeff Woolf

Assistant Chapter Captain -
Western Victoria Chapter

Name? Jeff Woolf

Age? 59, but young-at-heart in my MX-5

Born? Melbourne

Current abode? Mount Clear (Ballarat)

Profession? Div 1. Psych Nurse

Partner? Rhonda

Pets? Leonard (Jack Russell)

Fave food? Hedgehog

Can you cook? Just a basic cook, but will have a go at anything

Favourite tippie? Icy cold lager and don't mind a champers occasionally

First drive? Honda 125 on a farm at 15. Driving test in a Mini

First car? EH Holden wagon with denim curtains

First fender bender? EH after being run off the road

Everyday driver? 2001 V8 Statesman

Current MX-5? 1999 NB Grace green, came with limited edition 10th Anniversary features

MX-5 improvements? Interior wood theme, wheels, partial body kit, Konis and lowered springs and heaps more to personalize and to look and drive like a sports car

MX-5 dislikes? Built to a price, but easy to rectify to my own taste

Why an MX-5? Always liked them, did my research, love at first sight, nothing comparable



Sunscreen in Ballarat? Hmm ...

Fluffy dice? Not this little black duck, but had a Stig in the back net for a laugh

Passions besides the MX-5? Old war movies, reading, eBay, research, travel, watching motor sport, family interests

Favourite TV show? Top Gear

Dream wheels? I love the old sports cars of the '50s and '60s Jags and Healys with wood extras

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? Preferably not; front wheels are for steering



Favourite other Mazda? Mazda 787 B Sports racing prototype (above)

If not a Mazda (gasp!) what? I do admire the Austin Healy 3000 Mk 3

How long in the Club? About three years

How many MX-5 Club runs? I've lost count, have been on all the local ones, always fun

Favourite Club run? Have all been good; recent North-Eastern Chapter run with two extra days' touring with some of our Western Chapter crew for company would be hard to beat. Always looking forward to the next one ...

Funniest thing seen on a Club run? Some of the looks of passengers when the "tops down ruling" comes into play on a cold wet day, just after they get all cosy and snug

Done DECA? No, but wouldn't mind doing it one day

Ford vs Holden? Always been a Holden man. Series production was best

What's playing in your MX-5? A bit old-fashioned ... I like Cilla Black and Petula Clark

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Gave up on the Demons. I back the previous Grand Final winner every year so I usually have a different team every year and can change sides during a game to ensure a win! This strategy does not go down well with others, especially when backing the Olympics

Final comments? I reckon MX-5s are fantastic. I admire all the active enthusiasts, their cars no matter what model, and what they have done or not done to them as well as some of the legends and tinkerers. My hat's off to the Club officials who ensure the Club is going well.

Sometimes we take things too seriously ... my MX-5 is just for fun, and when I jump in I leave everything behind.

Special mention to John and Noellene Gleeson who have been inspirational with our Western Victoria Chapter. ■



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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.

Wanted: NB seat cover ...

Mildura member **Barrie Mansell** is looking to replace the seat backrest cover in his 1999 NB MX-5.

The current one is getting worn, as can be seen in the photo at right.

To avoid freight costs, Barrie wants only the cover, not the whole seat back.

If you are able to help please contact Barrie at andman@tadaust.org.au or on 0417 812 536.



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.

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

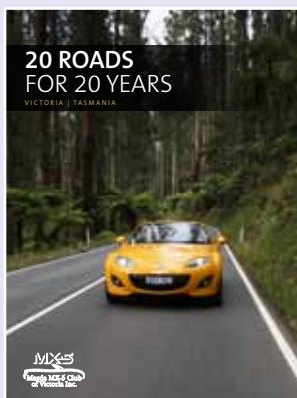


Club number plate frames



- » 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.



"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.



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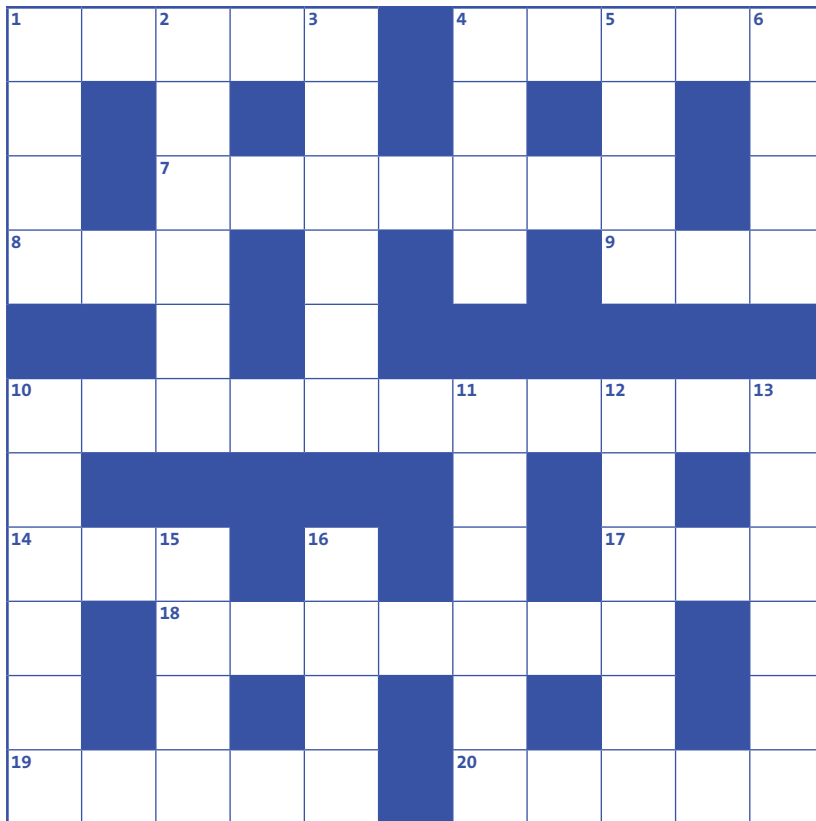
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Alan Bennett's

MX-5 crossword #3

... updated and "toughened up a bit"!



Across

- 1 German car sounds great with a circle (5)
- 4 Specific areas or regions (4)
- 7 Warning, don't park under where these birds sit! (7)
- 8 Ends with a stick and resides under the bonnet (3)
- 9 There is a big one in the motor, but not where it starts (3)
- 10 Watch out for them when driving, a mistake could be fatal (11)
- 14 The MX-5 has a counter set to revolutionise (abbrev) (3)
- 17 A hole under an MX-5 where mechanics work (3)
- 18 Driving lessons teach the Editor and Catherine (7)
- 19 A long, narrow receptacle for water (5)
- 20 Modern form of communication but please not while driving! (5)

Down

- 1 Battery juice (4)
- 2 Plunged or immersed, an extension of 8 across (6)
- 3 Please donate these if the worst happens in your MX-5 and life is ended prematurely (6)
- 4 MX-5s do it, cameras do it – in fact, it could double as an advertising phrase! (4)
- 5 The bonnet or front but not South East (4)
- 6 On ice it's expected, on oil it's dangerous; if you do this on tarmac replace your tyres (4)
- 10 On the side of the road this is normal and not moving (7)
- 11 To mould or throw again (6)
- 12 Electrifying and current unit (6)
- 13 Get started on a drive or arrange for review (3, 3)
- 15 A refreshing gap in the dash, to let rip (4)
- 16 When worn they cause tyre wear, but not in the city (4)

Answers next month ...

Some humour from Alan Bennett

*An MX-5 on its roof goes
wooz wooz ...*

*Friends don't let friends apex
early!*

*If you spin in turn three, and
no one actually sees it, then
... did you really spin in turn
three?*

*Oversteer scares passengers ...
understeer scares drivers!*

*If I had all the money I've
spent on cars ... I'd spend it all
on cars.*

*Straights are for fast cars ...
turns are for fast drivers!*

*Racing is the process of turning
money into noise.*

*Racing costs today exactly the
same as it did 50 years ago ...
it takes every penny you have.*

The older I get, the faster I was!

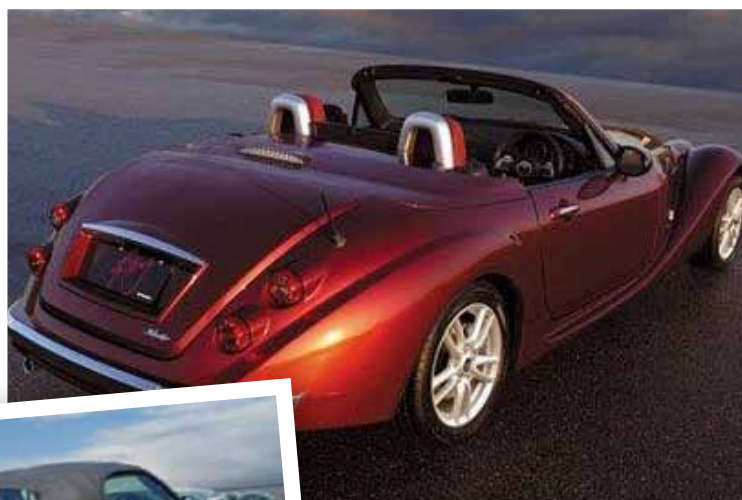
*Q: How do I make a small
fortune in racing?*

*A: Start with a large fortune
and just race ...*

An MX-5 by another name ...

■ Words: Ron Macdonald ■ Photos: Mitsuoka Motor Company

... a car should be a work of art, not just a means of getting from A to B.



Spot the difference?

- the MX-5 NC-based Himiko
- the Jaguar XK120
- the Jaguar XK140 and, below that, the lookalike Himiko



When is an MX-5 not an MX-5?

In the case of this beautiful machine (the top three photos, left) she carries on her compliance plate the manufacturer as "Mazda" and an MX-5 Vin number.

However she also has a hand-built custom body and the name Mitsuoka across her nose. This indeed, by definition, is an MX-5, though her coachwork is designed and custom built by the Mitsuoka Motor Company Ltd in Japan.

The "Himiko", as she is known, is an extension of the original Mazda philosophy of retro styling combined with modern technology and reliability. *Himiko* was a Japanese Queen of ancient times and Mitsuoka have tried to embody the dignity and radiant beauty attributed to this Queen into their design.

This magnificent beast is designed very much with the 1950s XK Jaguars in mind. The XK120 and XK140 are classics; their long bonnet and classic Jaguar racing pedigree is a great match for the spirit that has followed the MX-5 since its inception.

The basis of this car is pure NC MX-5, although the wheelbase has been extended just forward of the "A" pillar. With an overall length of 4575mm she is a little over half a metre longer than the standard model but with a similar width and overall height. Underneath she sports the Mazda two litre engine (LF-VE(RS)), a six-speed box (manual or auto) and is available in both the power retractable hard top or soft top variations.

The boot on this model, compared to the usual "sports car" fare, is cavernous and is not affected by the retractable hard top when down. The sloping boot lid is again very XK Jaguar but I have to say a very appealing improvement on the original.

It is very obvious that a lot of thought has gone into this design both from a practical and artistic point of view. On that point it should be noted that Mitsuoka believe a car should be a work of art not just a means of getting from A to B.

The interior is luxurious, sporting wood paneling and leather seats. For those who know the NC it is immediately obvious where the interior styling comes from.

I guess some purists may shy away from this variation of our much loved car, however, I personally think it is **magnificent**. I definitely think the Himiko will be added to my lottery win wish list. ■

More? www.mitsuoka-motor.com/english/lineup/himiko

A new option for the MX-5 owner

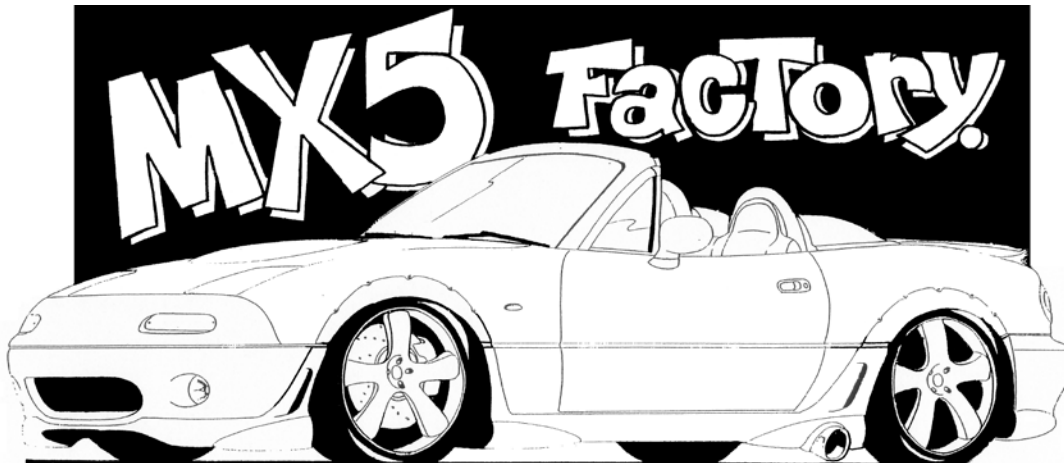
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