

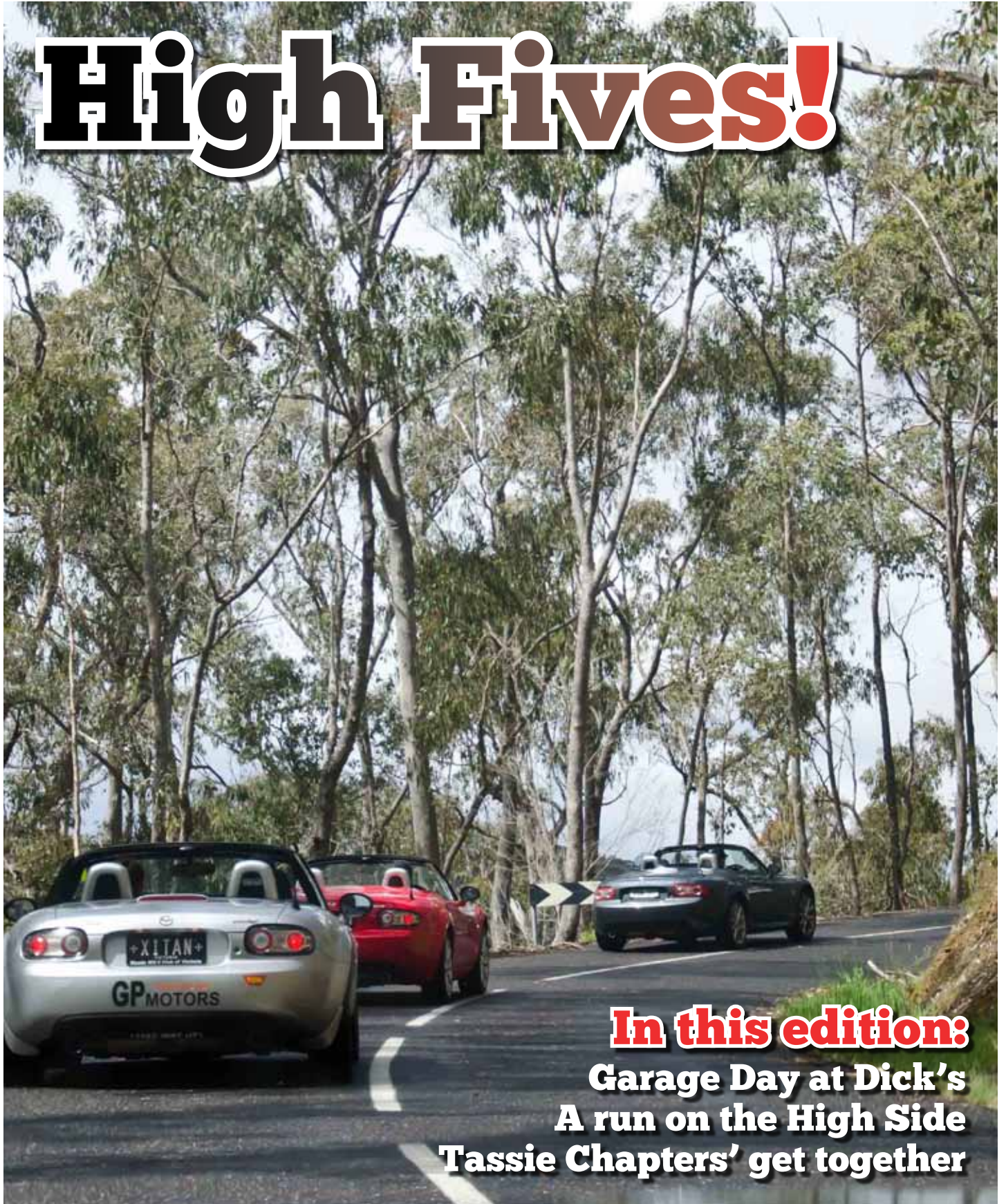
mxtra

10/2012

www.mx5vic.org.au

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

High Fives!



In this edition:
Garage Day at Dick's
A run on the High Side
Tassie Chapters' get together



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Cover image: On the Eildon-Jamieson Road on the way up Mt Torbreck. Photo: Wendy Clark.



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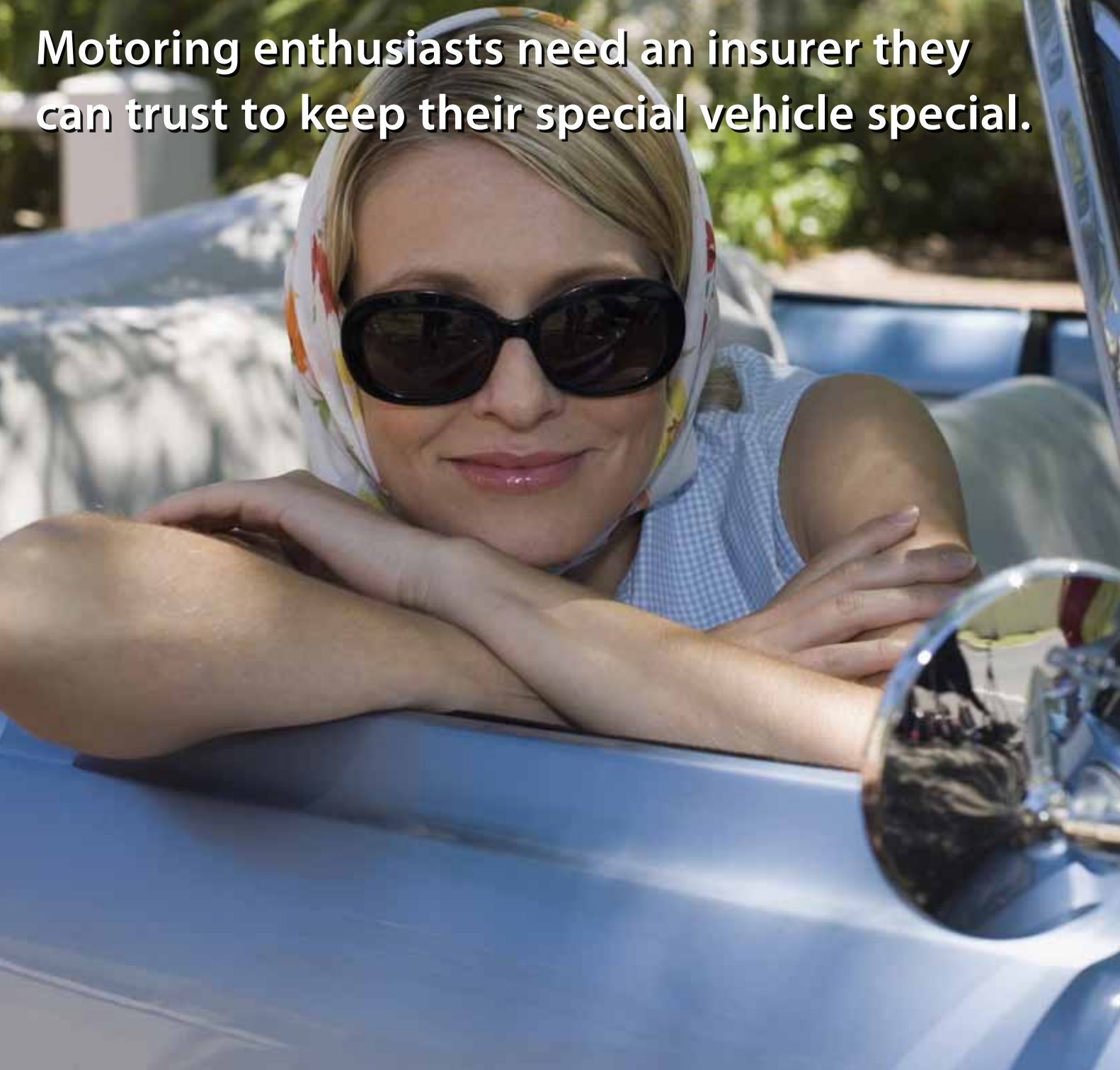
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Don's Drive(l) ...

■ Don Nicoll – President president@mx5vic.org.au

Welcome to our October issue of mxtra.

Since our last issue we have released the Club survey and I'm really pleased to see that we have had 170 responses already. For the results to be meaningful we would like to have at least 200 responses, so we will keep the survey open and encourage those of you who have yet to complete the survey to do so as soon as possible. A special thanks to all of you who have already completed the survey; we appreciate your input. We hope to have the first results available for the November edition of **mxtra**. In this issue, Daniel White has put together some of the first results of the motor sport survey (page 7) ... interesting stuff.

Once again in the last month we have demonstrated that Saturday runs are a real draw card for those in the membership who have difficulty joining Sunday runs. Alex and Ben had more than 20 cars on their run through the high country so forecasts of highly inclement weather did not deter those of us who find Saturday runs more convenient. Clearly the AFL grand final was no deterrent either! The Central chapter will be encouraged to look at other opportunities for Saturday events.

October is another full month with almost all Chapters hosting an event. By the time you read this we will have celebrated yet another Great Ocean Road run under the leadership of Chris and Joni, our Western Victorians will have joined up with the North-Eastern Victorian Chapter for a weekend away, the Southern Tasmanians will have experienced their Maydena run, the Northern Tasmanian their Meander to Miena and the motor sport group will have completed the six-hour regularity event in Winton.

Still to come in October are a bowling night for the Central Chapter, a Gippsland run for the Eastern Victorians and a six-day NSW south coast run. There is also a curry night and a show 'n' shine for the Southern Tasmanians and Bob de Bont is heading north for the Australian Motorkhana Championship in Queensland.

To say that there is plenty happening would have to be an understatement! It is fantastic how we are starting to fill the calendar and November looks just as busy. A huge vote of thanks is due to the

Chapter Captains and to all of you who are volunteering to organise events.

Mazda have very kindly arranged for all the Australian MX-5 Car Club Presidents to spend 18-19 October in Sydney for a meeting and also for a sneak preview of the Sydney motor show. More on what we discuss and what we see in the November magazine, but I think it needs to be said that this is very considerate of Mazda and a great opportunity for me to compare notes with the other Clubs and learn what they are thinking and doing.

During the week I was parked in the Doncaster shopping centre and when I returned to the car there was another MX-5 parking alongside. The driver had decided that parking next to a similar car was probably safer than anywhere else. I asked the driver if he was a member of the Club. He wasn't and *had no idea that we existed*.

I gave him one of our introductory cards and he headed off saying he would have to look us up on the web. It made me realise that, while we may be growing at an extraordinary rate, there are still lots of MX-5 drivers out there who have no idea of what they are missing. Our North-Eastern Victorian Chapter has decided to take out advertising in the local paper to address this very issue – it will be interesting to see the response they get.

In the meantime if you haven't got some of the Club cards to give away, e-mail your Chapter Captain or anyone on the Committee and we'll get some cards to you.

Finally, a plug for the CFA run on 4 November for those of us in the Central Chapter. This will be the fourth anniversary of a run we undertook in 2009 following the horrific bushfires north of Melbourne. We travel through some great country and the guys at Strath Creek CFA really appreciate our support. Hopefully I'll see you there.

Must go ... the driver's seat is getting cold.

Remember ... Safety ~~fast~~ first!

Don

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

October

- 19 *Central: 10-pin bowling night*
- 20 *South Tas: Curry night*
- 21 *South Tas: Show & Shine*
- 21 *Eastern Vic: Gippsland run*
- 22-27 *NSW south coast 6-day tour*

November

- 4 *Central: annual CFA run*
- 4 *Western Vic: Springfest, Ballarat*
- 10 *Central: Detailing 101*
- 11 *South Tas: winery & picnic run*
- 17-18 *NEV: Summit to Sea run*

December

- 2 *NEV: Christmas run*
- 9 *Central: Christmas break-up*
- 15 *South Tas: Christmas run*
- 16 *Western Vic: Christmas break-up*

January 2013

TBA Central: Twilight in the Trees

February

16-17 NE Vic: Snowy Mountains run



Add our Club calendar to your Smartphone

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



Membership

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

Hello everyone ...

I'm back at the membership desk, but thanks to Vice President Murray for taking on my role in my absence.

Our numbers continue to flourish with the count now at 445. This compares with 433 at the same time last year.

On behalf of all in the Club, I would like to extend a hearty welcome to the following new members:

Central Chapter

Geoffrey Blick	1995 White NA
Bradley Willmott	1998 Evolution Gold NB
Alexander Emelyanenko	2005 Galaxy Grey NC
Gary O'Dwyer	2000 Blue NB

Current membership count:

445

Western Victorian Chapter

Bill Riddell	1991 Neo Green
--------------	----------------

Northern Tasmanian Chapter

Paul Verhoeven	2005 Galaxy Grey NC
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See you out and about ... *Will*

New Club video

Have you seen the new promotional Club video on the home page of the Club's website?

Inspired by Central Chapter Captain **Ron Macdonald** and produced by Committeeman **Ben Sale** of "Other Side Productions", it gives a brief (one minute 40 second) insight into the Club's range of activities.

Check it out at www.mx5vic.org.au.



So next time someone asks you, "Just what does the MX-5 Club do?", point them to the home page ... the pictures tell several thousand words!

And, if you're a member who hasn't been along to any of our events recently, it would be worth you checking it out as well ...

- Decontamination
- Iron Remover
- Tar Remover
- Clay Bars & Kits
- Car Washing
- Car Wash
- Pressure Washers
- Foam Guns
- Wash Mitts
- Buckets & Grit Guard
- Drying towels
- Wheel & Tyres
- Tyre Cleaners & Brushes & Dressings
- Wheel Cleaners, Tools & Sealants
- Paint Correction
- Polishes, Compounds
- Machine Polishers
- Pads & Backing Plate
- Polishing Kits
- Protection
- Waxes & Sealants
- Long Life Coating
- Glass Cleaners
- Polishes & Cloths
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- Clean & Protect Kits
- Metal Polishers
- Applicators
- & Much, Much, More



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Full Throttle!



■ Daniel White – Club Captain - Motor Sport captain@mx5vic.org.au

Car Preparation

With a break in the Motor Sport Championship calendar this month, now is the time for drivers to prepare their cars and get them ready for the next two rounds coming up in November at Phillip Island and December at Winton.

Over the past couple of weeks I have spoken with many drivers in the Club who have been very busy working on their cars carrying out a variety of work from cam belts, new brakes and rotors, upgrading gearboxes etc, and one lucky person buying a new car!!

Good work folks ... remember to submit any changes to the Classification Officer if required.

Whether you service your car yourself, or have it done by a service centre, here are some basic tips to consider looking at or telling your service centre to look at for you, when preparing your MX-5 for a track day that can be sometimes overlooked:

Brakes

- » All pads should be inspected – inner and outer, front and rear to ensure they are thick enough and do not have any heat cracks or signs of delamination. If in doubt, replace them
- » Measure the rotors and ensure they are not below minimum thickness and are not cracked
- » Change your brake fluid and use a good quality fluid with a minimum of Dot4
- » Clean and lubricate your calliper slides

Driveline Oils

- » When was the last time they were changed?
- » Fresh oil is cheap by comparison to a gearbox or diff rebuild.

Under the bonnet

- » Coolant change
- » Remember to inspect your radiator cap as well. It plays an important role in keeping the right pressure in your cooling system and raising the boiling point

- » Check the cooling system hoses – especially the small bypass hoses under the inlet manifold
- » Check the belts: no cracks, and nice and tight
- » Air filter: if it's not clean, replace it
- » Remember the spark plugs

Wheels and Tyres

- » A decent four-wheel alignment is a must and will help your lap times
- » Balance your wheels
- » Check your tyres for wear or damage

NC MX-5 Rollbar Design Assessment – Brown Davis

During the month arrangements were made for an NC MX-5 Soft-top to go to the *Brown Davis* factory in Bayswater for measurements, to assess if a bolt-in, bolt-out style rollbar could be developed. Robert Hart kindly agreed to supply his vehicle for use as he has been researching options but to date has not been able to find the right one.

The design team has been challenged to see if they can build a unit, which is CAMS- and VicRoads-compliant and still allows use of the soft top. Safety is paramount in our sport and if a bar such as this can be developed successfully it would give NC drivers access to rollover protection (ROPS) equipment similar to the NA/NB MX-5 Brown Davis bar.

Stay tuned for a detailed report from Robert Hart in next month's *mxtra*.

Winton 6-Hour Regularity – 13 and 14 October 2012

Once again we have three MX-5 teams ready to compete in the Winton 6-Hour Regularity Relay. Expectations are high for podium finishes this year ... a clean sweep perhaps?!

There are a total of 43 teams competing in the event this year so we are in for a busy and challenging weekend of motor sport. An MX-5 group dinner is scheduled for the Saturday evening to give teams one last chance to discuss their plan of attack before the big day on Sunday.

Our teams are:

City Mazda Motorsport – Scott Gould (mgr), Daniel White, Mike Kirby, Kim Cole, Gary Prescott, Paul Ledwith. Volunteers: Andrew Strike, Todd Fletcher and James Cole.

Flyin' Miatas – Robert Downes, Peter Phillips, Stephen Downes, Teruo Delacroix, Noel Heritage. Volunteers: Pam Phillips, Anastasia Giannaka

Team MX-5 Motorsport – Paul Murphy (mgr), Tim Emery, Max Lloyd, John Downes, Mark Fitzgerald. Volunteer: Dale Fitzgerald

Good luck and good driving to everyone competing.

Motor Sport Survey – you might be interested to know??

As we now begin to compile a Club Motor Sport marketing profile based on our Survey responses I thought you might be interested to know some of the results.

The survey was sent to all MX-5 Club members who have indicated interest in motor sport and, pleasingly, our response rate was over 50%.

You might be interested to know:

- » 72% of respondents do not use their MX-5 as a daily drive car
- » The ideal number of Championship rounds per year?
 - 42%: 6-8 rounds
 - 40%: 8-10 rounds
- » Activities that would interest you as part of the Motor Sport program?
 - 75%: Driver development sessions
 - 62%: Car preparation workshops
 - 51%: Training for scrutineering qualifications
- » Forms of social media or online forums used in the MX-5 motor sport community?
 - 55%: use forums
 - 42%: use Facebook
 - 44%: use YouTube

Daniel #146

"Racing – converting money into noise!"

The MX-5 Club Grill



Introducing ...

Jo Hirst

- Assistant Chapter Captain,
Southern Tasmanian Chapter

Name? Joanna Hirst

Age? Too old and I still haven't grown up.
My motto is he/she who dies playing with
the most toys wins

Born? Hobart

Current abode? Howrah

Profession? Teacher. No comments about
holidays, thanks

Partner? Happily single

Pets? A cat, a border collie husky cross,
two chooks, and a cockatiel (the class pet)

Fave food? Italian and Indian

Can you cook? I do a lot of cooking

Favourite tippie? Mika a drink known in
Airlie Beach and named after the girl who
invented it. It has muddled lime Mount
Gay Rum and squash in it with lots of ice.
Very nice

First drive? 1956 Holden FE ... and I still
have her!

First car? As above

First fender bender? In the FE into a fence
- no damage to her though

Everyday driver? My beautiful two-tone
RX-7 1985 model special edition

Current MX-5? A silver MX-5 NB SE turbo

MX-5 improvements? None



MX-5 dislikes? Probably the gearbox on
my model

Why an MX-5? When I was in the sandpit
at the age of five playing with toy cars I
knew one day I would have a convertible
and my car has a glass rear window -
Important if you don't want to wipe out
motorcycles (another of my passions).
Also, I read so many good reports about
them

Fluffy dice? Yuck!

Passions besides the MX-5? Sailing my
yacht and riding motorbikes

Favourite TV show / book? Doctor Who,
Top Gear / The Guernsey Literary and

Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Shaffer
about the effects of WW2 on the island

Dream wheels (money no object)? I live
in hope Mazda will bring out a new RX-7

**Would you drive a Daewoo or
SsangYong?** Oh, no way would I be seen in
either. I think I would end up depressed

Favourite other Mazda? I think you can
work that one out

If not a Mazda (gasp!), then what? I love
my old Holden

How long in the Club? Since about 2004

How many MX-5 Club runs? Heaps here
in Tassie

Favourite Club run? Up to Ross Picnic
with lots of other car nuts. Such a variety
of cars, hundreds of cars to see and lots of
interesting people

Funniest thing seen on a Club run? A
snake in the middle of the road trying
to strike at Caz' car. Actually quite
frightening too ...

Done DECA? Not yet

Ford vs Holden? Mmmm ... it must be
Holden

What's playing in your MX-5? John
Cougar, Pink Floyd, Dire Straits and U2

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? None

Final comments? It is great to be in the
Club. I have met so many interesting
people with all sorts of talents and
interests



Scene about ...



■ Photos: John Waldo, Kelly Berggren, Bronwyn Roche, Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw



Chapter chatter ...

Not just for fathers ...

2/9/12 | Eastern Victoria



What better way is there to spend a Father's Day than with a bunch of keen little MX-5s for a cruise around Gippsland?

With a beautiful sunny day forecast we set off towards Drouin. One thing of note on the trip down to the start point – we passed a silver NC ... *towing a catamaran!*

Sitting at the start point we watched the other cars arrive and soon noticed a very common theme. One red one, two red ones, three red ones ... *Gracie* is of course Grace Green and our run leader Trav has a white NA but every other car in the convoy was red! Looks like there is a very bad epidemic of “red” in Gippsland at the moment, with five of the seven cars on the run infected!

Moving out of the car park line in line astern formation, we headed through Drouin and off towards Ripplebrook. This was a quite interesting coincidence as only a few weeks before Wendy and I had gone for a cruise through there and noted that it would be an ideal area for a Club run, particularly in autumn due to the many deciduous trees lining the roadside.

Unfortunately we had a slow ring-in at the head of the column; however we lost them with the left turn into Invermay Road West – a chance to get up to the speed limit and have a bit of fun. Along this stretch of road there were a few curious “furry” patches on the bitumen which invoked a little radio traffic on the subject with one member suggesting it might be an option for lunch.

Although there was a need to dodge the odd pothole or two, it was a great run through to Poowong then down Main South Road's wonderful curves and bends with some magnificent views across the very green rolling hills of Gippsland.

We headed back through Poowong East where a Danish settlement was established in 1877. More slow cars to hold us up but with a right turn coming up we thought all would be well. Gearing down for the right turn into Burnt Store Road we noticed with a little dismay that our slow friend was turning too. Having lost our little friend we made the left turn into Lardners Track and past the Lardner Park convention centre before descending a perfect hill for photographing a line of MX-5s ... only problem was when Wendy turned to take the shot there was not a car in sight. ☹️ Arriving back in Drouin after completing our first loop it was time for a quick cuppa and some much-appreciated cake which surprisingly had survived the many twists and turns of the first half of the run.

We headed off again and soon found ourselves back on Lardners Track. All went well until I was cresting a hill and was distracted by an oncoming truck – only to look forward again to find Trav stopped at a stop sign on the other side of the hill! Thank goodness for Mazda's very efficient braking system!



■ **Words:** Ron Macdonald ■ **Photos:** Wendy Clark & Ron Macdonald ■ **Run organiser:** Travis McInnes

Old Jindivick Road was a nice challenge: a tad bumpy at the start but some very interesting narrow winding sections including some very long bends.

We arrived at the lunch destination of the King's Arms Hotel in Neerim South a little earlier than planned. Trav advised he had anticipated this and had an *ace* up his sleeve ... we again took off on a sensational 40-odd kilometre "bonus" along some of the best MX-5 roads in Gippsland. More sensational scenery with many ducks inhabiting the dams. This scenery came in handy when we encountered a driver who thought he would play it safe – although the advised speed was 50kmh the best he managed was 35! This however was no major drama as the day was glorious: brilliant sunshine and a spectacular vista across the snow-covered Baw Baw ranges.

Finishing the loop back at the King's Arms we then bid the others a fond farewell and *bon appetit* as we headed back to Frankston for another engagement.

Many thanks to Trav for organising such a wonderful way to spend a Father's Day. ■



Chapter chatter ...

The “I have no idea where we’re going” run

16/9/12 | North-Eastern Victoria

As the name of the run suggests, we made this run up as we went along and had no idea where we would go or, indeed, end up.

A couple of people have commented that they thought it was a great idea to do this, but it was purely the result of staring at a map for some time trying to come up with a new run rather than recycling one of the older ones.

After conceding to myself that I had no idea where we were going to go, *only then did I think that it might be a good idea.* I would nominate one car to lead us off in whatever direction they wanted, then the next car in line take over and go wherever they wanted, and so on.

On a reasonable Sunday morning – no rain but a bit of cloud – we headed off to the meeting point in Yackandandah, about 45 minutes from home. Our first bit of excitement for the day came shortly after going through Chiltern when a

gaggle of geese decided to cross the road in front of us and test out my brakes. Luckily they worked. My wife, Marg, insisted later that they weren’t geese but were Bush Turkeys. Anyway, after avoiding the turkeys which had cunningly *disguised* themselves as geese, we continued on to “Yack” where we found several members already tucking into coffee and cake.

After catching up and a good chat with those we hadn’t seen for a while, it was into the cars for the first leg of the run. I nominated Bill and Elaine to take the lead first and we all fell in behind them. Heading off towards Myrtleford for a while they then turned off on the first of the roads for the day that we had never used before. It turned out to be a nice little road with plenty of twisty bits. The straight stretches kept us amused as well by having to swerve around craters in the road which would have swallowed us up if we had gone into them.

Now, those of us who live in the “Premier” State of New South Wales have always had to endure the taunts from

Southerners that we have the worst roads in the country. Let me tell you, it is now official that Victoria has taken over that mantle.

Arriving at an intersection near Dederang, Bill and Elaine stopped to let the next in line take the lead. This was Ron from Sunbury who had come up to join us again. Ron was on his own as his wife wasn’t keen on getting up at 4.30am, driving 300km to drive some more, then drive 300km home again ... not sure what’s wrong with her.

So, not knowing the area well, Ron decided to turn left towards Wodonga, then right at Kergunyah which took us down through Gundowring along a lesser road which runs parallel to the one which goes to Mt Beauty and Falls Creek.

After half an hour or so Ron stopped at a “T” intersection and handed over to the next car, that of Brian and Maree, new members on only their second run. They decided that they would like to take us on the Happy Valley road which was nearby. This is one of our favourite roads but this



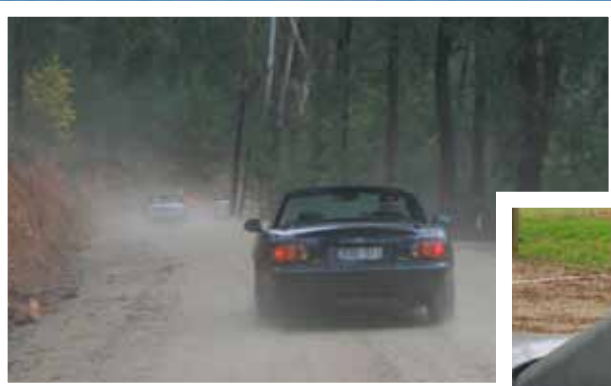


■ **Words:** Ron Gillick ■ **Photos:** Marg Gillick ■ **Run organiser:** Ron Gillick

time we were doing it in the reverse direction to that which we do normally. This brought us out on to the Great Alpine Road at Ovens and then in to Myrtleford where we stopped for more coffee ... and more cake.

It was then the turn of Greg and Feifei to lead the way and it was decided that we would head up to Stanley on a road that I'd heard had recently been sealed. Some of our four-wheel driving members had said that "this will be a great road when it's sealed"... and it probably will be ... when it's sealed. Unfortunately the middle three or four km are still to be done. After stopping at the end of the sealed bit we decided to keep going as "it's only a bit of dust and it will wash off". It turned out to be a lot of dust and it's in everything.

After Stanley it was down the hill into Beechworth where we stopped for lunch and ended the run. It was a good way to do a run with something a bit different and we will do it again one day. ■



Chapter chatter ...

Of elephants and wine glasses ...

8-9/9/12 | Northern Tasmania (with Southern Tasmania)



Main photo: Catching the perfect wave at The Hazards
Far left: en route to The Hazards
Left: Coles Bay lighthouse

Our annual overnighter to the east Coast took us to Coles Bay on the Freycinet Peninsula, surrounded by white sand beaches, aqua blue water and serious cyclone winds!!! 😊

Well, not quite, but looking at the number of up-rooted trees, fallen branches, and finally white capped waves, it wasn't far off it! For the entire trip we could often see the damage caused by the high winds over the past few days.

8 cars met up in Longford, looking snazzy and turning a lot of local heads, then we headed off with our tops down, winding through the back roads past Woolmers, behind Cressy and popping out just north of Campbell Town. After a quick smoko at Campbell Town, we took the Lake Leake Highway to Swansea. It is a great stretch of road with enough fun curves to get the tires nicely warmed up, though it is a bit of a bummer when (of course) you get stuck behind a caravan half way through... We finally got to a long stretch of road, passing the caravan under the blue silhouette of the distant Hazards. Onward to Swansea!

We stopped for lunch at the *Old Bark Mill* bakery/tavern in Swansea, and met up with the Southern Tassie Chapter! A great mixer lunch with lots of chatting ensued, then a quick stop for pics in front of the beach overlooking Great Oyster Bay, with the Hazards on the horizon, before we all headed off to overnigh together at the Iluka caravan park in Coles Bay.

After settling in and scoping out the local area, some headed off for a walk, nanna-nap or beer at the pub. Keith, Sandra, Carl and I took a stroll around the main road, since the beach was way too windy to walk on, before heading back to the pub. As we settled in for a beer with the two chapters, Anna found out that there were fresh oysters to be had at a local grower, but they were minutes away from closing for the day! As I am just as happy drinking red fizzy stuff as alcohol, I was able to jump in *Mixie*, our red NA with white mags, and cruise with Anna to get some fresh oysters, scallops and even a baby lobster for Sandra.

Dinner was a get-together BBQ for us, squeezing into one cabin which was excellent fun and full of stimulating conversation and lots of laughter. Dessert saw both chapters get together in the Southerners larger cabin, with freshly baked cinnamon spirals and home-made desserts (including yummy rocky-road!). It was great to get to know the other Chapter a bit better, especially since the first time I'd met them at the Ross picnic earlier in the year.

We were up early next morning to sunshine and bird calls. Breakfast was on the deck, sharing coffee, before heading off for the day.

We northerners (and Lisa from South) on a cruise around the local lookouts (no alcohol – ha ha!), lighthouse and real estate. The Southern Chapter preferred the coast over the Hazards to the lookout over Wine Glass Bay. Our view from the lighthouse on the edge of the peninsula was spectacular. It gave us a view of the Tasman Sea and the edge of Wine Glass Bay. The road in was fun though a really steep hillclimb section, twisty and no road-kill to stink up the eucalyptus on the sea breeze.

We said good bye to the southern chapter and they headed home. Lunch was a relaxer in Bicheno and then we took off to go *zooming* up Elephant Pass (my highlight trip) to St Mary's. Elephant Pass is a winding road with lots of hair-pins and a fresh breeze. The pass on the other side of the peninsula (Mary's Pass) is fun too, but Elephant Pass is where we hang out for! We stopped half way up for slow traffic to get ahead, then zoomed some more. From a comfort stop in Swansea we headed into the Fingal Valley to arrive at our all-time favourite road: Rossarden!

Rossarden is a tiny mining town under the Bluff, deep in the bush and often referred to as the 'ass-end of no-where'. There is a lot of forestry logging in the area, so the trees are kept in good nick, which is just what you need for on a run. The loop road out of Rossarden via a tight valley through a section of

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



words

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Cary Regional Reserve. Because it's so sexy, it has the honour of being the only road that we all are willing to face a section of dirt crawling for! Once out the other side, it was back down into the Fingal Valley for the final stop at Avoca.

After a quick stretch and reminiscing about past runs through the area (like Anna reminding me of when I was nursing baby Charlie on the side of the road – "Just up there ..."), we said our farewells, and then set off on our separate ways home. Everyone had had a blast of a weekend – thanks to all who helped out, the Southern Tassie Chapter for good company, and Bruce and Cheryl for excellent organisation - as always! ■



◀ Above left: up Elephant Pass
Left: Lisa flying solo

▲ Trevor's car, Avoca

Chapter chatter ...

South meets North in the East

... or, abscess makes the heart grow fonder!

Last year the Southern Tasmanian Chapter ran a weekend at Coles Bay and it's fair to say "a good time was had by all".

Well, *almost* all ... I had to battle an increasingly painful abscess above a tooth and was dosed up on a procession of *Nurofen* and *Panadiene Forte* the whole time. For those who haven't had the pleasure it is the kind of pain from which you cannot escape, and good wine only serves to delay or perhaps intensify the inevitable. I threw caution to the wind by not visiting the dentist before setting out this year and hoped that nothing would spoil this trip, all the more because this time we would be joined by the Northern Tasmanian Chapter.

Eight cars headed from Hobart to rendezvous with those from the north at Swansea. It was cool and windy but many went topless regardless. Some even put their roofs down (... *I know—an oldie, but just for the newbies!*).

Amongst the lovely sweepers and straights there are a few twisty bits thrown in to keep us entertained on the way to Swansea. We called in to Spiky Bridge (*below*). Built in 1843 by convicts it is characterised by its projecting spikes of rock that make it look like something from *Mad Max*. Allegedly it was constructed to prevent cows from falling into to the steep gully below. John "Road Warrior" Waldock took a photo of the cars lined up on the bridge and off we went.

This part of the world sets up something of the perfect "Club" sandwich: slices of breathtaking coastal scenery, lashings of entertaining road and topped off with a garnish of MX-5!

Swansea is a lovely little seaside town and we met our northern friends at the Bark Mill Bakery for a nice lunch and a chance to have a chat. An impressive line-up of cars (and drivers of course) assembled at the nearby beach for an unprecedented combined chapter photo, and with a backdrop of the ocean with seabirds spectacularly spearing into the water from on high.

Underway again, we made for our Coles Bay accommodation – *Iluka on Freycinet* holiday park. The massive granite landforms known as The Hazards (*right*) tower over our Coles Bay cabins and the pink of the granite appears in the roads here and there making for a rather unusual appearance.

The rest of the afternoon was about taking it easy and getting to know our cabin mates and the rest of the group. Some found the local 'watering hole' and settled in for a drink and some eight ball. Stacey and I shared with recently-joined member Lisa Gershwin and John and Michelle Waldock.

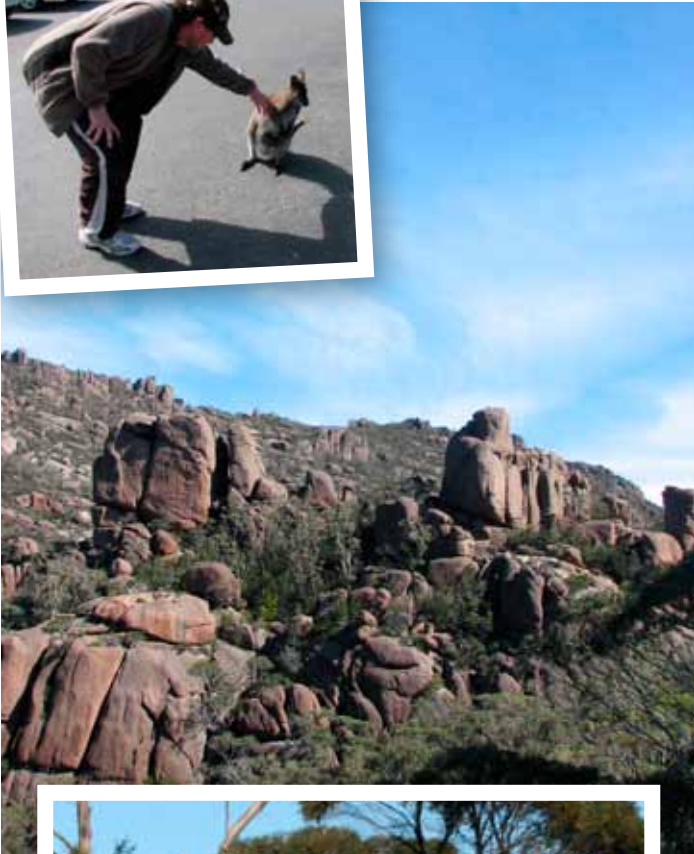
Responsibility for meals had been decided earlier across those





8-9/9/12 | Southern Tasmania (with Northern Tasmania)

■ Words: Alan Pryer ■ Photos: John Waldock ■ Run organisers: John Waldock & John Hadrill



from the Southern Chapter such that everyone contributed for the rest to enjoy, and very enjoyable it was. There was much chat over fine wine and we even strayed off the subject of MX-5s and cars in general. To get us back on track the *Top Gear* "Cool Wall" made a comeback appearance but before we could decide which version of the MX-5 should sit in the 'Aston Fridge' our cabin population swelled with a welcome visit from the Northern Chapter – and let's face it ... that decision would have been easy – NA, NB and NC belong in there! (Phew)

Wall-to-wall MX5-ers *et al* shared views, stories and jokes into the night and as the cabin numbers thinned out we grabbed a quiet cuppa before turning in. Great stuff.

Next morning there was much discussion around where to drive and what to see. Eventually many went on to Bicheno where most of the white-knuckle prone "navigators" would remain for a look around and coffee whilst the drivers went off for a spirited blat through Elephant Pass and back. Others decided to have a quick look at the local lighthouse and magnificent coastal views followed by a walk up to the lookout from which Wineglass Bay can be seen. We farewelled each other as we headed off and look forward to our next chance to catch up.

The wind had been fairly incessant up to this point but decided to abate for long enough for us to sight-see in comfort and we did sight sea. Upon the return of *Ocean's 10* from the lighthouse walk we were blown away again, only this time by a celebrity! A group of touring ladies were being accompanied by none other than *George Clooney*! Despite being uncharacteristically stiff and seemingly a bit bored he did pose with us for a quick photo, although he was upstaged by spitting image and obvious close relative – the even more handsome, Ian Long!

George (pictured at left with some of our gang) seemed reluctant to get back into the van with the ladies and was definitely showing the strain as he peered back at us through the rear window as they departed. "O brother, where art thou?", eh Ian?!

The walk up to the lookout is increasingly user-friendly and along the way there are some huge rockforms jutting out from the hills, some even "threatening" the walkers as they squeeze by. The view was magnificent, complete with trade-mark aquamarine water in sun-drenched Wineglass Bay.

As we prepared to leave for home we were joined by very friendly adult wallabies that appeared to have had no little experience with tourists but their near-new joeys were only just learning the ropes. We said *au revoir* to Coles Bay as we headed off down the highway although John and Michelle promptly said *bonjour* somewhat sooner than expected. We had not signed off as having returned from the National Park walk, and would officially still have been out there somewhere now if the Waldocks had not realised and done the right thing for all and headed back to sort it. (Nice chance for a spirited catch up effort too?)

After a brief meal back in Swansea we headed home after a great weekend. I for one look forward to next time, when hopefully my twin bro' Brad might turn up with his wife Angelina. ■

Chapter chatter ...

Candles and goldfields ...

24/9/12 | Western Victoria

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

The Western Chapter are on the road again for our Goldfields Run.

With a meet time of 10am for a 10.30am start, 15 bright and shiny MX-5s are lined up from Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne. The weather is a bit overcast but the brave ones drop their tops and off we go, heading out the highway towards the historic township of Clunes.

The first part of the trip is through some very green and picturesque farming country. Thirty minutes later we are parking in Clunes for coffee. The buildings are very old and in original condition, having been used in many Australian films. We all have a good wander around and enjoy a good chat and catch up.

Half an hour later we are off again, and now the sun is out – perfect for top-down driving.

Continuing on to the Ballarat-Maryborough Road, then a slight right on to McCallums Creek Road towards Majorca, and across the top of the Tullaroop Reservoir where the overflow is running after all the rain. The road now is very straight and narrow, luckily there is no other traffic to worry us.

After crossing the Pyrenees Highway the paddocks are a mixture of beautiful yellow canola crops and contrasting green pastures, with the canola giving off a lovely perfume. A few twists and turns later we are passing along the edge of Cairn Curran Reservoir which is a huge expanse of water.

On reaching Newstead we are joined by Warwick Gibbon who has travelled from Bendigo to join us for the rest of the day's run. We continue on through Guildford turning at the old pub, up and over some hills, around some bends and through the bush to arrive at Vaughn Springs for a picnic lunch break. This is a lovely spot with a mineral water spring and a creek running beside where we park our cars. There is even a big slide which Chris is brave enough to come down head first to show us how it's done.

The Bradshaws, who were held up because one of their cows decided to have a calf, have now arrived. Noellene presents Karen with a cupcake and candle as Saturday was her birthday. After the usual "Happy Birthday" it's off towards Chewton. This is a great road with a couple of stomach-dropping crests which we did not mention to anyone.

Through Chewton we turn left towards Reedsdale on to another road designed for MX-5s – and their drivers' enjoyment. The three cars from Bendigo, including new member Bill Riddell, leave us here to head north while we turn south to Taradale and on to Malmsbury. We stop here for a toilet stop and meet up with members of the MG Club, also on a run of their own. They have some very nice old cars and it is good to have a chat and share some experiences with them. This is where Bronwyn and Geoff leave us after a great run and return to Melbourne.

Now it's a spirited run into Daylesford for a stop at Herbal Lore Liqueurs where Roger McLean welcomes us to sample some great tasting liqueurs. This has become one of our favourite stops in Daylesford, with some members purchasing bottles with names like *Midnight Desire* and *Harmony*. Very nice!

Back in Ballarat we called into our place for a quick cuppa before going to the Ballarat Golf Club for dinner and wind-down chat to cap off another great day.

Thank you again to all that joined us today; we hope to see you next time.

Zoom zoom! ■



Chris on the slippery slope

Noellene (right) prepares Karen's birthday cake



Picnic at Vaughn Springs

Chapter chatter ...

Garage Day at Dick's ... 22/9/12 | Central Chapter

■ Words: Alan Bennett ■ Photos: Ron Macdonald & Alan Bennett ■ Run organiser: Ron Macdonald



It's been three years since the last Garage Day at Dick's but given the enthusiastic response from this month's reprise this event really needs to get back on the regular calendar in a hurry.

Dick Richey established *Oven Baked Enamel Services* way back in 1961 ... and he has the grey hairs to prove it. With the launch of the MX-5 and some prodding from early Club members Dick branched out and formed *The MX5 Factory*. Check him out on www.mx5factory.com.au, see his ad on page 27 or visit him at 34 Molan Street, Ringwood. He is the oldest Club sponsor we have, in more ways than one!

Ron introduced us to Dick and we got straight into over three hours of talkfest, demos

and hints and tips, witticisms and insights that made the event a delight. In turn Dick introduced us to Freddy, his MX-5 mechanic/guru. Freddy introduced us to his portable Snap-on computer ... so you can see this was a warm and friendly session!

The Snap-on costs several thousand dollars (see www.snapon.com) and is an engine diagnoser's best friend. A gift from MX-5 heaven. It plugs into almost any car's computer and checks for error codes and displays these on its screen. This makes finding faults much faster than ritual trial and error. The Snap-on can display an image of parts, their location and technical specifications so that the mechanics can be confident in their diagnosis. It means parts can be tested on the car and replaced only if required,

saving time and money, not to mention frustration. As a car can have thousands of fault codes this device means that the mechanic can review all reported fault codes and rectify all known problems or report the ones that are not urgent so that the owner is getting pre-failure advice for future attention.

To demonstrate the Snap-on's usefulness, Freddy disabled the engine on an MX-5, then attempted to start the car so that the computer would record the relevant error code. He then showed us the computer's display with the code correctly identifying the offending part – restoring this saw the car start on cue.

Then it was time to literally hoist the MX-5 above our heads so that we could all experience what lurks beneath. Freddy showed off the next factory tool: a brake fluid box of tricks that uses 4psi pressure to push brake fluid through each of the four wheels' brakes without any mess and in a matter of minutes, removing the fuss, the old fluid and any air bubbles at the same time. Did you know that the MX-5 has about 1.5L of brake fluid?

With a change of pace, Dick talked about one of the common problems he sees: the flooding of parts of the car with water. I can speak from personal experience that Dick was able to fix this problem for me



^ NA timing belt

< Freddy with an NC engine



◀ Dick Richey
(centre)
holds court

piston from the engine of an NA that had been regularly serviced and travelled 300,000km – no noticeable wear and everything working normally. He then showed us pistons from another car with similar mileage

but where regular servicing had not been maintained ... these pistons were black with carbon deposits and the owner was having to part with thousands of dollars for an engine rebuild. *Ouch!*

Moving out of the mechanical garage and on to the paint department, Dick showed us a car that was being stripped of paint and explained the detailed process they go through to remove the paint, sand down the panel, make any necessary repairs and then apply the paint layers including the clearcoat. When asked if paint protection was worth the money Dick's advice was to "keep your money in your pocket." Better to keep your paint clean by washing the car with a pH-neutral car wash and apply a quality wax every six months – he recommends *Meguire's* products. He warned against using dishwashing liquid to wash your car! I can hear the paint crying ...

Dick was at pains to point out that metallic paint is much harder to colour match and takes more time to get right hence is more expensive to repair ... a point to consider with your next MX-5.

Freddy emphasised that some mechanics replace the brake pads but do not examine or service the callipers – this eventually leads to seizure of the calliper which will then need refurbishing or replacing. When the brakes only work on one side of the disks, the braking efficiency is severely reduced and damage to the disks occur. Freddy showed us



Some quotes:

- » 98 octane petrol burns cleaner and you get more k's per litre.
- » MX-5s were designed to go fast not slow.
- » The MX-5 is exceptionally well designed and engineered. Well balanced. NAs over 20 years old are not needing parts replaced that European cars need after 10 years.
- » The only rust area on an MX-5 is on NAs around the windscreen. There are no regular or common faults on MX-5s.
- » Don't bring in your NC for a timing belt change at 100,000km – it doesn't have one!
- » What modifications do you suggest? It depends on what you are looking to achieve. The most cost-effective mods are to add a cold air filter, a modified exhaust and Koni shocks.
- » At the risk of repeating myself – always get your car serviced on time!

how he disassembles the callipers and cleans them with brake fluid before reassembly, a process which takes only a few minutes but which will ensure the brakes are working effectively. He also explained how to adjust the handbrake and commented that he has seen several badly-adjusted examples from customers, and that a bit of knowledge by the mechanic and just a few minutes work can fix would prevent poor handbrake effectiveness.

In finishing, and back to the beginning – another event? There was so much ground covered at today's session I could not cover everything discussed. So, if you have any interest in things mechanical, however small, I strongly encourage you to make the effort next time. There is the probability of a similar day next year plus a chassis day (who has seen a chassis getting straightened?). Look forward to any future day at Dick's.

Thanks Ron, for arranging a rewarding day. Thanks, too, to Dick and Freddy for your time, allowing us into your business, and for your honesty and passion for the car that is the reason our Club exists. ■

◀ It's a boy thing ...

and explain why and how it happened to me within minutes. There are water-collecting areas on the sides behind the seats from rain rails along the bottom of the soft top, the purpose of which is to drain water away to under the car and out of harm's way. If these drainage areas get blocked however, bad things can occur! In my case I was getting water in one side of the boot when it rained. I could not find leak and spent a bit of time with my head in the boot and a hose (from our water tank, of course) splashing precious water over the roof of the car. *Not a pretty sight!!* Dick to the rescue: the offending and blocking leaves removed by blowing compressed air up the drainage pipe fixed this in seconds. Dry car means happy driver.

Dick showed us what can happen if water drains into the passenger footwell area. The main car computer (ECU or engine control unit) is located under this area, and if this gets soaked it's goodbye computer and hello empty wallet. Cancel the children's education. On NAs and NBs, Dick recommends using a simple chop stick in the top and from below to ensure the drainpipes are clear. *A high-tech approach?* On the NC there are valves in the drainage pipes and he recommends using compressed air to blow out anything blocking the pipes from underneath the car. *The MX5 Factory* check and clean these drainage areas at all services as a matter of their standard servicing schedule.

Dick is starting to see a number of smokey NAs and NBs come in for much-needed engine work.

One of the big messages of the day: **get your car regularly serviced!** If not, expect bad (read expensive) things to occur. Freddy showed us a

Chapter chatter ...

A run on the high side ... 29/9/12 | Central Chapter

■ Words: *Bumblebee* (Robert Hart) ■ Photos: Wendy Clark, Ron Macdonald ■ Run organiser: Ben Sale & Alex Hailstone



Twenty MX-5s and one large angry bright yellow bumblebee (Commodore) converged on an unsuspecting Croydon McDonald's at approximately 8am on AFL Grand Final Day.



The weather being fine and sunny, those with folding roofs duly lowered them to experience top-down motoring.

Ben and Alex distributed running notes, aka 'stage' descriptions, to those present. All were impressed by their professionalism and the thought and effort that had clearly gone into compiling the route instructions.

Spot on 8.30am the convoy departed *parc fermé* (Maccas) and headed into the unknown.

After cruising along through some stunning countryside with generally open and flowing roads, the group arrived at BP Mansfield for fuel and snacks. The kind BP attendant cheerfully informed us that it was snowing on the Mansfield-Eildon road. Those either brave or foolish enough decided to continue with their roofs down, whilst others considered whether or not their cars' ESP (Electronic Stupidity Prevention) systems would keep the sting in the tail of their machines under control in the wet or snowy conditions to come.

As usual Ben and Alex, in their understated manner, mentioned that there were "a few" corners in the road between Mansfield and Eildon. Later we were to discover their definition of "a few" equates to ~674 corners.

Easing into the second leg, the first section to the top of the hill with stunning views through light rain was regulated by the presence of a white 4WD which led the group away. At the hilltop lookout the 4WD mysteriously disappeared and after quick photos we

were away again. At this point the pace quickened somewhat and those riders who were not at one with their mount quickly found that they struggled to stay with the lead group.

Ben and Alex did a fantastic job of sweeping the road for the following cars in their very low and fast white NA. The angry *bumblebee* thought that it might be able to keep up with the riders by disengaging the Electronic Stupidity Prevention system; however, after trying to fly backwards several times the driver decided that this might not be the cleverest idea. Thankfully no more moving chicanes were encountered and everyone was able to enjoy their MX-5s in testing conditions.

The lead group pulled into Eildon around midday and decided that lunch would be in order. Some anxious moments followed when the lead group realised that the second group had mysteriously disappeared along with the white 4WD ... luckily they arrived some minutes later and proceeded to describe the wonderful views along the route (which they obviously had time to take in).

The group descended on the local bakeries and cafés, which were no doubt surprised and pleased to receive such excellent patronage on the footy grand final day. Satiated after a gourmet lunch from Eildon's *provedores*, the group set forth once more on to another 'stage', this time from Eildon over the hill to Alexandra. This was an absolutely gorgeous flowing road with a combination of fast open uphill sweepers

and tight switchback turns, perfectly suited for the MX-5.

The angry *bumblebee* employed its sting to keep pace with the front group up the hill; however coming down it got a bit hot and bothered. Arriving in Alexandra the unanimous decision was that coffee was required. Various people headed their separate ways at this point and a smaller group of approximately 12 people enjoyed some good coffee in a warm café while discussing and solving the world's issues.

The angry *bumblebee*, being a fairly directionless creature, decided it should follow Ben and Alex back to Healesville and duly did so. Over the Black Spur the angry *bumblebee* tried once again to sting its hapless driver in very heavy rain. However Ben and Alex's MX-5 also seemed to have a sting in its tail in those conditions.

We parted with a cheerful wave in Healesville to return our separate ways home just in time to see Sydney presented with the AFL premiership cup.

Thanks to Ben and Alex for a great day out and the opportunity to experience some fantastic roads, see some old friends and meet some new MX-5 enthusiasts too. ■



^ You beauty!



^ The angry bumblebee

Another trek north-west to Bendigo ...

■ Words & photos: Bob de Bont

The eighth round of the 2012 NGK Victorian Motorkhana Championship was at the Huntly Livestock Exchange, hosted by the Bendigo Car Club.

The MX-5 Club was represented by Troy and Tony Heasley in Troy's NB8B, Mark Szutta in his NB8A and Bob de Bont in his NB8B. Troy, Tony and Bob set off from the BP Outbound on the Western Highway towards Bendigo into a clear and crisp morning which steadily improved as we approached Bendigo where we met Mark who had stayed in Bendigo. Tamara Dennett in her Mariner Blue NA6 and Zin Zhoa in his Galaxy Grey NC had entered through other clubs.

We were greeted with sunshine and clear skies, perfect weather for top-down fun. The cars were scrutineered and we caught up with the latest happenings amongst the motorkhana community.

After the mandatory drivers' briefing, with some trophies presented from previous rounds, we then headed to our first test area. In all there were 38 competitors, with 10 in Class B of which seven were MX-5 mounted. Being co-run with CAMS' JRACE Program, we were restricted to two test areas for our 10 scheduled tests.

The temperature continued to rise and the skies remained clear and blue with sunscreen being applied throughout the day. We quickly despatched the first four tests and broke for lunch and another chance to mingle with the other competitors. Results were posted after the first four tests with a few of the regulars having work to do after some poor starts. The afternoon consisted of six tests, including two reverse tests where the regulars hauled back some time. We finished up by 4pm and prepared our cars for the trip home, with each of us heading our own way.

Thanks to all who officiated and participated to make for an enjoyable day.

Results

Bob won Class B and also achieved 15th outright and 11th on handicap. Second in class went to Zin, with Tony in 4th and first Novice, followed by Mark in 5th. Troy was 1st in juniors. In the Clubs' Championship, the team has cemented our position in 4th with another good result in class and category. ■

Next events

- » **HAC Interclub Motorkhana**, Sunday, 18 November at Lardner Park on grass/dirt.
- » **NGK VMC Rd 9** on 25 November – details TBA.

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

Bob's motorkhana videos are here: www.youtube.com/user/deBounce60/videos



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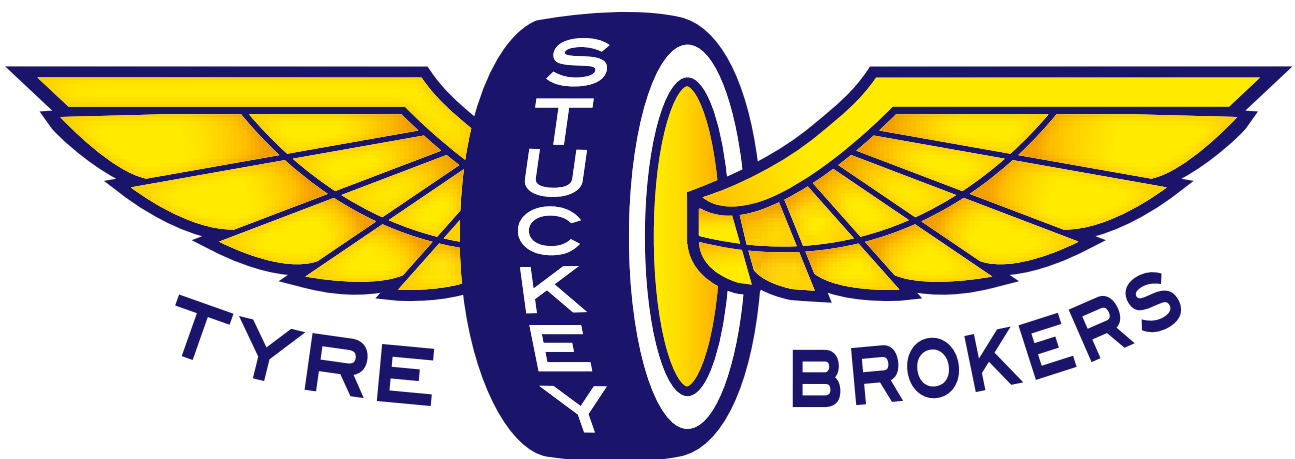
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22/9/12



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Market place ...

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For sale *1989 White NA*

- » Perfect project or parts car; definitely needs work!
- » 242,000km
- » *Reeeeaallllyyy* great little 1.6 motor, always looked after and serviced. Runs perfectly, starts first go every time. Very reliable little car.
- » The soft top includes a glass window.
- » Paint is flaking off
- » Left-hand front quarter dented and scraped (*side-swiped*)



Asking price:
\$2,000 ONO

Contact: Dave
(non-member)
0408 313 409

"MIMXV" rego plates
for sale separately ...

For sale *1999 Silver NB*

- » 75,000km
- » RWC + full service history
- » Always garaged
- » Excellent condition, completely original
- » Leather seats, aircon, woodgrain-look trim, headlight protectors, central locking
- » Registered for 11 months



Asking price:
\$13,000 neg

Contact: Ian
(non-member -
Frankston/Seaford
area)
0419 207 563

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

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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.

A new option for the MX-5 owner

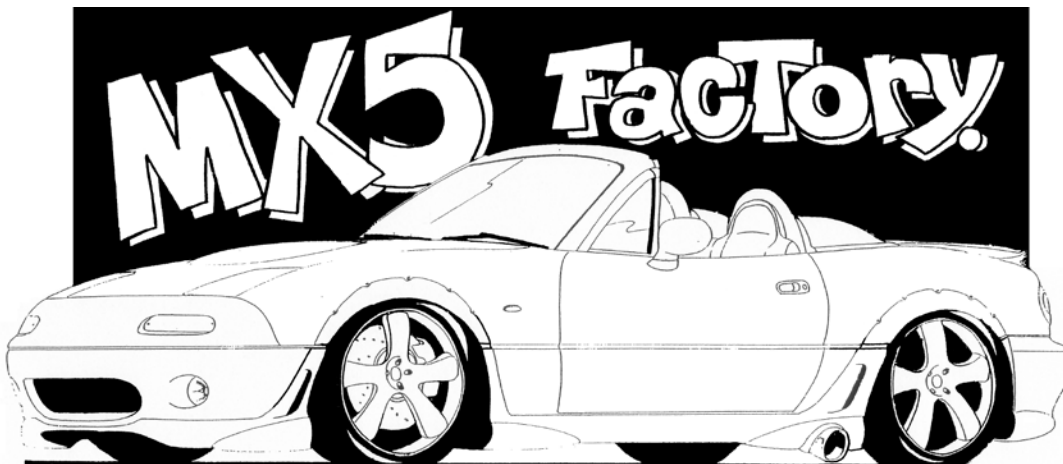
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- ◆ Full range of second hand mechanical body and trim panels available
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