

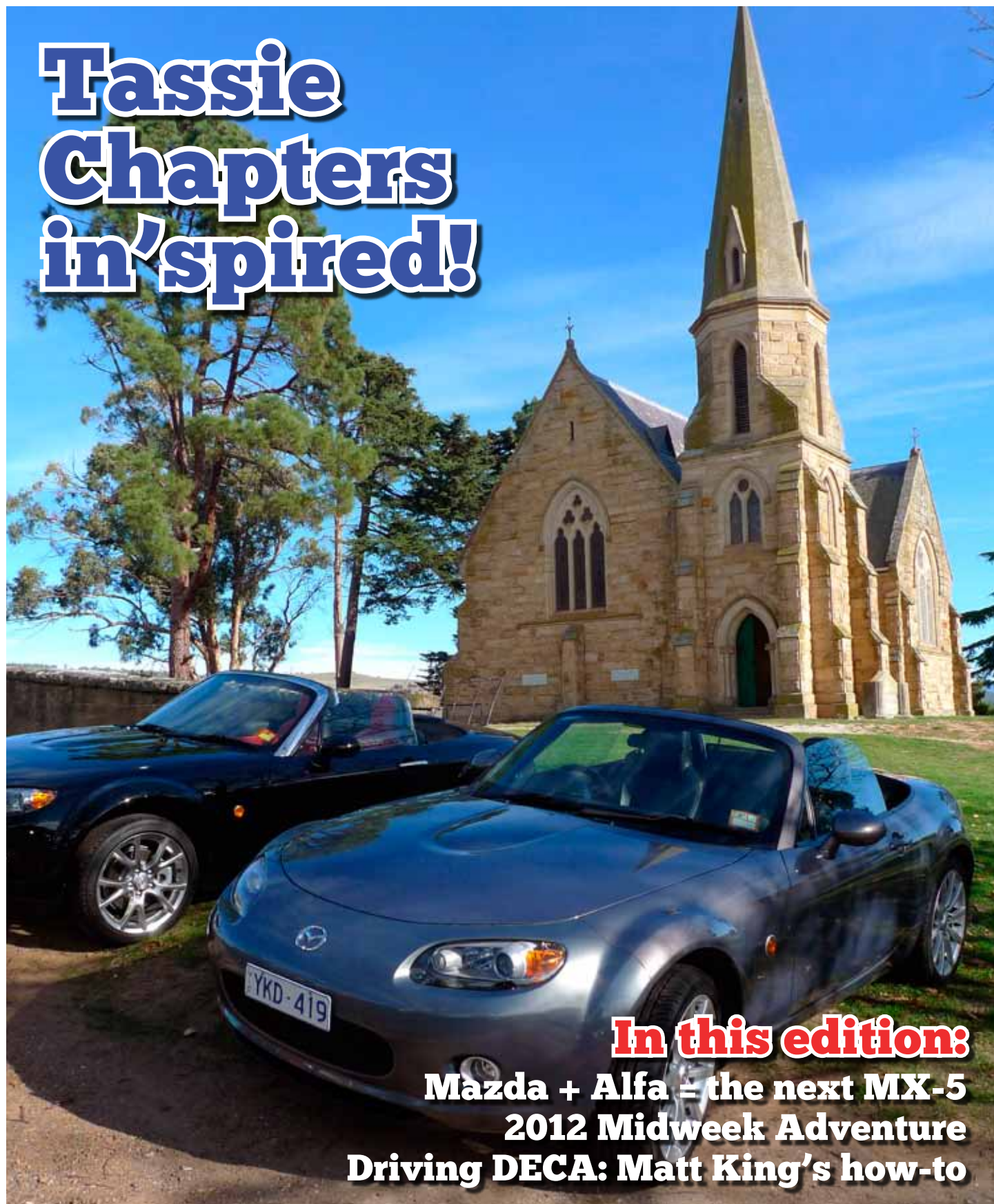
# mxtra

6/2012

[www.mx5vic.org.au](http://www.mx5vic.org.au)

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

## Tassie Chapters in'spired!



**In this edition:**

**Mazda + Alfa = the next MX-5  
2012 Midweek Adventure  
Driving DECA: Matt King's how-to**



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**Cover image:** Come all ye faithful! *It was a day of worship for the Tassie Chapters' members at the annual "Picnic at Ross" ... and there was a church there, too!* Photo: Kelly Berggren



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# Murray's Corner ...

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

*G'day all!*

Looks like I lost my bet.

Around the Committee table earlier this year we looked at the ever-growing membership and I reckoned that we would hit 550 for the first time this year.

There's only a couple of weeks left of this membership year and we're sitting at 536. So, unless you have 14 MX-5-driving friends you can sign up in the next two weeks ...

Still, that's a magical number, nearly 70 up on the total for last year, and another record for our Club.

**MX-5 wave:** Club member Rodney Tickler, an old MG man, reminisced to editor Don about the old *MG wave*. "I remember that camaraderie when I first had my MGB in London all those years ago, and it sometimes took the form of a flash of the lights or a toot on the horn," Rodney said. "How about making the suggestion in the next *mxtra* that we all start doing that in Victoria? It might add to our fun and it might even spread around Australia."

This is something that we used to do in the early days of the Club, when we all drove NAs and flashed our pop-up headlights at other MX-5 drivers, but it seems to have died. Indeed, I wave to other MX-5s on the road and most often draw a blank look or get donuts in return.



Wendy Clark captured this shot on the Great Ocean Road recently, and this fellow was not even driving an MX-5. He was just all about the top-down camaraderie.

So why not try again? If all 500+ of us all start, it just might catch on!



**Some reminders:** If you're planning to come to either

- » DECA next Sunday, 24 June or
- » the awards lunch on 22 July

please book **now!** So far numbers for both are very disappointing, and we would hate to have to cancel the events. Bookings can be made online via the calendar page on the website, [www.mx5vic.org.au/events\\_calendar.asp](http://www.mx5vic.org.au/events_calendar.asp)

**As I announced** on my President's Run last month, I am finishing up as president at the AGM in August.

With all the work the Committee has been doing recently to set up the Club for the future, I believe we are on the threshold of an exciting new era in the Club's development and history.

And I believe that, after six years in the hot seat, it's time to hand over the keys to a new president to lead the Committee and the Club forward from here.

I have been very touched by the kind words offered from members in the last couple of weeks, and was particularly honoured when Mazda Australia's Loyalty Manager, Ben Rounsefell, presented me with a silver bowl from the marketing team.

The inscription on the back reads: "*In recognition of your tireless passion and support for the MX-5 and the Mazda brand*".

It's been a privilege to be president of this wonderful Club, and I've loved my time in the chair. I thank the Committee for their strong support and hard work during my tenure.

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

*Murray*

*For your diary ...*

**See the full calendar for details**

## June

- 23 Western Vic: run to DECA
- 24 DECA driver training & fun day

## July

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

## August

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

## September

- TBA Central: High country run
- 9 South Tas: Coles Bay run

## October

- TBA Central: GO Road dawn run
- 14 South Tas: Maydena
- 21 Eastern Vic: Gippsland run



**Remember our Club Smartphone calendar**

The smartphone version of the Club's events calendar is at [www.mx5vic.org.au/smartphone/events.html](http://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 [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

## 2011-12 Round 8: Sandown, Sunday, 29 April

MX-5 competitor numbers were a little down as this was the final round of the 2011/2012 season and nearly all the Championship Class winners had already been decided. Nevertheless, several people recorded personal best times (see results, below). Unfortunately, Tim Emery "had an off" and slightly damaged his car, but importantly was not injured although shaken and sore. Tim had wisely invested in a proper racing seat and personal multi-point harness restraint which greatly assisted in minimising the personal injury.

## Annual Motor Sport meeting: City Mazda, Friday, 11 May

See Noel Heritage's report, page 21.

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

A somewhat disappointing turnout on the day, but very interesting as a range of MX-5s were put on the dyno. By way of interest for those who didn't attend, the indicative results of what your car may achieve are shown on page 22.

Special thanks to Daniel McCoey of RTR for his efforts on the day and for answering the many questions raised.

## DECA Day: Shepparton, Sunday, 24 June

Entries are open and I am after approximately half a dozen people from the Motor Sport Team to assist on the day. Please contact me if you can help. Our motorkhana guru, Bob de Bont, will be playing a major role on the day.

## 2012-13 Round 1 & Vic/NSW Interstate Challenge: Phillip Island, Saturday, 30 June

Entries are closed and it's a full field.

**We are looking for four to six people to assist on the day – again please contact me. You do not have to have any motor sport experience.**

It should be a real battle but I am confident we can retain the Challenge Trophy.

Competitors are reminded that they are required to submit a **new Declaration Form** to Russell Garner before Round 1 if you want to be awarded Championship points. The form can be downloaded from [www.mx5vic.org.au/motorsport\\_championship.asp](http://www.mx5vic.org.au/motorsport_championship.asp) on the Club website. Russell will **not** be chasing people up or adjusting results after the event.

## Award Presentations: Sunday, 22 July

Please support the Club at this function as all Club Award winners including motor sport awards are presented.

## "Junior Driver" Training: Winton, Saturday, 4 August

This is conducted in conjunction with AROCA; keep your eyes on AROCA's website for entries. **Please note** that the "Racecraft" driver training component has been cancelled in favour of a "Train the Trainer" exercise, which will be an invitation-only event.

## Phillip Island 6-Hour: Sat/Sun, 4-5 August

We have two teams tackling this event with high hopes considering the Club's history at the Winton 6-Hour over the past years.

## Motor sport calendar

See the full calendar for details

### 2012-2013 Championship

#### June

30 Rd 1: Sprints, Phillip Island

#### August

4 Junior driver training, Winton

5 Rd 2: Sprints, Winton

4-5 Phillip Island 6-Hour

19 Rd 3: Sprints, Sandown

#### October

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

### Motorkhana 2012-2013

#### 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

## Winton 6 Hour:

Sat/Sun, 13-14 October

If you are interested please contact me to discuss. Already 16 people have indicated their interest.

Until next month ...

**"drive responsibly at all times"**

Robert #26

## 2011-12 Championship | Round 8 Sandown Sprints - 29 April, 2012

Results - Round 8	1st	2nd	3rd
Standard NA	Noel Heritage » 1:38.375	Robert Downes » 1:39.039	John Stone » 1:41.523
Standard NB	Steven Downes » 1:35.302	John Downes » 1:39.146	James Young » 1:41.093
Standard NC	Robert Hart » 1:33.549	Randy Stagno Navarra » 1:33.884	Colin Denman-Jones » 1:34.150
Clubman	Peter Phillips » 1:34.846 <sup>1</sup>	Max Lloyd » 1:38.245	Tim Emery » 1:38.546
Modified	Robert Parr » 1:31.623	Ray Monik » 1:34.299	Gary Prescott » 1:34.990
Restricted Open	David Wilken » 1:28.867 <sup>1</sup>	Brendan Beavis » 1:32.082	Daniel White » 1:35.393
Open	Owen Boak » 1:25.522	Steven Cook » 1:27.309	Chris Boak » 1:28.885





# Membership

Current membership count:

536

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

*Hello everyone ...*

**With the end of the Club year almost here, membership numbers have again ended in very healthy territory.**

This year has seen about a 15% increase in numbers, with the increase due to both a greater retention rate and record numbers of new members. With that in mind, I welcome to our ranks the newcomers listed at right.

In the last few weeks, a number of “old” members have renewed their links with the Club after an absence of a year or more. I would like to welcome back **Logan Gan, Nick Germanos** and **Chris Riffkin** (all Central Chapter members).

**You will soon receive** either an email or a letter concerning the process for renewing your membership with the Club. As in the past, you have the choice of paying by cheque or money order, although we encourage you to use our online payment system where you have the option of paying by Visa or MasterCard. The process is relatively

simple and will only take you a minute or so. Of course, if you have any difficulties in navigating the system, a quick phone call to me or to President Murray should set things right.

**Online members:** Whilst preparing for the new membership year, I noticed that a number of “Online” members have elected *not* to receive emailed information from the Club (*which is a bit of a contradiction!*). Generally this happens when a member accidentally hits the “unsubscribe” button on a Club email. If at any stage you realise you are not receiving emails from the Club, and this is something you did not elect to do, please let me know immediately and I’ll remedy the situation.

On that note, that’s it for another month; indeed, for another year!

**Enjoy your MX-5 and I’ll see you out and about ...**

*Will*

## New members – Central Chapter

Carolyn Hall	2006 Blue NC
Risdiyanto Mintareja Tio	2005 Galaxy Grey NC
Chris Riffkin	1989 Classic Red NA
Robert Ross	1997 Laguna Blue NA
Ivan Xavier	1997 Blue NA

## Alan Bennett's MX-5 crossword #3

May 2012 – answers

A	U	D	I	O		Z	O	N	E	S
C		I		R		O		O		K
I		P	I	G	E	O	N	S		I
D	I	P		A		M		E	N	D
		E		N						
P	E	D	E	S	T	R	I	A	N	S
A						E		M		E
R	E	V		B		C		P	I	T
K		E	D	U	C	A	T	E		O
E		N		S		S		R		U
D	I	T	C	H		T	W	E	E	T



# Social-lights

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



Your personal invitation to attend the

## 2011-12 Awards Presentation & Lunch

Sunday, 22 July, 2012

“Macedon Views”, Macedon

Please see the enclosed flyer for all the details – it is a great opportunity to get together and acknowledge the achievements and efforts of your fellow Club members.

Sadly, at the time of writing, only 13 people have registered their intention to come along and with the **RSVP date of 30 June** fast approaching we are once again faced with the very real prospect of having to cancel an important date on our Calendar.

RSVP to Janette now 0448 833 321 – [www.social@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social@mx5vic.org.au) – or via the Membership Portal on [www.mx5vic.org.au](http://www.mx5vic.org.au) and follow the links.

**It’s a date – ink it in!**

**We would love to see you there ...**

# Scene about ...



■ Photos: Kelly Berggren, Karen Bradshaw, Ron Macdonald





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# The new MX-5spider?

*Our Club motor sport events with the Alfa Club could get even more interesting in the next couple of years ...*

In a move reminiscent of Toyota and Subaru, with their respective new "86" and BRZ sportscars, we could be seeing similar cars on the track (and on the road) ... some wearing Mazda badges and some wearing Alfa insignia.

■ Article and concept images: [nzherald.co.nz](http://nzherald.co.nz)

If the next-generation Alfa Spider looks like these recent concepts (right), nobody will care that it is made in Hiroshima.

The current tough conditions in the international motor trade have produced some unexpected bedfellows, although this one must rank as one of the more bizarre.

Yet, when you look a little closer, it all makes sense.

Mazda and Fiat – which owns Alfa Romeo – have signed a (non-binding) memorandum of understanding for the development and manufacturing of a new roadster for both the Mazda and Alfa Romeo badges, based on Mazda's next-generation MX-5 rear-wheel drive platform.

The study calls for Mazda and Fiat to develop two differentiated, distinctly styled, iconic and brand-specific light-weight roadsters featuring rear-wheel drive. The Mazda and Alfa Romeo variants will be powered by their respective brand's proprietary engines.

Fiat is more aware than most carmakers that, in the eyes of the enthusiasts at which such cars are aimed, real sports cars are rear-wheel drive.

Witness the Mazda MX-5 which, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, is the most successful open two-seater in automotive history, and Alfa Romeo's iconic Spider, which was a cult car among the *tifosi* even before Dustin Hoffman drove one in *The Graduate* and propelled it to international stardom.

With the most successful example in the world to its credit, it can be assumed Mazda knows a thing or two about roadsters.

The Spider was introduced in 1966, and stayed in production for almost three decades, becoming one of Alfa Romeo's longest-running models, and arguably its most recognisable. When it was discontinued in April 1993, it was the last rear-wheel drive Alfa – until the advent of the hand-built 8C Competizione



more than a decade later – and Alfa Romeo still does not have a compact rear-wheel drive platform.

Hence the tie-up with Mazda, which does.

For Alfa Romeo to develop a new platform for one relatively low-volume model would make it prohibitively expensive, but the company bean-counters are well aware that a front-wheel drive roadster based on the Mito/Giulietta platform won't cut it.

The memorandum calls for Fiat and Mazda to develop two distinctly differently styled lightweight rear-wheel drive roadsters on the fifth-generation MX-5 chassis, each with a specific own-brand engine.

The memorandum doesn't say what engines are envisaged, but we would expect to see a tweaked version of the 1.4-litre Fiat MultiAir in the new Spider, and a similarly-sized Mazda **SkyActiv** engine in the MX-5.

Both cars would be built at Mazda's Hiroshima plant in Japan, with the Mazda version to be released late in 2014, and production for Alfa Romeo envisaged to start in 2015.

A final agreement is due to be signed later in 2012. ■

## Mazda's motor sport legend retires



**Mazda Australia's motor sport manager Allan Horsley (left) has retired after a hugely successful 30-year career.**

Horsley's Mazda Motorsport career started in 1981 when he was hired as team manager of Allan Moffat Racing and launched the team's successful RX-7 touring car program. Three successive Australian Endurance Championships followed for the RX-7 between 1982 and 1984 but perhaps his greatest achievement was a hat-trick of victories

at the James Hardie Bathurst 12 Hour between 1992 and 1994.

He also masterminded Mazda Motorsport's foray into tarmac rallying, campaigning several MX-5s (among other Mazdas) in Targa Tasmania.

Horsley played a key role in establishing the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW, assisting Sue Ransom to implement Mike Quist's plan to establish an MX-5 club in every Australian state. ■

# Chapter chatter ...

## Petanque at **L**ovegrove 6/5/12 | Central

■ **Words:** Salman Shami ■ **Photos:** Salman Shami, Ron Macdonald ([gracies-place.net](http://gracies-place.net)) ■ **Run organisers:** Pam Bown & Tyrone Dark

*"Petanque at Lovegrove" was the unusual title of the Club run to which we were invited. I had never "petanqued" before but I was keen to drive my MX-5 on nice windy roads.*

An antipasto platter and the knowledge that *Lovegrove* was a winery were all the added incentive I needed.

The promise of showers was the only thing that threatened to dampen the day. It was a nice surprise then that the sun shone through the clouds as I opened the blinds in the morning and looked outside.

My 16-year-old son, Haroon, accompanied me. It was to be his first Club run on public roads. It was something that he obviously looked forward to because he got up and had breakfast with very un-teenage like enthusiasm.

With L-plates in place we set off to the meeting point at *The Pines* shopping centre in Templestowe. We live in Doreen so we actually drove on some of the roads in the run to get to the starting point. In an MX-5 a windy road never gets boring so it was not something we minded at all.

We got to the starting point with plenty of time to spare. It's always nice to meet other members of the MX-5 Club. As a whole they are all nice, warm and interesting people.

After the convoy rules and safety briefing at slightly after 9.30 and with me behind the wheel, we set off in convoy and headed through Templestowe toward Eltham. Here we turned off the main road and headed towards *Monsalvat* through some lovely hilly and forested back roads through Diamond Creek, Yarrambat, Doreen, then Arthurs Creek and Panton Hill to Hurstbridge. The run organisers, Pam and Tyrone, obviously have a very keen eye for great roads because I don't think they left any out.

Hurstbridge is a lovely town set at the juncture of Diamond Creek and Arthurs Creek. It is characterised by tall gum trees and some lovely cafés and interesting shops. We had coffee and a snack at the delightful *Wattle Café* that apparently had served customers since 1922. The coffee and rhubarb and apple crumble would have done its original owners proud.

It was Haroon's turn to drive so the L-plates went on the MX-5 again and we set off. This was going to be a white-knuckled ride for me in the passenger seat as the convoy wound its way through all the fantastic roads that Pam and Tyrone had meticulously added to this part of the route.

Having borrowed a CB radio helped us a lot. It gave me something to help Haroon anticipate oncoming hazards such as cyclists, gravel and some crazy people in four-wheel drives who all seemed to have woken up on the wrong side of bed that morning or maybe they were going home after a night of roo shooting at some 4WD muster. Whatever irked them, they all acted the same way in that they tried very hard to run us off the road.

Maybe a four-wheel drive is the antithesis of an MX-5; bloated and heavy versus nimble and light; excessive versus minimalist; slab-sided versus curvaceous.







### ^ Lovegrove Winery

Maybe an MX-5 makes a four-wheel driver feel like maybe they could be driving something more fun but aren't.

I could go on but then this would become an anti-four-wheel drive tirade, which it is not. It's about how much fun we all had.

Anyway, as the run progressed we drove over some very narrow, twisty and damp roads through Arthurs Creek, Doreen, Nutfield, St Andrews, Smiths Gully, Christmas Hills and then Hurstbridge and on to Cottles Bridge. Here we finally stopped at the beautiful Lovegrove Winery.

It was great to get out. Haroon drove the car well and although he made a few mistakes the car was forgiving and controllable enough that he was able to correct and avoid disaster.

Sitting in the passenger seat I found this leg of the run to be really scary. I now realise that the fun place in an MX-5 is the driver's seat. The car has such direct steering that is so

communicative, it's as if one can think one's way around a corner. A driver really becomes one with the road. That is not any comfort to the passenger. All one feels are the lateral forces, the sensation of speed and the proximity of trees. I must have told Haroon around a hundred times to slow down. *For the first time in my life I was actually happy to see a Toyota Camry on the road ahead!*

The winery was set in lovely scenery that was a joy to behold. Its name comes from the family that started the winery. I wish I could have tried some but being with a learner driver it would have been quite irresponsible of me. Maybe next time ...

After a nice antipasto platter and some great conversation with fellow club members we decided to head home. This time it was my turn to drive. The sun shone and the breeze was comfortable and everything was right with the world. ■





# Chapter chatter ...

## Bradshaws' Halls Gap-Avoca run ...

20/5/12 | Western Victoria

■ **Words:** Karen Bradshaw ■ **Photos:** Karen Bradshaw, Leon Wilson, John Gleeson ■ **Run organisers:** Ian and Karen Bradshaw

*Allan and Dawn Everett, Ian and I met up with the other members of the Western Victoria Chapter at Skipton for a cuppa and lots of chatting before heading on towards the spectacular Grampians.*

**Noellene Gleeson:** The starting point for Bradshaws' "Halls Gap - Avoca run" was Victoria St, Ballarat. The weather was looking good as eleven shining MX-5s gathered for another great day out.

John called everyone together to explain the layout of the day and to welcome some newcomers: members Neal Brownrigg and Rudy Vanderelst, together with soon-to-be-members Alan and Kelly White (very nicely tricked red NA) who have just moved to Ballarat from Queensland.

*They love Ballarat weather, smart couple!* Also a big welcome back to Leon and Carly Wilson, who we hadn't seen since their wedding.

Then we were off and heading towards Skipton to meet up with the Bradshaws and Everetts. ■

It was a great sight to see all the little MX-5s roll down the hill into Skipton to the car park in the main street. What a pity that Skipton still has a take away shop and the local hotel is yet to open after the 2011 floods. We created quite a bit of interest from the locals and a bus that stopped at the toilets. Of course we weren't shy showing off our great cars! It was also a chance for us to meet our new members and also to catch up with old friends not seen for a while.

We had a lovely drive up to Halls Gap via Maroona and then Moyston with some great views along the way.

We stopped in Halls Gap for lunch – some had brought a picnic lunch and some tasted the local cuisine.

Not only did we chatter some more but we were entertained by a couple of very quiet miner birds and some very friendly yellow-crested cockatoos who would eat from your hand. They were very partial to Dawn's crusts from her sandwiches, finishing up with Noellene's jam shortcake biscuits! After lunch at Halls Gap we travelled across the Grampians via Zumsteins, which is a rather

sad sight, yet to be bought back to its former glory from the floods. What a great piece of road for MX5s – so glad we have new tyres on the car! From there we ventured through Roses Gap – forever on alert for those famous kangaroos. We have to be extra careful now as there are a few red cars in our group and we all know the kangaroos have an attraction for red MX-5s! Alas we didn't "see" any kangaroos. We then diverted to Dadswells Bridge to satisfy our need for an ice cream fix and more chatter.

After our ice cream we headed to Glenorchy then Moonambel where we stopped at a very popular local winery, Warrenmang. We were met by a very flustered and somewhat grumpy hostess. We had a wine tasting of their wines with a few bottles being purchased. I hope Mrs Grumpy was happy. Then because of the lateness of the day, we returned to Ballarat via Waubra passing the wind farm during a beautiful sunset. We arrived at the Ballarat Golf Club for our lovely evening meal. We had a great day with great friends and great cars, how better can you spend a lovely autumn day. ■



^ At Dadswells Bridge





^ So ... who's writing the mxtra report??



^ Makes a change from giant roos, eh, Lockie?



^ The rendezvous in Skipton



^ John Gleeson thoughtfully provides a coatstand for his team ...



^ At Halls Gap



# Chapter chatter ...

## Campbell-Todd Midweek Adventure 2012

15-17/5/12 | Club ■ Words: collated by Coral Campbell ■ Photos: Wendy Clark & Ron Macdonald

Participants on the run were asked to comment on something interesting or outstanding about each day for them. Their comments have been woven into the fabric of the story of the mid-week adventure.

**On Tuesday**, the occupants of 11 cars, met at Torquay foreshore for a coffee before heading off on the mid-week adventure to Apollo Bay and environs.

**Janette:** *Welcome to the 2nd Campbell/Todd Tour. Historically, we celebrate significant milestones on the tour.*

**Saeko:** *Someone's wedding anniversary.*

**After some scenic** touring-style driving, it didn't take long to reach the famous Turton's Track. Will and Coral were the lead car at this point, followed by Tyrone and Pam, with the rest following.

**Will** (at the end of Turton's Track): *How can they be so far behind?*

**David Cr:** *Tyrone was just in front but got clean away on the windy Turton's Track. I wasn't that brave!*

**Lockie:** *Having to stop "Eye-spy" to concentrate on driving along Turton's Track.*

**Ron:** *Turton's Tack – awesome!*

**Tyrone:** *Absolutely ditto. Today we are (Great) Ocean's (Road) Eleven!*

**Pam:** *Weeeeeee!!!*

**After a very tasty lunch** at Nouri-shed, the group moved on through Laver's Hill and back along the Great Ocean Road towards the scenic stop at Mait's Rest.

**Tracey:** *Mait's Rest walk – awesome trees and scenery.*

**David C:** *Those magnificent, majestic Mountain Ash at Mait's Rest.*

Leaving Mait's Rest, the group travelled the rest of the way to Apollo Bay.

**Linda:** *Sign saying "Slow Roos".*

**Wendy:** *I missed the man having a twinkle. Damn!*

**At the motel**, some were seen to attempt to clean their cars before heading out for our evening meal.

**Chris F:** *I took a photo of Ron washing his car. Doing what I should be doing!*

**Don:** *"Chips" – what "Chips"? Whose "Chips"? Where "Chips"?*

**Grant:** *At last, seeing Will and Coral's car dirty!*

**Coral:** *At last, seeing Grant and Saeko's car dirty!*

**On our way to the meal**, we spotted a 'foreign' MX-5, with Queensland plates. We were surprised to find Sam and Shannon at the hotel and delighted when they decided to join us for the meal and agreed to convoy with us the following day. The day's highlights were summarised by Gail's comments:

**Gail:** *Back on the road again with the fabulous MX-5s. Even enticed a couple of orphans from up north to join us!*



^ At Mait's rest



^ No, no ... you start!





■ **Participants:** Pamela Bown & Tyrone Dark, Grant Butler & Saeko Fujiki, Will & Coral Campbell, David & Gail Collins, David Crouch & Christine Galbraith, Chris Fox & Kerry Pratt, Phil Harris & Christy Aylward, Ron Macdonald & Wendy Clark, Don & Linda Nicoll, Lockie & Tracey Story, John & Janette Todd ■ **Drop-ins:** David James, Sam & Shannon March  
 ■ **Run organisers:** Janette & John Todd, Coral & Will Campbell

**Wednesday morning**, we were greeted by David James (past-president and life member) who had decided to drop work and join us for the day's run. Having left Melbourne at 5.30, he arrived at about 9am. We set off with the three extras in convoy, towards Port Campbell.

**Pam:** *What more can you wish for – great cars, great company, great scenery.*

**Grant:** *Slipping, sliding, spinning. Oh, how I wish I had bought those new tyres!*

**Saeko:** *Oops, he's done it again!*

**Tracey:** *High smelly point – the "odoriferous" tractor we passed on the drive to the 12 Apostles.*

rest of us re-grouped.

**Sam & Shannon:** *Our first experience in an MX-5 convoy. Thanks to our southern cousins for their wonderful hospitality.*

**From Port Campbell**, our route took us to Timboon Distillery and Ice-creamery.

**Will:** *Geez, I love Timboon ice-cream!*

**After leaving Timboon**, our plan was to move onto the Apostle Whey Cheese Factory and then to the Gorge Chocolate, however, things were not as easy as they first seemed!

**Janette:** *This way or that way to Apostle Whey?*

**John:** *The navigator failed to give me enough warning.*

**Tyrone:** *Fantastic roads, but gee whiz, wasn't Apostle Whey Cheese hard to find!*

**At the cheese factory**, we were provided with a tasting and commentary.

**Chris F:** *Dianne from the Apostle Whey Cheese – "After it matures, it smells a bit farty. It's OK – it's not off"!!*

**We finally headed home** to our temporary residence at Apollo Bay, ready for another evening meal! The day's highlights:

**Don:** *Smelly cheese, liquorice chocolate, a new Grant manoeuvre, wallaby on the le... le... right, great roads and great company.*

**Dave C:** *Excellent drives, excellent weather. Excellent, but too much bloody food!*

**Gail:** *At dinner, not hungry. Food all day mixed up in my belly going around those fabulous bends.*

**Chris G:** *How good was that?*

**Phil:** *Recovering from upset stomach but still being able to finish the run.*

**Lockie:** *Coming over the hill and seeing*



^ Coral & Will: We love Timboon ice-cream!

*Bass Strait as smooth as a mill pond.*

**Linda:** *Favourite bit – coming over the rise at the end of the day and seeing Apollo Bay and the ocean – misty and timeless, feeling relaxed and satisfied. And that wallaby!*

**At dinner** on Wednesday evening, people were trying to find the right collective noun for a group of MX-5s on a run. Ideas suggested included:

- » a freedom of MX-5s
- » a rush of MX-5s
- » a zoom of MX-5s
- » a Miata of MX-5s
- » an addiction of MX-5s
- » a thrill of MX-5s
- » a colourful blur of MX-5s.



^ Mites and tites

**We stopped at** the Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge for some sightseeing. No matter how many times you see this coast line, it is still so impressive. We then moved on to Port Campbell for lunch.

**Wendy:** *Liked the tites and mites at Loch Ard Gorge.*

**Ron:** *Quote at Port Campbell Take-Away: "Could you please not feed the seagulls as they shit everywhere and sometimes it lands in your food".*

**It was at this point**, after lunch, that our new MX-5 friends continued on their way to Warrnambool, while the

» *This way or that way to Apostle Whey?*



^ Saeko, John & Grant (smiling!)



## Midweek adventure (continued)

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**Thursday morning** saw the group head off to Mariners Lookout (via a small detour), with a panoramic view across Apollo Bay, before travelling in convoy to Lorne.

**Janette:** *I love when history repeats itself!*

**Don:** *Going first means no stone chips!!*

**Will:** *Where's Rowdy?*

**Lockie:** *Blowing away a Nissan Micra is fun.*

**Phil:** *Apollo Bay to Lorne – fantastic.*

**Dave C:** *Soaking up the vitamin D with a coffee. A perfect end to the three days.*

**Grant:** *What are the unfortunate non-MX-5 drivers doing today?*

**Saeko:** *Phew. No spins today!*

**Chris F:** *Great weather. Great drive back to Lorne.*

**Tracey:** *Beautiful blue skies and sunshine – a great end to a terrific trip.*

**Tyrone:** *Fantastic three days. Book us in for the next one!*

**Overall,** we had a great mid-week tour around the south-western coastal regions of Victoria, with a call from Phil to do it again, exactly the same way in two years' time!!







^ The view from Mariners Lookout, overlooking Apollo Bay





# Chapter chatter ...

## Rambling to Ross ... 20/5/12 | Southern Tasmania

■ Words: John Waldock ■ Photos: John Waldock & Robyn Tanner ■ Run organiser: John Waldock

*The "Picnic at Ross" is a fairly new event on the Tasmanian motoring calendar, only in its fourth year.*

In this short time the event has grown from about 180 cars attending to about 800 cars of all varieties. It has become an important part of both Tasmanian Chapters' calendars and a great opportunity for the two Chapters to meet up and say hello.

This year the Southern Tasmania Chapter left Hobart early, with a tally of 13 cars; probably one of the biggest attendances we have ever had and a good indicator of the regard that the event has with members. We had a pretty cruisy run up the Midlands Highway; old Morris Minors, VW Beetles and the like were common and a taste of things to come. So, a fairly sedate pace was set (although the increased inclusion of overtaking lanes gave us a chance to coast along more speedily). Even the weather was co-operating as, although it was a little cool, the skies were blue and generally clear of cloud.

We arrived in Ross on time (*a minor miracle!*) and handily found our regular display spot. Something seemed to have gone wrong though, as the Northern Tasmania Chapter was put in a different place, but luckily the Northerners were able to find us. We caught up with Bruce, Michael and Tim and for the first time met Kelly (keenly taking photos) and her partner Carl.

Every spare inch of the town was crammed with cars of all shapes and sizes and, with all the shops opening up for the occasion, the little town had a party atmosphere. Bakeries and cafés were full to overflowing while the bric-a-brac shops displayed their dusty wares to the many passers-by. People of all ages tramped through potholed paddocks to peer through shiny car windows and see themselves reflected in gleaming chrome. Lots of them came to admire our sleek array of MX-5s and of course we were delighted to extol the virtues of our little cars to anyone who came within earshot!

It was an interesting day. We saw new cars, rare cars and ridiculous cars with everything in between. Some of us had interesting conversations with their owners about the merits of tyres and other similar arcane knowledge. Hopefully the accompanying images give an idea of what a terrific day it is for car enthusiasts. ■



*There's no limit!*

**Southern Tasmania Chapter Captain, John Waldock**, brought up the big 5-0 recently, and several Chapter members and their partners joined John's family and friends to help celebrate the occasion.

John's wife Michelle presented him with a cake in the form of a Classic Red (almost) NA like John's pride and joy, complete with his Mini-Me behind the wheel, "Feisty" registration plate and "50" speed limit sign.

All are looking forward to the cake with the 100km/h sign! *Why not speed up as you get older!*

*~ Allan Pryer (cake maker!)*



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## Picnic at Ross ... 20/5/12 | Northern Tasmania

■ Words: Bruce Harvey ■ Photos: Kelly Berggren & Bruce Harvey ■ Run organiser: Bruce Harvey



*Tasmanians love cars and this could have not been more evident than at the fourth annual "Picnic at Ross".*

The weather was perfect, the setting was fabulous, the organization was top class and more than 800 cars and their proud owners came from far and wide to converge on the historic convict town to park and display their pride and joy.

Marques to suit any taste from AC through to Zephyr were on show with most Tasmanian car and bike clubs represented, but the 30 plus MX-5s were the main attraction for a lot of the public.

Picnic at Ross has given the North and South Chapters a common meeting ground for the past 4 years and the opportunity to compare cars, discuss improvements and socialise is something that many members look forward to each year.

In fact we enjoyed it so much that plans were made to meet with our Southern mates more regularly and a couple of combined runs are now being planned with the first as early as September this year.

An interesting discussion took place over coffee: disregarding money which car, from all that were on show, would you most like to take home? The conclusion – the one we came in. No one could see a car that was better than the MX-5 – for what, I think, are very obvious reasons.

Congratulations to the Post Vintage Car Club for another brilliant day. ■





# Groundhog Day at Pakenham ...

■ Words & photos: Bob de Bont

*Round 3 of the NGK Victorian Motorkhana Championship for 2012 was held on 13 May and hosted by the Victorian Mini Club at the Pakenham Auto Club grounds in Pakenham.*

There was fine weather leading up to this event, however the heavens opened on the Saturday night prior, returning the Pakenham ground to its typical muddy surface. The rain continued on the Sunday morning with the ground never drying out. *At least it was consistently bad all day.*

The MX-5 Club was represented by three entries at this round with **Tony** and **Troy Heasly** co-entered in Troy's Titanium NB, both attending their first motorkhana, joining me, **Bob de Bont**.

In total we fronted up for six tests in four areas which included some large lakes. For general enjoyment we watched many of the Special drivers covering themselves in mud as well as the many and varied methods adopted by the front wheel drive production cars trying for a complete colour change.

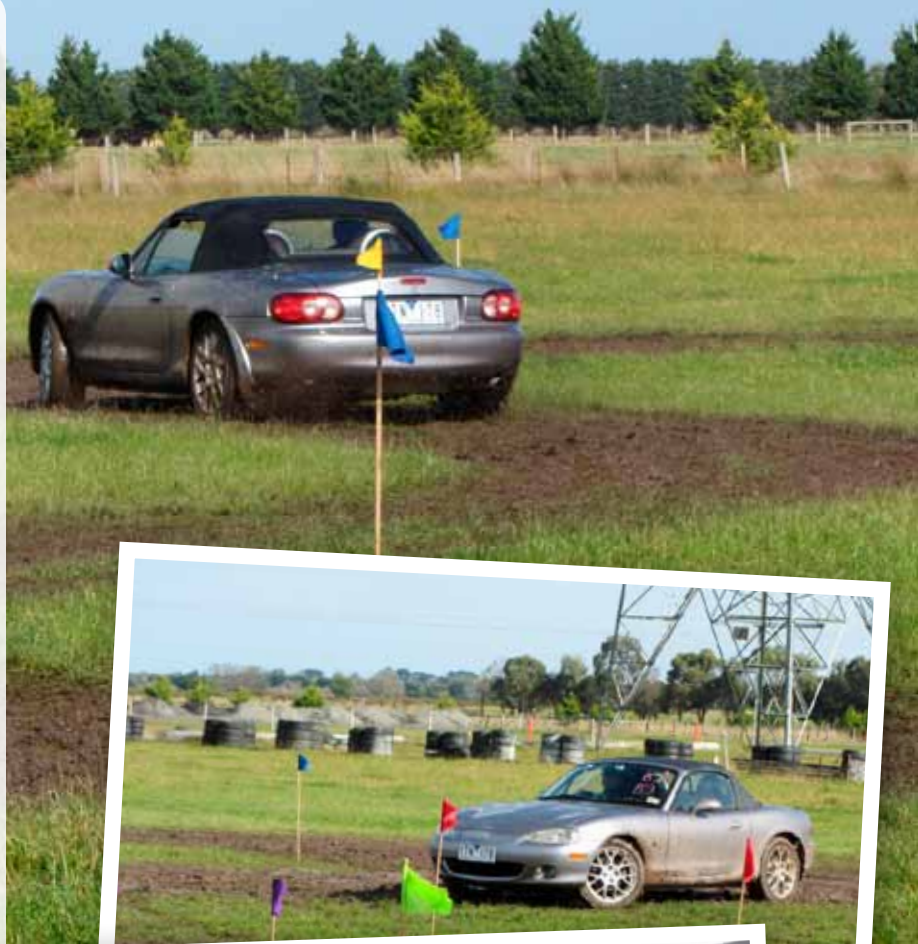
All that was left was to pack our gear and head to the BP roadhouse for coffee and to discuss the happenings of the day. This was followed by a sedate trip home in heavy traffic and the prospect of spending a couple of hours cleaning the mud from the outside and under the car.

## Results

Emerging from the mud, Bob had built up a lead of 2.4 seconds over Tony after 480 seconds (8 minutes!) of competition with Troy a very creditable 10 seconds further back. The three of us occupied the first three places in Class B with Tony also achieving 2nd in novice and Troy achieving 2nd in juniors.

With good individual results the MX-5 Club's points received a healthy boost to consolidate our 4th position in the Clubs' Championship.

More information is available from [www.motorkhanavic.com.au](http://www.motorkhanavic.com.au) or from Bob de Bont on 0402 345 562 ■



↖ top: Tony Heasly  
above: Troy Heasly

↖ Bob de Bont



# 2012 Motor Sport meeting



■ Words & photo: Noel Heritage

*On the evening of Friday, 11 May, we conducted one of our regular Motor Sport meetings at which all matters relative to the motor sport side of our Club are discussed in an open forum environment.*

The meeting was chaired by the Club Captain – Motor Sport, Robert Downes, with the able assistance of Assistant Captain (and heir apparent) Daniel White.

The meeting was held in the Board Room of **City Mazda** who not only kindly made their excellent facilities available, but also provided a much appreciated pizza dinner with refreshments for all attendees. The evening was further enhanced with an informative presentation from Dave Thompson and Rod Crowe from *Castrol Australia* who gave the assembled Fangios the good oil on both lubricants and brake fluids plus some of the dos and do nots.

The meeting proper covered a range of topics and generally managed to stick to the pre-published agenda.

## Keys issues discussed:

- » Arrangements and nominations for the forthcoming Winton 6-Hour at which we will try to go that elusive one step further.
- » Request from AROCA for people to help assist in the running of events.
- » Clarification on whether or not two specific tyre types are classified as R Spec or not.
- » Requirement for everybody competing in the next championship to have updated declarations submitted well before the event.
- » Introduction of random compliance audits concentrating initially on class-winning cars.
- » Confirmation that the current championship scoring system will remain unchanged for at least the next Championship season.
- » Arrangements for the forthcoming Dyno Day with a suggestion that all the current front-runners should make an appearance as part of their updated declarations.
- » Safety issues including two recent potentially serious on track incidents where cars left the racing surface and found the nearest immovable, or almost immovable, objects on which to re-arrange the panel work and have their drivers seeing stars for a while. A key factor in both drivers ultimately being OK is considered due to both cars being fitted with roll cages, proper racing seats and multi-point racing harnesses which were being worn at the time of the incidents.



- » Recent incident at Wakefield Park where a competitor suffered a potentially fatal heart attack and was apparently only saved by quick intervention by appropriately-trained fellow competitors and the use of the track's defibrillator. With many of us not exactly born yesterday, the availability of a defibrillator at all venues and events is considered appropriate.
- » Need to find additional revenue streams to help fund Club activities and operation.
- » The next Inter-State Challenge against NSW which is set for 30 June at Phillip Island and the desire to continue our winning streak.
- » Presentation function on 23 July at which all mere mortals are invited to attend in order to praise the Club champions for the 2011-2012 season.
- » The Motor Sport Captain succession plan and the transition from Robert Downes to Daniel White.
- » That it has been previously agreed that the current motor sport rules will run for another two-year period before any major review.

The meeting concluded with rapturous applause as the thirsty participants eagerly eyed off the ongoing plentiful supply of refreshments provided by City Mazda. ■

# Dyno Day ... *RTR Dandenong, Saturday, 26 May*

■ **Event organiser:** Robert Downes



A somewhat disappointing turnout on the day, but very

interesting as a range of MX-5s were put on the dyno.

By way of interest for those that didn't attend, the following results are indicative of what your car may achieve:

Model	rWkW
» Standard NA6	63
» Standard NA8	72
» Standard NB8B	76
» Standard NC	91
» Standard NB8B"SE"	98

Special thanks to Daniel McCoey of RTR for his efforts on the day and for answering the many questions raised. ■



^ Alan Conrad's NC

< Dale Fitzgerald's NA



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# DECA: learn, have fun, win!

■ Words & photos: Matt King, past President and Club Motor Sport Champion

*DECA with the MX-5 Club is all about having fun!*

With our next DECA drive day coming up on 24 June, Matt King has given **mxtra** some hints and tips for getting the most out of the day ...

It should be obvious, but in case it isn't, for most people having fun also involves:

- » not crashing your lovely car
- » not running into anyone or anything else
- » not acting like a dickhead and ruining everyone else's fun.

So, in order to have fun, it's evident that you also need to play safe. That doesn't mean you can't get your car sideways, make some noise, or knock over a few cones. On the contrary, pushing your limits, and possibly exceeding them, is encouraged in an environment well away from trees, lampposts, Johnny Public and Sergeant Beergut. It just means that:

- » if you're not sure if you've lost control yet, you most probably have;
- » if you've lost control anywhere close to anything you could hit, you're in serious danger of **Not Having Fun**, and
- » if you've lost control, don't try to recover. Just stand on the brakes until you slide to a stop, and get on your way again.

With those cautions in mind, here are some tips that will help you get the most out of the day.

The topics below relate mainly to doing motorkhana courses on the DECA skidpan.

## Body set up

First, get yourself seated correctly:

- » push your left foot hard into the footrest and wiggle your backside well back into the seat;
- » then push the clutch pedal all the way in. You should be able to bottom out the pedal without stretching. If you can't, move the seat forward until you can do this;
- » next, hold your arms out straight and rest your wrists over the top of the steering wheel. You should be able to hang your wrist right over the rim, without moving your shoulders forward. If you can't, tilt the backrest up until you can.

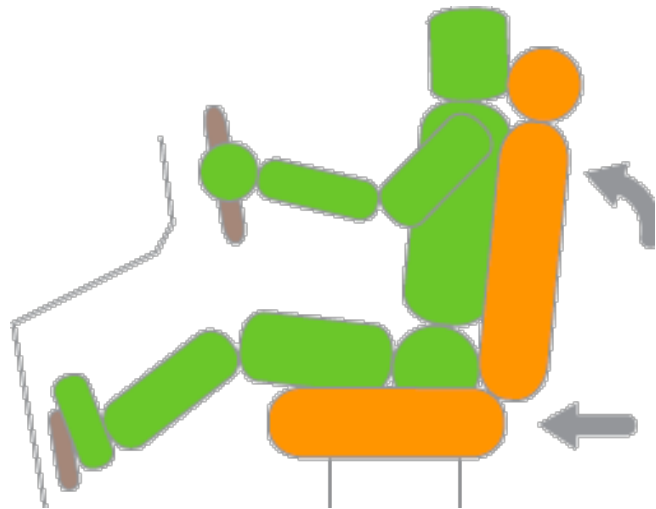


Figure 1 - Correct driving position (image from ninthlink.com)

Your seating position will now probably be further forward than you are used to, but this is better for good car control.

When you're ready to drive, it will help to have your seatbelt done up as snugly as possible. This allows your arms to do the steering, rather than having to support your body weight.

- » Use the footrest to brace yourself against the seat. This will support your lower body rigidly, which means you aren't flopping about, giving you a better feel of what the car is doing. At all times unless you are using the clutch, you should use the footrest as a brace.
- » Pull the seatbelt tight across your lap, and tight across your chest as you lean back in the seat. Snap your (left hand) fingertips on the belt between your shoulder and the belt anchor, to lock the inertia reel. This will leave your upper body strapped tightly into position.

Seated like this, you'll be in the best position to get a feel for how the car behaves.

- » I like to keep my hands on the wheel at the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions. This means you cross your arms occasionally, but in a slippery environment, it means you know which way the wheels are pointing without having to look at the steering wheel.
- » On the tighter turns of a motorkhana course you are likely to need to cross your hands a bit though. I have no problem with recommending this approach, as it is much faster than shuffling the wheel, but it helps to pay attention to which direction the steering wheel is.





### Car set up

If you have adjustable doodads on your car (shocks, sway bars, etc), don't go hard. Softness is desirable, as the rapid weight transfers of motorkhanas can easily overload a tyre if the suspension is too stiff. This goes for the fast guys as much as the beginners – I have driven a completely standard NB to victory here.

Don't worry about messing with your tyre pressures – the short runs have minimal effect on heat buildup.

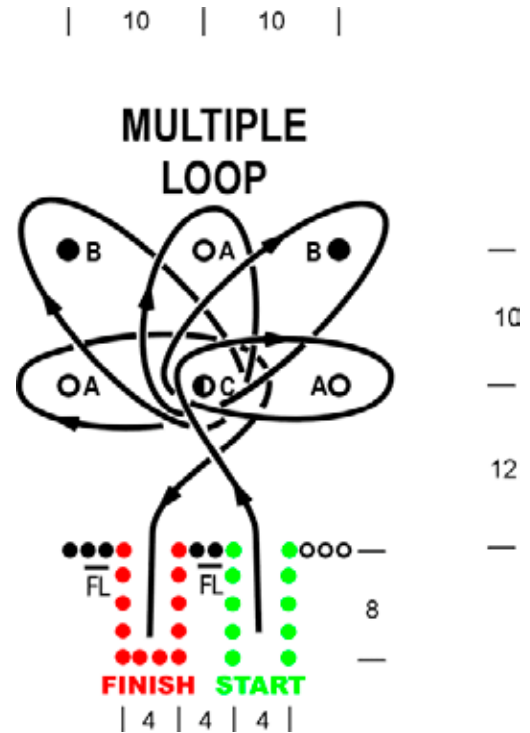
### Memorise the course

Review the course you are about to do carefully, both on paper, and by looking at the cones on the skidpan. The only thing more embarrassing than getting lost mid-run is finishing a course and being told you missed a cone.

As best you can, visualise what it will look like as you pass each cone, and where you will need to go.

... continued

Figure 2 - Don't get lost! Motorkhana courses can be confusing



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# DECA: Matt King's how to ...

## Look where you want to go

A truism of driving is that if you look at a certain target, your instincts will take you there. There are two aspects to this when it comes to the skidpan. First, you need to be focussed one or two steps ahead of where you are – look at the next cone, not the one you are at. Second, if the car starts sliding sideways, it will allow you to adjust the steering angle instinctively to make the car point in the correct direction.



Figure 3 - Look ahead to the next cone

## The Grip Circle

Staying in control means staying within the grip limits of the car. Past the grip limit, the car will start to slide. There are a couple of circumstances when breaking traction is beneficial, but most of the time you're best served by maintaining traction.

The grip circle is a commonly used analogy to describe how much grip you have and how you can use it.

Your tyres have a roughly equal amount of traction that can be applied in any direction, be that forwards to accelerate the car, backwards to brake, or left or right to turn. You can also brake and turn at the same time, or accelerate and turn at the same time, but you must share the available grip between these two actions – you can't do both with as much effect as doing only one or the other.

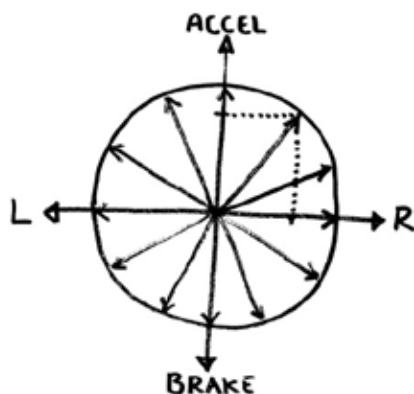


Figure 4 - The Grip Circle

The practical implication of this is that:

- » attempting to steer when applying maximum braking or acceleration will result in travelling straight ahead;
- » attempting to brake or accelerate when turning at full grip will result in a loss of turning force – you will run wide.

The result is chronic understeer or oversteer<sup>1</sup>. If this happens, you need to ease off the power, or brakes, or steering, in order to regain grip. To avoid this:

- » as you transition from braking to turning, you need to ease off the brakes progressively as you apply more steering angle, and
- » as you transition from turning to accelerating, you need to unwind the steering progressively as you apply more power.

The grip circle concept can also be applied to each end of the car, or each wheel individually. In this case, each grip circle will change in size as weight transfer occurs due to braking, cornering or accelerating. But this article is long enough without delving into that!



Figure 5 - Weight transfer to the left tyres decreases the grip of the right tyres. With an open differential it would be easy to spin the inside rear wheel under power

## Controlled oversteer

"I'll put it simple: if you're going hard enough left, you'll find yourself turning right." – Doc Hudson, *Cars*.

When oversteering, the back end of the car is sliding more than the front end. This happens when the grip of the back wheels is exceeded. It can be caused either by braking and turning too sharply, or by turning then applying too much power.

This can be used to your advantage in a motorkhana to rotate the car quickly around a tight corner, but it requires deft skill to avoid ending in embarrassment.

When oversteering, the steering wheel will be pointed in the opposite direction to the way the car is rotating (that is, steering right whilst turning left).

Once the rear of the car is sliding, the car becomes unstable. This means you will constantly need to apply input, to the steering and/or throttle, to maintain and correct the attitude of the car.

*As oval track racers say: Understeer is when the front end hits the wall first. Oversteer is when the back end hits the wall first.*





Failure to do so will result in either a spin, where the rear end slides too far to catch with steering alone, or a tankslapper<sup>2</sup>, where the rear end grips again and (because the front wheels are pointed in the opposite direction) the car snaps into a turn in the other direction.

- » First, the front wheels must be aimed in the direction you want to go – **Look Ahead!**
- » Then, the arc of the rear wheels must be controlled by using the throttle to adjust the amount of cornering grip the rear tyres have (see the Grip Circle section earlier). More throttle means less cornering grip, and the back end will run wider.
- » Eventually, the rear end will regain traction. When it does, you need to respond very fast to unwind the steering angle and keep the car pointing the way you want.

Learning this takes time, practice, and lots of open space, and that's why you're going to DECA!

### Handbrake turns

A gross method of oversteer, useful for rotating the car very rapidly around very tight corners (usually 180 degrees or more). A handbrake turn is just an oversteer situation, initiated deliberately by locking up the rear wheels with the handbrake. Once initiated, the oversteer must be controlled as described

above, using the throttle to keep the rear wheels spinning and sliding if necessary.

Here's a quick how-to guide around a right-hand corner:

- » As you approach the cone, brake or decelerate. You should be in first gear, and the cone should be about two or three metres from the right of the car.
- » Grab the steering wheel at about 11 o'clock with your right hand.
- » Close to the cone, turn the steering so your right hand is back in about the 3 o'clock position. Aim to have the right front wheel as close as possible to the cone – ideally so close that if you don't slide the back end out, the rear wheels will hit it. *See Figure 7.*
- » Once the car starts turning in towards the cone, dip the clutch and pull hard on the handbrake. Keep your finger on the button!
- » Allow the back end to swing wide around the cone.
- » Release the handbrake. You shouldn't need more than a second on the handbrake – if you keep the rear wheels locked up the car will spin to a sudden stop.
- » Release the clutch and hit the throttle at the same time, to spin the rear wheels and keep them sliding. *See Figure 6.*

... continued

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<sup>2</sup> I've heard two versions of the etymology of this term. One, (from race car drivers) the sound of the fuel in the tank slapping from one side to the other. Two, (from motorcyclists) the sound of the rider's privates contacting the fuel tank.

# DECA: Matt King's how to ...

- » As this happens, and depending how far you need to rotate, unwind the steering angle quickly to get the front wheels pointed in the direction you need to go – you may even be able to let go of the steering and let it snap back on its own
- » Aim your eyes and the steering where the car needs to go, and control the oversteer as above.



*Figure 6 - Handbrake turn initiated, now the power has been applied to keep the slide going*

Sadly that sounds very complex, and to start with it can be confusing. As you gain experience, the separate steps of brakes, steering, clutch, handbrake and throttle all merge into one smooth action. Practice makes perfect!

If you're attending with a front-wheel drive, you can simplify things, as you don't need to press the clutch. Doing this in a rear-wheel drive car will stall the engine.

The most common mistakes are:

- » Not braking first – this is vital to unweight the back end and load up the front end.
- » Pulling the handbrake before you start turning the car.
- » Leaving the handbrake on too long, or forgetting to hold the release button in.
- » Not applying enough power once the back end is loose.
- » Applying too much power.
- » Not keeping the front tyres pointed where you need to go.

## Rev-matching, double-declutching, and heel and toe

*"You almost had me? You never had me – you never had your car ... Granny shiftin' not double clutchin' like you should ..."*

– Dom Toretto, *The Fast and the Furious*<sup>3</sup>.

Most motorkhana courses are first-gear only, but a few get you up to second. For these, you'll be approaching tight corners in second, and need to get around them in first gear. If you don't downshift smoothly, the rear wheels can lock up as you release the clutch, resulting in an unintended rear-end slide.

I won't go into the details of rev-matching or heel-and-toe downshifting, but I strongly recommend you read up, learn, and practice, practice, practice! Second back to first can be a stubborn shift – you need a big throttle blip to match the revs well.

## The wet

If it rains, the skidpan gets very slippery! Or, in other words, your grip circle becomes very small. This makes controlling the car that much harder – you need to be super smooth to avoid losing traction, and very fast to respond if you do. Throttle inputs especially must be very gentle. If the surface is patchy, expect the available grip to vary constantly around each cone.

## The goal

If your aim for the day is to win the competitive courses, there's a simple goal: *Get from the start to the finish garage in the least possible time!* Obvious really, but every moment wasted is time lost. This means:

- » Start from the front of the garage.
- » Minimise the distance travelled, by keeping as close to the cones as possible. You should be so close that you can't easily see them.
- » Keep the car at the absolute limit of traction (edge of the grip circle) as much as possible. Doing this requires delicate balance, and perfect transitions between braking, cornering, and acceleration.
- » Don't waste time driving deep into the garage to finish.



*Figure 7 - Keep it close to the cones! Also, note the weight transfer to the front end due to braking. This will make it easier to initiate the handbrake turn necessary to get the back tyres around the cone.*

## Launching

Getting off the line in the dry, I prefer to give the car plenty of revs (5000-6000) and drop the clutch – this often results in some wheelspin, but it prevents the engine bogging down. Avoid this approach if the course is wet (or you have a turbo), or you will just sit there with the wheels spinning.

## Braking

Braking needs to be applied smoothly, to avoid locking up – if you do so you lose any steering control. Without ABS, this requires skill. If you lock up, partially lift off the brakes and squeeze them again. However, finishing in the garage in the dry is sometimes easiest by just locking up all four wheels – the instant lock-up at low speeds is a faster method than squeezing on the brakes.

<sup>3</sup> Yes, I am aware of the horror of this quote. Double-clutching is for DOWNSHIFTS, not upshifts...





## Corners

Some corners are best served by braking, flicking the car around, and accelerating. Others are better navigated by taking a wider arc and maintaining speed – the distance travelled will be longer but you aren't slowing, transitioning and speeding up again. Which method works best depends on the car, the exact corner, and more likely on what you have to do next. If you have another corner immediately, the shortest distance often works, but if there is a longer path it may be better to keep your speed up.

## Breaking down a course

Here's an example course layout.

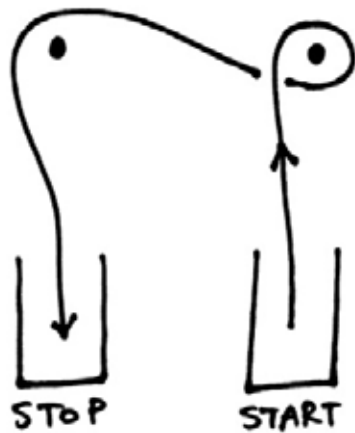


Figure 8 - A simple motorkhana course

Most drivers don't think through the goal of minimising the total time. All they think about is getting to the next cone quickly:

- » Leave the garage aimed at the first cone ...
- » Get around it and drive to the next cone ...
- » Get around the last cone and head for the exit ...
- » Park in the garage.

This would result in the solid line below.

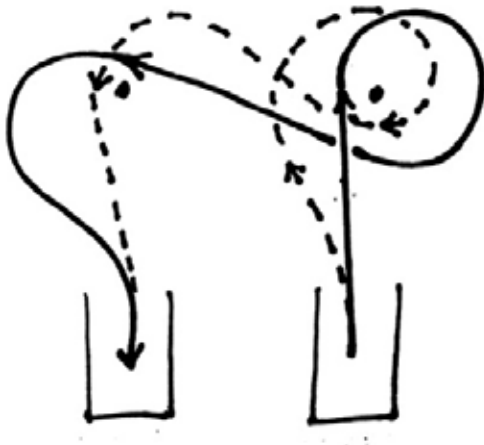


Figure 9 - An improved line (dashed) comes from planning ahead

The trouble is that if you don't plan ahead, you won't be set up to get from one cone to the next in the minimum time.

It can help to think the course through backwards:

- » Arrive at the garage decelerating hard from the highest possible speed, hence ...
- » Leave the last cone in the position where your speed is maximised and your distance to the garage is minimised, hence ...
- » Approach the last cone so that you will be leaving it at the trajectory determined above, hence ...
- » Approach the first cone so that you will be leaving it lined up to attack the second cone, hence ...
- » Leave the garage and take a path that gets you to the correct entry point for the first cone.

This approach is shown by the dashed line in Figure 9; as you can see it is quite different.

## Going home ...

**"Don't try this at home, kids!"**

Two thoughts to leave on:

**One**, the drive home from Shepparton is a long one for most attendees. You might have only done a few minutes' driving on the skidpan all up, but the day is tiring, so enjoy the cruise home, pay attention and **stay safe!**

**Two**, the things you can do at DECA have little bearing on the "real world" of public roads and traffic. Smooth driving is an admirable goal anywhere, but skids, oversteer and pushing the limits in public isn't.

If you haven't had enough fun, make sure the Club knows you're keen for another event. ■

# The MX-5 Club Grill



## Introducing ...

*Gerry Engwerda*

*North-Eastern Victoria Chapter*

**Name?** Gerry Engwerda

**Age?** 62

**Born?** Holland

**Current abode?** Yackandandah, north-east Victoria

**Profession?** High school teacher

**Partner?** Ellie

**Pets?** Sonja, the big dog in a small frame

**Fave food?** Italian, French and Malaysian

**Can you cook?** Yes

**Favourite tippie?** Red of any variety – I am very democratic

**First drive?** Morris 1100

**First car?** 1971 Ford Escort sold 11 months later when the front seat worked loose, a headlight fell out turning a corner and when I realised that flat out it would only just hit 70 mph

**First fender bender?** Never had one! Seriously – I wish I hadn't mentioned that!

**Everyday driver?** It's the MX-5. Why waste the opportunity? My wife has a Lancer and beyond that we don't need or want anything more. We have a Fiat X1/9 in storage waiting for attention

**Current MX-5?** Navy Blue NB 1999. I like that "current" bit though – is there something I don't know? Is someone giving me another one?

**MX-5 improvements?** That I have had done? Nitrogen in the tyres, adjustments to the exhaust/muffler to make it sound a bit more like a proper sports car with the proper sports car noise. Minor stuff of course! I would love to put in a turbo but not sure if that would change the character of the car too much



**MX-5 dislikes?** Lack of a turbo and that I can't drive it top-down in winter because I am Dutch and like to be warm. Can't look under the seats (does that count?)

**Why an MX-5?** The look of it, the reliability and the handling! I have always loved a great-handling car like the Lotus and the MX-5 is, I think, its equal

**Fluffy dice?** No

**Passions besides the MX-5?** Teaching, aviation, flight simulation, history, reading

**Favourite TV show / movie / book?** I can't pick a favourite. I don't watch much television and I have a very extensive library of both fiction and non-fiction. There are so many "favourite" books that I could not pick one. Films? Much the same although mockumentaries appeal to me, especially "This is Spinal Tap" and "Best in Show" – cult classics!

**Dream wheels (money no object)?** Lotus Evora S or a Lotus Elise which is probably a direct contender with the MX-5. I'm not proud. My second car was a Lotus Europa S2 and I still have fond memories of it. A sensible family car? – a Jaguar XJ12 in good condition

**Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong?** Excuse me....? I would if the other option was a long walk

**Favourite other Mazda?** The RX-8

**If not a Mazda (gasp!) what?** A Honda Type R. One of our boys had one and I was dead impressed

**How long in the Club?** Four years

**How many Club runs?** About 15 so far

**Favourite Club run?** The Ballarat run to Winchelsea and then the Great Ocean Road to Torquay. Actually the Snowy Mountains weekend run wasn't bad either, come to think of it

**Funniest thing seen on a Club run?** Two hours into a weekend run at Corryong, my wife decides she has to fill up the car with plants she can't do without

**Done DECA?** No

**Ford vs Holden?** Does anyone apart from a bogan care anymore? Really! I grew up with Fords but I would be happy with either

**What's playing in your MX-5?** A mix – Beatles, Rolling Stones, Arlo Guthrie, Eric Clapton. We had so much to choose from – we were very lucky really to have lived when we did with such variety and talent around. Very exciting times musically and I really doubt we will ever see anything like it ever again

**Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)?** AFL - Melbourne. Someone has to. When I arrived in Australia with three words of English, it was the only name I recognised when presented with a list of teams from which to choose. We won three in a row then and not a sausage since

**Final comments?** When we bought the MX-5 one of the first things we did was join the Club. It turned out to be a great decision. Since joining we have seen more of Victoria and southern New South Wales than we could have ever imagined. We have also met some of the best people who will be firm friends for life.





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

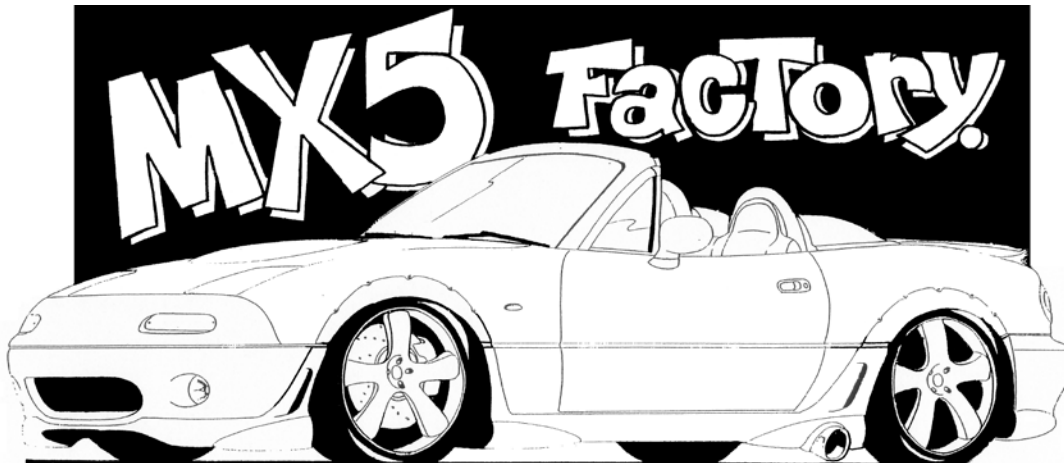
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