

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

Seven years in the making ...

How sweet it is!



In this edition:

**New MX-5 at the Sydney motor show
Sapphire Coast "Sapphari"
Princey follows his father to Rob Roy**



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The *Flyin' Miatas* celebrate their win in the Winton 6 Hour. From left: Teruo Delacroix, Stephen Downes, Robert Downes, Anastasia Gianneka, Noel Heritage, Pam Phillips and Peter Phillips. Photo: *anonymous!*



mxtra is the monthly newsletter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria Inc (#A0021659A) PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193. Registered for Print Post: PP381712/2306

All contributions welcome: please send articles and photos to the editor, **Murray Finlay**:

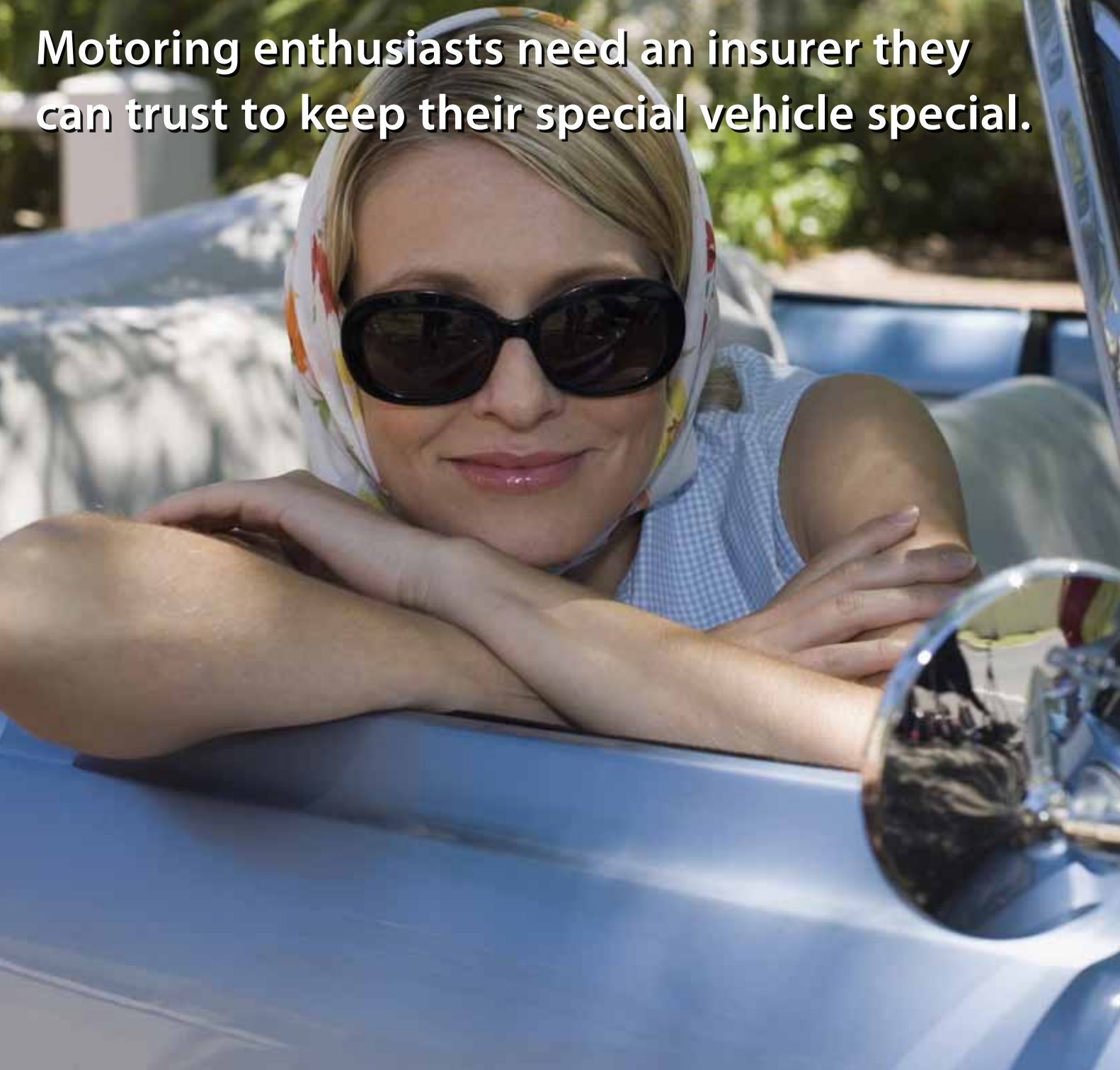
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Don's Drive(l) ...



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

Welcome!

Thanks to the generosity of Mazda Australia both Murray and I scored an invite to the Sydney Motor Show last month to witness the unveiling of the new Series 3 version of the MX-5 NC.

The opportunity was taken to meet with the other MX-5 Club Presidents from around Australia who had also been invited to the event.

First the new car. There haven't been a great many changes, some tinkering with the engine management system to improve fuel consumption and some minor changes to the dash. The biggest change is to the nose where the fog lamps have been recessed closer to the front wheels so that the grill looks as though it has been extended forward (although it hasn't), giving the front of the car a slightly more aggressive look. The piano black section of the dash has made a return which may be a negative to some, as it can reflect the sun into your eyes.

The new **Mazda6** was also on show and that looks quite the winner. It has a lot of features which will appeal to those looking for a family car with remarkably low fuel consumption. I can see it appealing to Ford and Holden buyers who are sick of pouring petrol into thirsty engines.

While attending the Mazda release we also took the opportunity to visit the other stands. Apart from the fact that Mazda's stand was probably one of the biggest and most eye-catching, the lack of some of the top-end manufacturers was very noticeable. I did read in one of the Saturday Age "Drive" articles that there was a tendency for the likes of Rolls and Bentley to find other ways of spending their advertising dollars. So, apart from the Porsches, the Mercs, the Lambos and a few other marques which had fronted, there were plenty of medium and small cars to feast the eyes upon.

The Presidents' meeting was a great success. It is quite remarkable how similar and yet how different all of the Clubs appear to be. A simple thing like a Club convoy on a social run comes in very different formats. In WA for example you have a starting point and an end point and everyone makes their own way in their own time. In NSW the convoy rules appear to be a little stricter than the ones we have now, but all seem to work.

One area of interest is Club merchandise. Again there are many versions of how to do this, from one Club having a range of clothing but only available in one colour, to one Club offering just one-size-fits-all hats, scarves and stubbie holders! NSW and Vic/Tas take the prize for holding the greatest range of clothing types, colours and sizes ... and both suffer from having large amounts of money tied up in stock. All Club Presidents were interested in the possibility of adding their logo to Mazda merchandise as a way of increasing the offering while reducing the stockholding problem. We will be taking this up with Mazda to see what is possible.

There were also some interesting ideas for Club events which have been successful in other States. I'll be taking these to the Committee for consideration, so watch this space.

Finally the Club survey. Thanks to the response to our last email we now have 217 completed surveys. This is a fantastic effort and my thanks to all of you who took the time to complete the questions. We now have more than enough responses to generate a reasonably accurate picture of the Club's membership. Survey results will be compiled over the next couple of months and we'll put together a full report for this magazine.

I'm looking forward to enjoying the warmer weather. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, many of the recent runs have enjoyed great weather. It is good for the soul when you can feel the skin madly manufacturing vitamin D without the inconvenience of goose pimples.

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

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

Don

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

November

- 25 *Western Vic: Coastal run*
- 28 *Central: New members' night*

December

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

January 2013

- 19 *Central: Twilight in the Trees*

February

- 3 *Eastern Vic: Gippsland run*
- 16-17 *NE Vic: Snowy Mountains run*

March

- 8-11 *Club Vic/SA weekend, Halls Gap*
- 17 *Eastern Vic: Licola run*

April

- 16-24 *Club: Tassie Tour*



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

Current membership count:

468

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

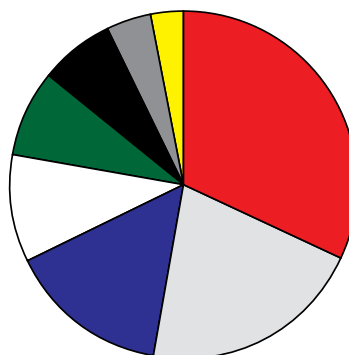
Hello everyone ...

The surge continues with 18 new members and five renewals for the month. On your behalf, I extend a hearty welcome to:

Central Chapter

Christine Brymner & Matthew Gibson	1990 Classic Red NA
Nicholas Casemore	1995 Silver NA
Glyn Dalton	2000 Classic Red NB
Domenic DiMaggio	1989 Classic Red NA
Kerry Fitzgerald	1998 Grace Green NA
Martin Gunsberg	1992 White NA
Martin Horn	1991 Silver NA
Graeme, Susan, Brigette & Austin Marks	1999 Grace Green NB
Frank Nathan	2002 Silver NB
Christopher Warren	2004 Velocity Red NB SE

A member at a recent run asked if red was the predominant car colour in our Club. I answered in the affirmative, but it prompted me to check just how popular it actually is. So, for those interested in statistics:



Colour	%
Red	32
Silver	21
Blue	15
White	10
Green	8
Black	7
Grey	4
Yellow	3

North-Eastern Victorian Chapter

Cindy & Roger Valkenburg	2003 Burgundy NB
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Western Victorian Chapter

Craig Baird	1996 Montego Blue NA
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Perhaps the red ones *do* go faster!

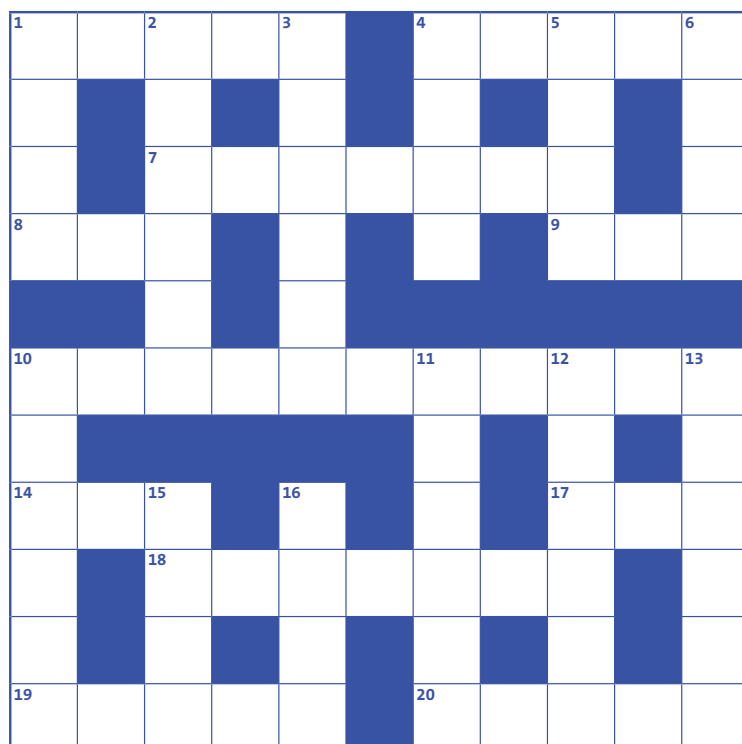
The most prominent model? The NB is at 43%, followed by the NA at 35% and the NC at 22%. *Make of it what you will!*

See you out and about ...

Will

Alan Bennett's

MX-5 crossword #5



Across

- 1 About to go red (5)
- 4 Can be 1-way, 2-way or a diode? (5)
- 7 Racing close to the ground whilst carrying (4)
- 8 A street in Paris? (3)
- 9 Roof-less indicator? (3)
- 10 Make clear or definite (11)
- 14 Pinch (3)
- 17 English car that purrs (abbrev.) (3)
- 18 Move on, Australia, fair enough? (7)
- 19 Re any mix-up wanted? (anag.) (5)
- 20 It is a full rear door, to the back (5)

Down

- 1 Somewhat open, usually made of glass (4)
- 2 Something's cooking here (6)
- 3 Most uncommon (6)
- 4 Sunless precipitation? (4)
- 5 Lodgings (slang) (4)
- 6 Nope, he said, that's not -air motoring (anag) (4)
- 10 MX-5s moving in a line (6)
- 11 Revs up, foot on brake, about to go (6)
- 12 Put in (6)
- 13 Just putting it into 6th or 7th gear is just not enough for Henry! (6)
- 15 Father but no further repeats (4)
- 16 Prevent or cut a flat surface (4)

Answers next month ...



Full Throttle!

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



The Flyin' Miatas win the Winton 6-Hour!

We had three MX-5 Club teams competing in the 2012 Winton 6-Hour Relay Race. Well done to all drivers and volunteers for your outstanding results.

This year 43 teams competed in perfect weather conditions. Once again the event was extremely well organised by our friends at the Alfa club, AROCA.

Congratulations to the Flyin' Miatas for a well-earned win.

It was a fantastic weekend of Club motor sport. Entertainment for the weekend was not limited to the track either; we had 20 people attend dinner on Friday night and 30 on the Saturday night, at the North Eastern Hotel in Benalla, with lots of stories told and plenty of laughs.

On Saturday afternoon after practice and lap time nominations had been submitted, all 22 MX-5 team members and associated volunteers gathered in the pit garage for a presentation. Everyone was presented with a gift package consisting of a Mazda sports/overnight bag, MX-5 hat, a *City Mazda Motorsport* shirt and Yanmar drink bottle. It was also announced to all drivers that the driver who scored the highest bonus lap score on race day would win a free vehicle window tint to the value of \$500, kindly donated by *ARMA Tinting* in Essendon and the winner was Peter Phillips who scored 16 bonus laps – well done Princey.

On behalf of all MX-5 Club competitors and associated team volunteers present, I would like to thank the following people for their support and generosity, which is greatly appreciated:

» **Ben Rounsefell** and the marketing team from **Mazda Australia**: sports bags and hats.

- » **Greg McPherson** from **City Mazda**: motor sport shirts.
- » **Prem** and the team at **ARMA Tinting Essendon**: tint prize to highest bonus lap driver and 20% discount to all MX-5 Club members (see ad, page 27).
- » **Noel Heritage**: Yanmar drink bottles.

Personally, I would also like to thank all MX-5 Club members and volunteers for their camaraderie, for supporting each other and contributing to a fun weekend for everyone involved. This was a fine example of what makes our Club so great. Well done!

For the full report see Tim Emery's article on page 18. Check out all the pics taken by Jess Murphy at www.mx5pics.com.au

2012 Victorian Super Sprint Championships

The 2012 VSSC was conducted over four Championship rounds by CAMS affiliated car clubs with rounds at Phillip Island in Feb, Sandown in April and June and the final round at Winton in September. Congratulations to our four MX-5 Club members who competed in this Championship and for their outstanding results.

» **Dave Wilken**, Modified Class 2F: 1st place in class & 5th place outright



» **Brendan Beavis**, Standard Class 1B: 2nd place in class & 17th place outright



» **Owen Boak**, Sports Cars Class 5Q: 3rd place in class & 32nd place outright

» **Christine Boak**, Sports Cars Class 5Q: 4th place in class & 94th place outright

Phillip Island Sprints, 17 November – Round 4

Round 4 is happening as this edition of **mxtra** comes to you. It's with the WRX Club, and all were looking forward to a great round at Phillip Island after a two-month break. More than 40 MX-5s entered this event, so it should be a good one.

2013 Motor Sport Dates

These are the tentative "to be confirmed" dates so far for next year's motor sport calendar. Please pencil these into your calendar and I will confirm in due course.

TBC	Winton	2 March	Driver Training – AROCA
TBC	Winton	3 March	Sprints – AROCA
TBC	Sandown	12 May	AROCA
TBC	Sandown	1 September	AROCA
TBC	Winton 6-Hour	18-19 October	AROCA

Requests have also been made for two dates at Phillip Island and for dates for Broadford.

Also please note that there has been mention of an expected fee rise of at least 30-40% for events held at Phillip Island in 2013.

Daniel #146

"Racing – converting money into noise!"

The MX-5 Club Grill



Introducing ...

Alan Everett

- Western Victorian
Chapter

Name? Alan Everett

Age? 64

Born? Ballarat

Current abode? Wallinduc

Profession? Farmer

Partner? Elizabeth (Dawn or Liz ... answers to either!

Pets? Two Fox terriers, Ruby and Buff, and two work dogs

Fave food? Steak and mushrooms, and stews

Can you cook? Yes, simple things

Favourite tippie? Beer, port and bourbon (separate glasses!)

First drive? FE Holden

First car? 1968 HK Holden

First fender bender? Never had one (lucky!)

Everyday driver? Mazda BT50 and a Nissan farm ute

Current MX-5? 2005 Velocity Red NC

MX-5 improvements? None

MX-5 dislikes? None ... great cars

Why an MX-5? Affordable and fun to drive

Fluffy dice? None

Passions besides the MX-5? Family, travelling and golf

Favourite TV show / movie / book? All James Bond movies

Dream wheels (money no object)? Nissan GTR, Audi RS5

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? Not if I can help it!

Favourite other Mazda? Mazda3 MPS

If not a Mazda (gaspl!) what? Holden HSV

How long in the Club? 4 1/2 years

How many MX-5 Club runs? Countless



Favourite Club run? Great Ocean Road

Funniest thing seen on a Club run? When one of the Club members fitted a spacesaver wheel to his car ... it looked quite odd

Done DECA? No

Ford vs Holden? Holden

What's playing in your MX-5? '60s & '70s

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Geelong Cats

Final comments? Great Club, great runs and a great bunch of people



Scene about ...



■ Photos: Daniel White, Bronwyn Roche, Ron Macdonald, Karen Bradshaw



^ What're you lookin' at? The MX-5 Enforcers take no lip!

Not bad for hairdressers' cars!

■ Words: **Tim Emery** ■ Photos: **Jess Murphy** (<http://mx5pics.zenfolio.com>), **Tim Emery**, **Daniel White**

After seven years of trying, this year's Winton 6 Hour was won by a Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania team, the "Flyin' Miatas".

Three teams from the Club competed in the event, bringing home a first for *Team Flyin' Miatas*, a fifth for *City Mazda Motorsport* (the two 'A' teams), and a 15th for the event 'rookies' – my team, *Team MX-5 Motorsport*.

Robert Downes led the victorious team to a much-deserved and welcomed win over the winners of last year's event, 'Team E30', a team of race-prepared BMWs. With some niggling fuel issues in Robert and Noel's NA8, they, Stephen, Princey, and Teruo ran a strategic and consistent race to nudge the fiercely competitive BMW team from victory.

City Mazda Motorsport, led by our new Motor Sport Captain, Daniel White, improving from a sixth place last year, ran with four cars with the last minute scratching of Mike Kirby after an unfortunate "kitchen incident". The third team, *Team MX-5 Motorsport*, consisted of first-time or limited previous event competitors including our very own Max 'Birthday Boy' Lloyd who celebrated his 69th birthday on race day, came away with a 15th place. Mark 'Fitzzy' Fitzgerald was going through power steering belts like hot dinners and to top it off blew a hole in the side of his turbo on the last lap of his session. Some slick Team Management by Dale and 'Murph' saw our next team car out on the track without a single lap dropped!

It was an amazing result against 43 teams, including a team of 2011 Renault Clio Sport Cup cars, two teams of Lotus Elise and Exige, a full team of MINI Challenge race cars, along with plenty of BMWs, Alfas, and everything in between.

The Winton 6 Hour relay has a rich history in club motor sport in Australia, developed to pit car clubs against each other by using a regularity format to allow a team of cars, no matter how fast, a chance of winning. The event also requires a massive amount of team management with nominated times to be communicated to drivers every lap by pit boards as well as the team manager and crew having control of cars going



^ Everyone's a winner, baby, that's for sure!



2012 Winton 6-Hour ~ 14/10/12



^ Max Lloyd, John Downes, Mark Fitzgerald, Tim Emery, Dale Fitzgerald and Paul Murphy celebrate Team MX-5 Motorsport's 15th placing at Winton.



Team Flyin' Miatas

Robert Downes
Stephen Downes
Noel Heritage
Peter Phillips
Teruo Delacroix

Volunteers

Pam Phillips
Anastasia Giannakas

City Mazda Motorsport

Daniel White
Kim Cole
Gary Prescott
Paul Ledwith
Scott Gould
(Team Manager)

Volunteers

Andrew Strike
Todd Fletcher
James Cole

Team MX-5 Motorsport

Tim Emery
Mark Fitzgerald
Max 'Birthday Boy' Lloyd
John Downes
Paul Murphy
(Team Manager)

Volunteers

Dale Fitzgerald, Jess
Murphy

in and out of pit lane following strict rules. All our team managers and pit lane teams did an amazing job, proving that this is truly a team event to pit car clubs against each other.

A massive thank you to Murph, Jess, Dale, Scott, Pam, James, and Todd and Andrew from *City Mazda* for their support over the weekend. On behalf of all the team members I would also like to thank Daniel (and Greg) for their ongoing support of the Club's motor sport group. It was a great moment watching a sea of people in *City Mazda Motorsport* shirts jump

into the air when the winning team was announced.

Being part of this event was another reminder of the level of professionalism and competitiveness of the Club's motor sport group.

As always, one of my most enjoyable parts of a weekend of motor sport was driving my car home, stacked full of gear, roof down ... while I am sure I could hear other competitors towing their fancy race cars and saying to their mates ...

"Not bad for a hairdresser's car". ■

Following in my dad's tyre tracks ...

■ Words: Peter "Princey" Phillips ■ Photos: Pam Phillips & Teruo Delacroix



Some of our Club members went to the MG Car Club's "Come & Try" Day at Rob Roy to have a taste of a form of motor sport, some just to have a look and others to give a hand.

On a very blustery, cold but dry day we adventured into the hills at Rob Roy park owned by the MG Car Club to have a bit of fun and a taste of a "hillclimb".

There were several members there including Anastasia and Graeme in his MX2.5, all having a taste of the hillclimb or sticking their toe in the water to see if they like it.

As a regular motor sport participant I was keen to run up the hill ... but for different reasons from all the rest.

The purpose of my trip was purely nostalgic. Of all motor sport events, this was of more importance to me (other than Bathurst, given the opportunity) than anywhere else I had been. It was nearly 65 years ago to the month that my father had steered an Austin Ulster under 750cc race car to a track record (38.3 sec) at Rob Roy.

I had done some research through the MG people who had supplied me with a wealth of information about dad's car and his efforts at Rob Roy. For the older members it was at Rob Roy where people like Lex and Diana Davison, Harry Firth, Peter Manton, Jim McEwan and many others cut their teeth before entering mainstream motor sport. Of all of dad's racing, the only trophy of his I have is the Rob Roy Silver Tray from November of 1947 ... just after his stint at the Australian Grand Prix at Bathurst.

We all did a slow sighting lap in procession and I was more than enthusiastic to give it some stick.

I was keen to see if my "modern Austin 7" (alias NB 10AE "Prncey") could repeat the old man's feat. First hurdle was to

organise some rudimentary timing as they were not doing any on the day. I figured I could use my mobile back to Pam and say "start" and "stop" whilst she did the timing. Pam seconded a volunteer (turned out to be a fellow with an NC MX-5 out for a drive) to time for her.

Sitting on the start line all I could think of was my dad – 65 years ago, with very little power, grip or brakes sitting where I was having a red hot go.

Off I went: up the hill, slight right-hander, slightly downhill over the causeway, steep climb turning left unsighted over the hill to the finish. "Stop". *Thirty seconds flat.*

Sixty-five years later, with twice the capacity and slightly more technology, all I could manage was to knock him off by *eight seconds*. Then again, he was in a "race car".

I did the hill once more for the day taking in the scenery of it all. What a great little track ... albeit very short but set in one of the most beautiful settings. We are truly blessed in Victoria to have so many venues to participate in motor sport.

As a postscript to this day, I discovered that (it appears) that dad's car is still in existence somewhere ... the MG historians are chasing that up for me.

Special thanks must go to Teruo Delacroix who volunteered to do some officiating (flagging on the coldest corner of the track) whilst we all had a fun day. It is admirable to see that wherever we go the MX-5 people stick their hands up to help where we can. I must thank my wife "Cupcake" (Pam) for supporting me and the MX-5 motor sport team in our crazy endeavours. ■



▲ Top: Princey with his father's 1947 Rob Roy trophy; above (left), Peter in action at Rob Roy and (right) his father on the same track in 1946.

Chapter chatter ...



Laughing all the way to ... Yackandandah!

13-14/10/12 | Western Victoria

■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Run organiser: John Gleeson

■ Saturday morning: Noellene Gleeson

Laughter, laughter and more laughter !!

What a great weekend! The Western Chapter are at it again.

Ten MX-5s line up in the cold in Ballarat to set off on our Yackandandah weekend. We shelter under a verandah and hear what is planned for the next three days. Then it's off we go, tops up at this stage but sure this would change later in the day.

We head towards Daylesford, which is a road we always enjoy. Then on to Kyneton to pick up Neville and Faye Pryor from Bendigo. After this we have our first missed turn. We are lost in Kyneton! The first U-turn for the day.

Ian sorts things out and we are now on this great road called Baynton Road which goes through some terrific valleys with plenty of turns and huge rocky landscape. *Oh-oh!* There are roadworks and we are on about 2km of gravel road. Sorry guys ... at least it's nice and smooth !

We decide to have a coffee stop at the Toobarac Reserve. After a chat we all decide on tops down as the weather is beautiful now. *This is the way to go!*

After passing through Seymour we have to do a small stint on the Hume Fwy. Now I tell Johnny boy we have to watch out for M31. Next thing there is a sign with M31 on it. Before you can

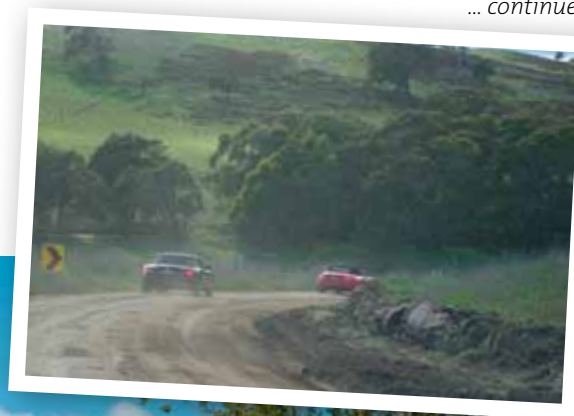
read the rest we have turned. *The next sign says MELBOURNE!* Guess what? We are going on to the wrong side of the Hume! John stops at the end of the on ramp. "What am I going to do now ????" he says. "You tell me ... you have 10 cars lined up behind you!", I answer (helpfully pulling the ladder up).

So down the ramp we all go on to the freeway heading towards Melbourne. Next minute there is a emergency crossover sign, so around we go – 10 MX-5s getting back on track (after all, this is an emergency). Lawrie has to keep going and play catch up, or else he would have had a large four-wheel drive and trailer in his boot !

As everyone said later, it all adds to the fun of the trip.

Then it's on to Benalla where we meet up with Ron and Marg Gillick and Gerry and Ellie Engwerder from the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter for a picnic lunch in the rose garden.

... continued



Laughing all the way to ... Yackandandah (continued)

■ Saturday afternoon: Karen Bradshaw

We were lucky to arrive at the Benalla Gardens as our leader (and Chapter Captain) had an aversion to travelling the correct way on the Hume Fwy.

After much jesting on his lack of sense of direction, we settled down with *Weary Dunlop* for our picnic lunch.

After we had our fill we followed our new leaders Ron and Marg, from the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter, to Winton Raceway to say "hello" to our MX-5 motor sport cousins. In keeping with the theme of the day the new leader missed the turn into Winton! *So our convoy had to do another U-turn.*

We watched all sorts of cars roar around the track; they even had the safety car out in action. After checking out Winton we headed to Glenrowan, the heart of Ned Kelly country. After Noellene had tickled Ned Kelly in a place that cannot be printed, Gwenda visited the friendly red back spider in a little outhouse outside the souvenir shop. We then headed to the ice cream shop and wandered around window shopping.

Then it was off in convoy again towards the Millawa mustard shop and the Millawa cheese factory for an afternoon cuppa of cappuccinos and lattes, lots of chin wagging and storytelling and good-hearted banter.

Then Ron was gathering us up again and off we went to Rutherglen to visit Chambers Wines for lots of tastings and giggles. Their favourite dog was not so polite with the wheels of our MX-5s.

Afterwards we all lined up for fuel in Rutherglen – they must have rubbed their hands together to see 13 cars lining up. Unfortunately, some of the cars did not like what was put in their tanks. We then had a quick squirt over to Chiltern to book in at our diggings for the night, which just happened to be right next to the railway line with trains coming and going all night. I managed to sleep through the clickety clack and whistle blowing ... not sure if others were so lucky.

For our evening meal we hoofed it down to the *Black Dog Bistro* for a terrific meal and sung happy birthday to a very surprised Faye Pryor.

A very fun-filled and enjoyable day with great friends.





◀ *New inmates at the Beechworth asylum ... and their transport of choice.*

excrement of the aforementioned herd of next week's steak.

Everyone enjoyed sharing a drink (iced coffee or chocolate being popular), and thanked Ron, Marg, Gerry and Ellie for their hospitality in showing us just some of the highlights of this very beautiful area.

■ **Sunday: Patrice van Velsen**

We awoke to a beautiful cloudless Chiltern morning, and all things indicated a great "top down" day of motoring.

Ron and Marg arrived at the motel and briefed us of the day's "run" around the district.

We set off at 9.30 in our gleaming clean cars, heading for Yackandandah. Our first bit of excitement came in the form of an interesting local "shortcut" through a drain under the railway line. Well ... that saying about being "young at heart" rings true when every driver takes the opportunity *mid-tunnel* to check if the horn still works ... and test the exhaust note by seeing whose "bubby car" could make the loudest noise through the tunnel. It was music to our ears.

We arrived at Yackandanda to be met by Gerry and Ellie. The contents of the shops there were a mix of stepping back into the early 1900s in some, and modern craft and art-type shops. If you're ever in need for that dining table at home to seat 20 or so people ... they had one made from a single piece of redgum. It would only set you back \$50,000, and you could tell your guests to bring their own chairs, because they weren't included.

We enjoyed a leisurely coffee and took in the local culture, including the buildings. Oh, a word to the wise: don't lie down in the back of the taxi there ... 'cause he's also the local funeral director!

We headed off on our way to Myrtleford, on a beautiful scenic road called the Happy Valley Road, which had the obligatory twisty bits. We were just enjoying the scenery with its palette of greens and blues when we had to stop for

a herd of next week's steak being driven up the road by stockmen on horseback. Just as we were about to move, one rebellious beast decided that he would prolong our pause in the journey. The dogs didn't look like they wanted to move this one on, so I decided to get out of the car. As my husband says, I'm there to balance the car, read the map, select the music, open and close any gates and ... move any obstruction in our path! The heffer obviously had no fashion sense, took one look at me, and beat a hasty retreat to rejoin the rest of its herd.

On our journey we were treated to the most magnificent views of the snow-peaked alps, and took the opportunity to stop and take photos. We stopped in Myrtleford for lunch and, whilst everyone did their own thing for lunch, most at least looked through the *Red Ramia* store which, apart from being a restaurant, sells the most incredible goods from India – from miniature figurines to a staircase or a curry pot big enough to cook lunch for a small nation.

Yep ... more twisty bits on our way to look at Mayday Hills Asylum in Beechworth which is long closed. [*Ed: perhaps appropriately, this is where we hosted NatMeet 2008.*] The gardens remain magnificent but the tragedy of neglect is evident to this piece of post-gold rush architecture. We then broke into two groups and had a drive around Gorge Road, taking in the Woolshed Falls. Some of this road was dirt which saw every car covered in a fine dusting of the local "terra-not-so-firma". We enjoyed some great photo opportunities.

We concluded our day at the *Beechworth Bakery*, our cars now covered in fine dust, and most splattered with the

■ **Monday: Noellene Gleeson**

After staying at Beechworth on Sunday night we all met at our cars at 9.30am in the motel carpark.

We said our goodbyes to Alan and Jason Laine from the Eastern Victoria Chapter who were taking a few days to return home and were off to Bright for the day. Ian and Karen were also leaving to spend next week cruising around, and will meet up with us the following weekend in Moe for Alan's Gippsland run.

Four other cars went back to Ballarat and Bendigo on Sunday afternoon, leaving five cars to head for home today. A vote decided the long way home was best ... the Whitfield-Mansfield road again. Another beautiful day, and what a road to travel in these magnificent little machines.

Up and over the mountains, down the valleys and on some of the best roads anyone could wish to travel on.

We pulled up in Yea at one of the best bakeries for great-tasting pies and pasties for lunch. Then it was on to Broadford. Kilmore, Lancefield, Woodend and home.

Back where it all started, we said our goodbyes. Everyone had just the best weekend.

Thank you once again to Ron, Marg, Gerry and Ellie for their help and organising some great spots to visit. A fantastic weekend.

You guys are the best. Thank you. ■

Chapter chatter ...

Another sunrise on the Great Ocean Road

14/10/12 | Central Chapter

■ Words: Alan Bennett ■ Photos: Alan Bennett, Ron Macdonald
■ Run organisers: Joni & Chris Condos

The Great Ocean Road run is one of the runs on the calendar every year. If you haven't been on it yet you are missing out on a treat.

Just get an early night and dream about corners!



The starting point for this year's run was at Little River, close to Avalon Airport. "6am for a 6.30am sharp start" read the flyer – who would get up that early? Well, we did and so did a whole lot of other MX-5ers as it happens, many of them repeat offenders.

So this meant a 4am wake up for us, and even earlier for others, but we were determined finally to make our first Club GOR run so plans were made and committed. The good news, and by the time we hit the road at 5am we were starting to wonder just why this seemed a great idea yesterday (and we were sober), was the almost total lack of traffic and the continuous run of green lights. *What traffic problem? What need for another freeway or tunnel?*

The next best thing was the great coffee at the BP service centre which was doing a roaring trade. Some 24 cars set off as the sun officially rose at 6.35 and we were on our way with a gentle run. With the dawn breaking behind us we braced ourselves against the cold air, all except a white NC (was that the President we saw at the wheel?) that must have had a serious problem with the fabric roof as it was still up and black as the morning sky. Thank goodness for the heater, I was thinking, as we meandered through foggy patches in bunches like low clouds for the next 10 minutes. The gentle run was interrupted at 48km by – a roundabout! Yes, it was gentle driving at its easiest but this was just the entree. A few minutes later a sole Harley gave us all overtaking practice as he was clearly in no hurry.

We rolled through Anglesea at 7.20 on the last day of their music festival and this is where the curvy bits on the road started to become much more frequent. The tide was coming in and the seas calm as we navigated through a few wet patches on the road being careful not to add to the horror road toll. Some 10 minutes later we drove through Aireys Inlet where a lone cyclist was carefully keeping to the left of the road. There was cloud to the west and the sun was making its presence felt in the east allowing the heater to go down a notch or two.

A further five minutes and the first road sign to bring a smile to my face, winding road 50km – *only 50, I caught myself thinking?*

Minutes later the sun was blinding and the rarely-used sun visors were into play and the rock fishermen cast their lines hopefully out to sea, swimmers and surfers were conspicuous by their absence.

7.45 found us enjoying our windy road leading into Lorne where we car parked and, surprise, another waiting convoy of MX-5s from Western Victoria that, with those that had joined us en route, doubled our numbers. Time for a quick comfort break and a group photo with the club banner and we were off again on the next leg. Don, or whoever he was, resolved the stubborn roof and joined the fresh air club and just after 8am we were winding and twisting to the music of bitumen. By 8.15 we happened upon a group of early-bird cyclists who had pulled over to let us pass safely (thanks!), a few more cyclists were ahead but we extended every mutual courtesy and we zoomed on towards our destination, the pulse quickening as the frequency of twists and turns went up another notch.

Past Separation Creek and more early birds with worms fishing for their breakfast, no doubt enjoying the quietness of the early part of the day whilst we glided by happily in our own worlds.

Around another corner and, suddenly, sitting on the other side of the road was a very lost-looking koala blocking traffic. A convenient generous shoulder provided a safe place to pull over as I grabbed my camera and my best shoo voice, gently trying to persuade the surprised marsupial to go bush and quickly before he became a statistic, or worse – creating a human-related car crash. With a tilt of the head and a sudden realisation that something grumpier than an oncoming car was coming directly at him, he scurried on to the bank on the side of the road and was gone. Several passing MX-5s proved their horns were working as I received some interesting looks by those that saw me on the side of the road stranded on the wrong side of the road and no koala (my witness) in sight – it must have seemed a bit curious!

Back on the road we passed a few more cyclists and some grazing cows at Skenes Creek at 8.45 and then a few minutes later we were welcomed by a sign that promoted Apollo Bay officially as "Paradise by the Sea". Joining dozens of

other MX-5s which by now were parked, and their occupants who were drifting into the many cafés that were open and looking for business. The early morning doubts had been finally replaced by satisfied smiles as we stretched our legs.

So, later than usual, we had breakfast and a chance to reminisce about previous outings, overseas tourists keen on fishing and holidays to come, plans for a new MX-5 and more caffeine, finally!! Time now to walk the footpath and be impressed how expensive real estate is here while noticing the number of people increasing by the second as the seaside comes to life just as we plan to make off.

Accepting a suggestion we turned left at Skenes Creek and headed for Otway Fly of treetop walking fame – we kept on going for another refreshing dose of twists, turns, ups and downs in rolling hills and a cover of trees that drop the temperature several degrees but warm the driving spirit. Plenty of opportunities to test how securely the passenger arm rest was attached to the door!

Inevitably the straight lines returned and the traffic density increased to the point when we made the concrete jungle that passes for a freeway, there was lane-to-lane traffic which was such an unwelcome contrast to the almost carless calm of the dawn drive ...

Sigh ... oh, for next year's run.

Don't miss it. ■

Central Chapter wishlist?

- As another fantastic MX-5 year draws to a close I am now turning to the Central Chapter's 2013 calendar. If you have any ideas you would like to have included or better still if you would like to host a run please let me know. I currently am looking for run ideas for February, May, June, July and August. I know this might seem a long way off but I would like to have a basic framework in place by the end of the year to ensure we get the best possible mix of events to cover all tastes.
- Remember it is the members that make this Club great, so your input in this matter is vital.
- Ron Macdonald, Chapter Captain
0422 490 786 | central@mx5vic.org.au

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW

Sydney, 19th October 2012 // Report & Photography by Bryan Shedden—President, Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW



Mazda Australia very kindly sponsored the MX-5 Clubs of Australia Presidents' Meeting in Sydney on 18th October, arranging for the interstate Presidents to fly to Sydney and overnight at the Sheraton on the Park. The Presidents' meeting is an opportunity to share news, issues and ideas about each of the state clubs, with the aim of developing stronger links between the states and working towards best practice for all. Recent meetings have been held via video conferencing but this time, with the Motor Show in town, Mazda generously facilitated a face-to-face meeting, aligned with the next day's Australian launch of the new-look MX-5. Mazda recognise the

importance of the MX-5 Clubs to their core brand values through their Kizuna program for customer engagement, and so they invited 30 lucky members of the NSW Club to attend the Motor Show launch. Thank you Mazda Australia!

The Presidents' meeting was attended by Glenn Thomas (NSW), Don Nicoll (VIC & TAS), Denise Peck (QLD), Barrie Parker (WA), and Des Long (SA), in addition to Murray Finlay (VP VIC & TAS, Mazda Liaison), and Bryan Shedden (NSW Publicity Officer and President-in-waiting). We covered lots of ground at the meeting, and again the next day. Most notable were discussions about future NatMeets, with an expressed desire to

move away from the tradition of holding it over the Easter period, in the interests of reducing costs. NatMeet 2014 will be held in Queensland's Sunshine Coast, and NatMeet 2016 is proposed to be in Tasmania. Bring it on!

At 8:30am on 19th October, prior to the public opening of the Motor Show, the 30 MX-5 Club members checked in and joined the other Kizuna attendees inside. We were treated to a light breakfast of fresh fruit, pastries and coffee, while nervously chatting about the four covered Mazdas on the stand. The official proceedings began at 9:00am, with Ben Rounsefell (Mazda Australia's Loyalty Manager) thanking us for attending



and supporting Mazda. He singled out the MX-5 Clubs with praise for our dedicated enthusiasm. Alastair Doak (Mazda Australia National Marketing Manager) unveiled the new-look MX-5, which we have dubbed the NC3. With a newly designed front bumper to make the MX-5 look even more aggressive, the larger front grille offers a sense of depth while the stylish front fog lamp bezel and new front chin spoiler help to complete the new look. Driving the new-look MX-5 will be even more enjoyable thanks to throttle adjustments, making it more responsive when accelerating out of corners, while updates to the brake booster allows greater front and rear distribution control and improved

braking ability all around. The NC3 is available in Australia as Roadster Coupe only with the soft-top being discontinued due to negligible sales. The “recommended delivered” price is now \$51,607 for the manual, increasing to \$56,577 for the automatic Sports.

Three more reveals followed quickly afterwards. Akira Tamatani (Mazda6 Chief Designer) presented the all-new Mazda6 sedan and wagon. Lastly, Hideaki Tanaka (CX-9 Program Manager) presented the new-look CX-9. All three cars adopt Mazda’s exciting new Kodo design language, first adopted on the CX-5 and BT-50. The design language will be rolled out to the all-new

Mazda3 in 2013, followed by the all-new Mazda2, and then the all-new MX-5 ND which is expected to arrive in late 2014.

After the presentations, club members were free to peruse the rest of the Motor Show, while the Presidents walked back to the Sheraton to complete our meeting. We finished with a delicious lunch hosted by Mazda at the Bambini Trust Restaurant.

The support our Clubs received from Mazda over these two days is greatly appreciated, and we anticipate further strengthening of our ties in the next two years, ready for the arrival of the ND!



Chapter chatter ...

Meander to Miena 14/10/12 | Northern Tasmania Chapter

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



At the Great Lake

"I come to realise that Tasmania is the most perfect part of Australia. It's the cleanest, the prettiest, the most fun, the most proud.

"Everywhere else in Australia you've got to pore over maps for days to find snippets of great road or snippets of great countryside. In Tasmania, however, every single road feels like it was created by someone who designs race tracks. Not sure any other road or car will ever feel the same for me again.

"So there you have it: for the best driving roads in Australia, it's got to be Tasmania."

Like him or not, that quote from Jeremy Clarkson certainly sums up how lucky we are to live in Tasmania and to have an MX-5.

The nine cars that had gathered alongside the Meander River at Deloraine were attracting plenty of attention from the early morning walkers but none more than from a minibus full of dark-skinned athletes. One of these boys just had to have his photo taken beside every car and, judging from his ever-increasing grin, he was going to remember this morning for a long time.

The run today was going to take us right up into the central highlands of Tasmania to the Great Lake. Visitors to this part of Tasmania are probably more likely to have a 4WD with a boat behind it than a sports car ... however, as Mr Clarkson had discovered, every road in Tasmania was created with the driver in mind.

With the time rapidly approaching a promised commitment to meet a tenth car at Bracknell, we headed out of Deloraine and enjoyed a quick and easy run into Bracknell where Ian and Helen were waiting and able to latch

on to the convoy as we passed through the town centre. Apart from a small miscommunication with my navigator, where I missed a left turn, the run from Bracknell to Poatina was without major holdups and we were soon at Poatina village for a coffee and some of Kelly's famous iced cinnamon swirls.

The town of Poatina was built during the middle of the '60s to serve as a housing site for workers who were part of the town's hydro-electricity projects. The name Poatina is actually the Aboriginal term for cavern. Poatina was purchased by Fusion Australia in 1995 and provides a unique opportunity to care for homeless and unemployed young people and offers a wide range of training and job skills.

Navigator *Chez* had reminded me before we left that morning to put the new Chapter banner in the boot, and a couple of obligingly-spaced trees meant it saw the light of day for the first time – and everyone posed in front to give us a nice photo opportunity.

The weather thus far had been pretty good but looking up at Mt Blackwood



◀ *The other left!*
 ▼ *"Tas Bash" devotees*



◀ *Climbing the range*
 ▼ *"Mixie" winking*
 ▶ *Carl Berggren*



where we were headed next it was very dark and threatening and could have even been snowing – or at least raining. Picnic rugs were put away, cars loaded and, with the comforting thought that the Great Lake Hotel where we were to have lunch had a *huge* fire place, we set off up Mt Blackwood. This is a piece of road that rivals the infamous Sideling or even Elephant Pass.

Imagine that you are flying out of Melbourne on a typical winter's day – dull, grey, bleak – and as the plane climbs through the cloud it emerges into the sunshine and the only clouds are below. This is exactly what happened as we climbed up Mt Blackwood – the temperature dropped as we passed through the clouds, and then suddenly there was a scramble to find the sunglasses as we emerged into what could only be described as an absolutely perfect clear sunny day! The run up the rest of the mountain with its numerous hairpin corners and sweeping left-and right-handers was perfect and, amazingly, *the only other traffic was on the other side of the road going down the mountain!*

The Great Lake is 1030m above sea level, covers an area of 114 sq km and is Australia's second-largest fresh water lake (the biggest is Lake Pedder in Tassie's south). Views of the lake through the trees were visible as we snaked along the top of the Tier, soon arriving at the Lakes road T-junction where we turned right for the short run to Miena. The road followed the bottom end of the lake and we attracted several waves from fisher folk who were probably thinking that if they were not fishing then driving around with no roof was the only other sensible thing to be doing ... especially considering the magnificent weather.

When I had contacted the Great Lake Hotel to warn them we were coming they told me that *Tas Bash* would be at the hotel for lunch that day as well. But they assured me they would have no trouble catering for us all. What they forgot to tell me was those *Bash* people have large tins and will not leave you alone until the tins are full of money. Those men and women really do put a lot of effort into their themed cars and the costumes they wear and raise a lot of money for *Variety* and of course they are all car enthusiasts as well.

At this point I must compliment the management and staff at the Great Lake hotel; they had everyone's lunch order sorted, all the drinks made and were able to serve all the lunches at the same time in a second dining room they had prepared just for us – absolutely brilliant service and terrific food, all the time trying to deal with the *Bash* "nutters" in their "clown" uniforms.

It is possible to drive around the lake but unfortunately there is a 30-odd km section that is not sealed as yet, so our return trip would be the same road as the morning – albeit in the reverse direction.

We were not quite so lucky traffic wise on the return trip with the convoy becoming fragmented as we caught slow-moving traffic and were only able to pass said 4WDs in small groups. We were able to regroup at the turnoff to Poatina where Michael and Anna suggested they knew a good back road that would take us to Longford for afternoon coffee. That agreed, and with Michael leading, we were in Longford by about 4pm to finish what everyone agreed was another great day out. ■

Chapter chatter ...

Russell Falls run 14/10/12 | Southern Tasmania Chapter

■ Words: **Jo Hirst** ■ Photos: **John Waldock** ■ Run organiser: **John Waldock**

Our Chapter met at Bellerive at 9am, an earlier start than usual. Some of us headed to the local bakery for lunch supplies and some to the local café/restaurant for a much-needed caffeine heart-starter.

We gathered for some sorry tales of woe over latest dents and damage to our beloved cars. Our Victorian guests Dave and Gail Collins were in John's newer car, his "disco red" NB SE turbo. We all noted the absence of Allan Pryer – who wasn't actually late this time, but not coming at all!

We were briefed by John Waldock and had our photos taken, then the nine MX-5s headed off to Russell Falls at Mt Field National Park, with John leading in *Feisty* (John's Classic Red NA).

It took John a little time to reacquaint himself with his trusty old *Feisty* but was soon driving in his usual fine form. Those drivers or passengers with radios informed our Victorian guests about our local landmarks and interesting historic tales as we proceeded on our journey.

The temperature dropped as we entered historic New Norfolk and stopped for a rest, talk and walk, while Lisa Gershwin was interviewed by ABC radio Brisbane on her mobile phone about an eyeball which had been found – *not one of ours, luckily*. Much discussion ensued about what it could belong to ...

The weather began to improve and we were off again. We drove on through picturesque hop fields and hedgerows with no real traffic or idiots on the roads, and with good corners between Salmon Ponds and Westerway. There were lots of *special interest* cars out and about heading for the Glenora District School for a show and shine.

Gary Whittle and Maureen showed their enthusiasm for a bit of pedal-down action on the way to Maydena. At Maydena we made another stop for morning tea or coffee, and many chips were stolen from people's paper bags by the rest of the Chapter, who were a bit peckish evidently.

We turned around and headed back towards Mt Field National park and gathered for a walk to Russell Falls. Many and varied conversations were going on, with subjects ranging from internet security, UHF radio set-ups in cars, and everything in between.

Lots of pictures were taken by all at Russell Falls, including another group photo. We all walked on to Horseshoe Falls, then back to the picnic ground for lunch. Lisa's guest suffered from a leech problem but this was soon fixed with a little help and lots of advice was given on how to deal with the itch. Lunch began with discussions of travel and travel hints, more discussions about cameras and of course MX-5s. Future runs were discussed, and a reminder of the curry night coming up.

By about 3pm people started to head home on what had turned out to be a glorious spring day put on by Tassie for our lovely Victorian visitors.

Oh, by the way ... no keys were lost, and John's new camera worked very well and was used constantly. ■



L-R: Gail Collins, John Waldock, Jo Hirst, Dave Collins, Lisa Gershwin, Maureen & Garry Whittle, Rowena, Cliff Hutton, Suzie Dear, Brandt Campbell, Alan Dear and John Hadrill.



Chapter Curry night

Our curry night at Mike and Liz's was an enjoyable one as usual, with good food, excellent company and many jokes. The highlight was the guided tour of Mike's many beautiful cars. A raffle was held and some prizes won. Thanks to Mike and Liz for a lovely evening. ■

Breast Cancer Tasmania's "Tops Down" event

■ John Waldock

There was a lot of initial interest when I announced we are going to attend a "tops down" event, until I explained it was a show and shine for convertible cars.

Anyway, on the day five intrepid MX-5ers turned up at Parliament House lawns for a morning of checking out great cars and interesting conversation.

We were among 105 convertibles, ranging from a 1935 Riley Brooklands to a 2013 Mercedes CLK something or other. We rolled out the banner and chatted, and over the next five hours had a lot of conversations about cars in general, our cars in particular, the merits of different MX-5 models etc.

The public could vote by buying a cardboard ribbon and placing it in front of their favoured car. Being a more modern set of cars, we didn't fare as well as some of the more exotic models on show, but we had a good sprinkling of supporters. It was great to see the NB SE get the most ribbons out of our group, as it was obviously the best car there (*I am sure Murray agrees with me there!*).

At the end of the day we had raised over \$3000 for breast cancer and had spent an enjoyable day talking about our cars.

Does it get any better? Thanks to Allan, David and Lisa, and to Caz, who alerted me to the event originally. ■



^ Lunch at Russell Falls



< "Tops Down" in Hobart
✓ Definitely tops up: David, Allan, Caz, Lisa and John



Chapter chatter ...

Yarragon run ... in reverse 21/10/12 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words & photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw, Bronwyn Roche, Alan Laine ■ Run organiser: Alan Laine

We met in the car park at the back of the Foodworks store in Trafalgar, all looking forward to this much talked-about run.

But there were three cars that were waiting at the train station – no trains where we were going! But we must make allowances for them as they had come up the previous evening from Ballarat (not Ian and me, as we had been travelling around Mt Kosciusko and Mt Hotham the previous week).

We caught up with many friends and made some new ones. After lots of chin-wagging it was time for Alan's "pep" talk and then it was off for our adventure with a convoy of 15 of which about half were of the red variety.

There were four visitors from Ballarat, four from Melbourne and the balance being locals from the Eastern Victoria Chapter.

The weather was undecided as to whether it would rain or the sun would shine. It was pretty cold but three quarters of the group had their roofs down trying to encourage the sun to make an appearance. We had a couple of light showers long the way but nothing would deter us from our adventure.

The morning session was absolutely fantastic, full of left and right turns and an abundance of curvy corners with a couple of big dippers thrown in for good measure. The views were great ... such good farming land looking like a patchwork of green and ploughed ground.

Unfortunately the rain made another appearance and the clouds hung about. We stopped at Boolarra for an unscheduled

toilet stop, regroup and natter. Then we were off again for more fantastic MX-5 roads before lunch.

Unfortunately we had to detour on to three and half kilometres of gravel road – yes, you read right – *gravel road!* Now our pride and joys were all dirty, even if it was unavoidable ... don't worry Alan – all is forgiven.

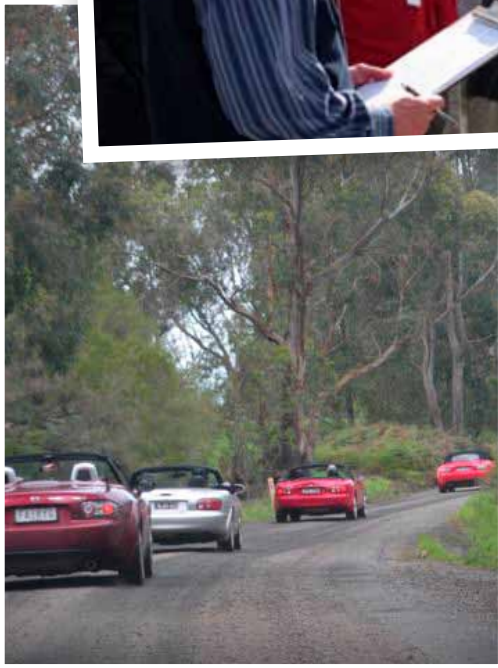
We had lunch at Mirboo North; a couple of us had a chilly lunch in the park before going in search of our fellow travellers. We found them having a chilly alfresco-style lunch in the main street.

After a photo session we were off again for our quick run back to Yarragon on yet some more great roads and curves. We went via *Roches Road* which was named after our members Geoff and Paul Roche, both of whom were on the run with us. It was a trip down memory lane for Geoff, Bronwyn and Paul, who all grew up in the area.

In Yarragon we were relegated to the back street as the main street was very busy and there were no parks for us to show our cars off in. The rain hastened our goodbyes and departures with most heading in various directions. Bradshaws and Everetts headed to Moe Motor Inn for the night as we were joining the Club's southern NSW tour on Monday.

A big thank you to Alan Laine and the Eastern Chapter for a fantastic MX-5 run and their hospitality for the day. ■





Chapter chatter ...

Canberra pays a visit 7/10/12 | North-Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Marg Gillick ■ Photos: Ken Keeling (Canberra Chapter, NSW Club), and Marg Gillick



✓ L-R: Andrew & Marj Johns, Bob Judd (Canberra Chapter Co-Convenor) Marg & Ron Gillick, Peter Le (Canberra)




The Corowa members of the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter (Ron and Marg Gillick and Andrew and Marj Johns) heard that several members from the Canberra Chapter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW were conducting a run in our area and would be stopping in Corowa for coffee one Sunday morning recently.

Fifteen MX-5s pulled in to the car park of *The Chocolate Factory* in Corowa. Run organiser, Ken Keeling, said the run was a part-driving and part-food and wine tour, also taking in a few galleries and car museums. Corowa is the home of *Max Mclean's Car Museum*, a private collection lovingly cared for by Max and a group of friends and volunteers, and the Rutherglen wine region is just across the river ... altogether, the perfect place for a stopover.

We met and chatted with many of the group including joint Chapter Convenors Bob Judd and Bricet Kloren with whom we made tentative plans to arrange a joint run at some time in the future.

As usual at any get-together, cars and gadgets were compared while coffee and delicious chocolate was consumed. ■



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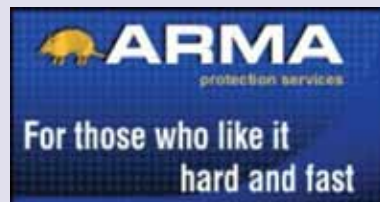
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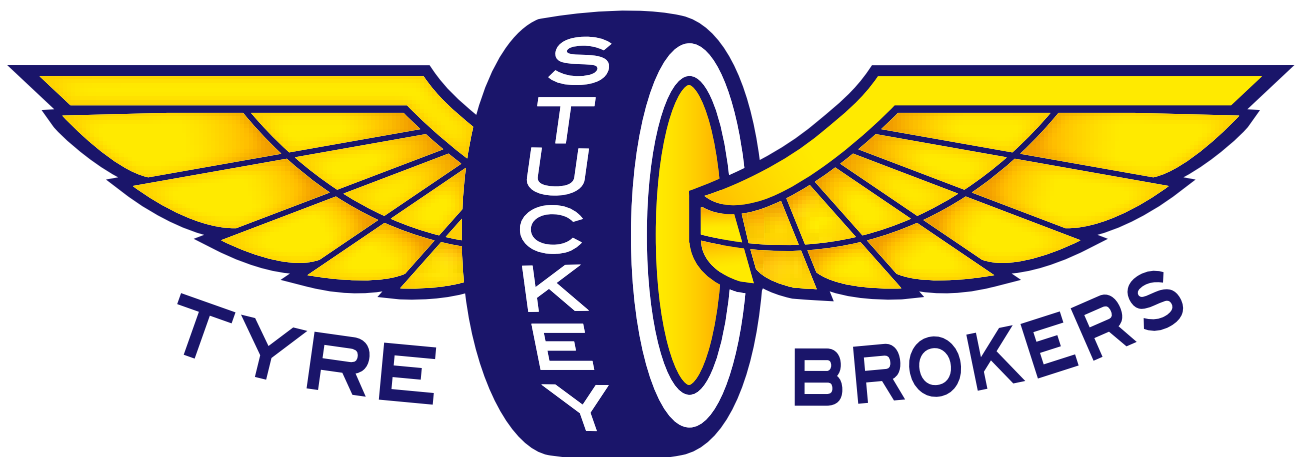
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The clutch of the matter

Words: Ron Macdonald

It would be fair to say that probably 80% + of the cars in the MX-5 Club are manual. Therefore they have a clutch, the operation of which remains a mystery to some owners. For those people, this is a basic article on the hows and whys of your car's clutch.

Why have a clutch?

The sole purpose of a clutch is to release the driveline from the engine. If your manual car did not have a clutch, every time you tried to stop you would either crash into something or stall the car. The clutch also makes changing gears easier, while you can do clutchless rev-matched gear changes (as I had to do recently on a 200-odd km return trip from the GOR) ... I am sure Mr Mazda would not recommend this as if it's done incorrectly it can cause mechanical damage.

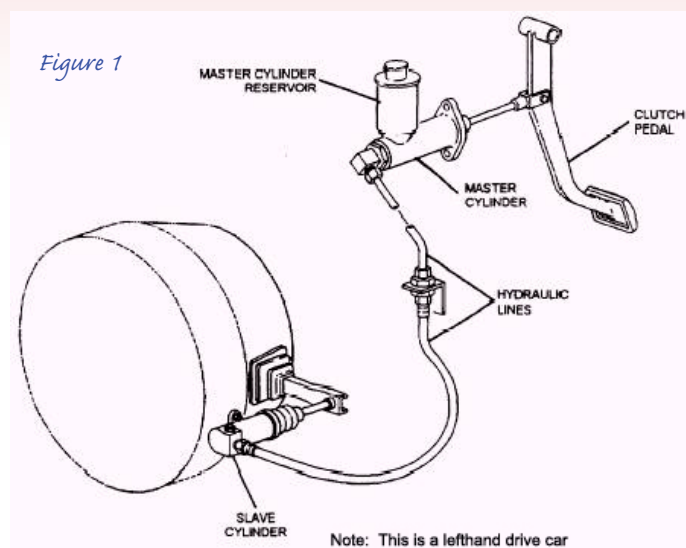
A few things to understand the system better:

- » When you push the clutch pedal to the floor you are not engaging the clutch – you are actually *disengaging* it.
- » The hydraulic side of the clutch system uses brake fluid, most MX-5s would use a DOT4 fluid in their brake system and it is the exact same oil you use to top up your clutch reservoir.
- » While on the subject of brake fluid, please note that this works as a pretty good paint stripper, so if you spill any on your car's paintwork wash it off immediately!
- » Brake fluid is not kind to the human body either. If you get it in your eyes, flush them with a copious amount of clean water; don't rub your face with brake fluid on your hands and most definitely wash your hands well with soap and water before grabbing hold of the wedding tackle when you go to the toilet.

Your clutch system can be broken down into two main parts: the hydraulic side and the mechanical side.

Hydraulic

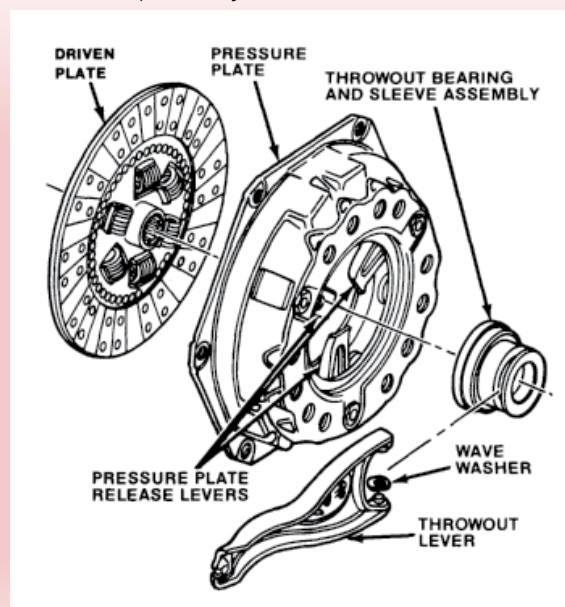
The hydraulic part of your clutch system consists of the master cylinder which is bolted to the firewall in the engine bay, a hydraulic line (connecting the master cylinder to the slave cylinder) and the slave cylinder which is bolted to the driver's side of the gearbox's bell housing (fig. 1).



Mechanical

The mechanical parts of your clutch system consist of the throwout lever, thrust bearing, pressure plate and the clutch (or driven) plate (fig 2). The clutch plate is sandwiched between the engine's flywheel and the pressure plate and is coated on both faces with a friction material not dissimilar to what is used on brake pads. When the clutch is engaged, the friction material on the clutch plate grips both the flywheel and pressure plate, giving you a mechanical connection between the engine and gearbox. When the clutch is disengaged both the engine and gearbox can move independently.

Figure 2



How does it all work?

The best way to understand how things work is to go through the "bang to bang" (as we used to say in my *Gunnery* days). In normal circumstances the clutch plate is engaged with both the flywheel and pressure plate allowing the engine to rotate the gearbox and in turn the drive shaft, differential, axles and finally the rear wheels.

When you push the clutch pedal to the floor, a rod connected to the pedal pushes on a piston in the master cylinder, which draws brake fluid from the master cylinder's reservoir and sends it (under pressure) down the hydraulic line to the slave cylinder.

The pressurised fluid activates a piston in the slave cylinder which in turn pushes on the throwout lever, the inner end of which is connected to the throwout bearing (or thrust race). The throwout bearing is forced forward into the pressure plate release levers (or fingers), which then separate the pressure plate from the driven plate. Your clutch is now disengaged.

When you release the clutch pedal the whole procedure is reversed and the clutch is again engaged (fig 3).



'CW' update ...

■ Words & photos: John Waldock, Southern Tasmania Chapter

In February 2011 John reported that he and his best mate – fellow Southern Tassie Chapter member Allan Pryer – had “gone halves” in a Sprite in need of a complete restoration. They’ve been updating us on their journey together ...

It’s a little embarrassing to be writing this update.

Looking back at all my photos, I realised it has been two years since Allan and I purchased **CW**, our 1962 Mk 2A Austin Healey Sprite (named after Allan’s father), and about 18 months since we had the engine out and rebuilt.

The going has been slow; we have had fellow MX5-er Mike Williams welding some patches in the floor pan. The engine bay has been ripple coated and finished off in sparking Monza Red. We have cleaned the underneath of **CW** (that took three attempts – trying to strip back 50 years worth of oil, muck and road grit!) and ripple sprayed the underneath surfaces.



We are awaiting the re-conditioned gear box, which hopefully will arrive soon. We can then drop the motor back in (*such a relaxed description of a pretty big job*) and get **CW** back on the road.

The intention is to then strip back the exterior paint and have that sprayed by another friend of a friend in a spray booth.

Estimated time of completion: who knows! We are hoping **CW** might be driving in early 2013, but I have long given up predicting when things will get done as Allan and I are trying to save money by doing as much of the work ourselves as we can.

So, watch this space. Hopefully I won’t be writing too many more updates. ■

◀ *half way there ... still lots to do.*

Engaged

Disengaged

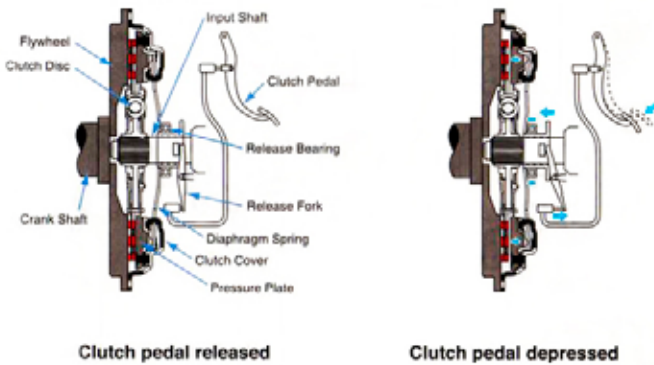


Figure 3

Knowing how the clutch system works can be very handy for diagnosing clutch issues. Basically if you have drive at the rear wheels but you cannot disengage the clutch, it will most likely be a *hydraulic issue*. If on the other hand your clutch can be disengaged but you have no drive or the clutch slips under load, it is most likely a *mechanical issue*.

Clutch plates (like brake pads) do wear, however to gain the maximum life from your clutch plate is it important that you always remove your foot from the pedal (and put it back on the foot rest) between *every* gear change. Even the slightest pressure on the pedal can slightly disengage the clutch and cause it to slip, creating unnecessary wear to the friction material.

There you have it, while not a comprehensive study of the clutch system of a manual MX-5, hopefully it might remove the mystery for some. ■

Next month:

Replacing the flexible clutch hose on an NB MX-5.

Preparing the engine bay for painting, seemed to take forever. ➤



Grant & Saeko's "Sapphari" ...

A tour of the NSW south coast ... 22-27/10/12 | Club

■ Photos: Will Campbell, Karen Bradshaw ■ Run organisers: Grant Butler & Saeko Fujiki

Extended tours have become a regular feature of the Club with trips to various locations around Victoria, as well as to Tasmania and New Zealand.

The most recent of these was a trip to the Sapphire Coast of southern New South Wales, organised by Saeko Fujiki and Grant Butler. The week-long adventure was centred in the beautiful town of Merimbula, and covered approximately 2,000 kilometres of some roads ideally suited to our favourite sports car!

We hope that what follows gives you a taste of our adventures!



Participants (from left): Dawn Everett, Will Campbell, Alan Everett, Coral Campbell, Ian Bradshaw, Phil Harris, Grant Butler, Saeko Fujiki, Dave Collins, Jenny and Bruce Gray, Gail Collins and Karen Bradshaw.



Anyone for bridge?

Got ourselves a convoy ...

Day 1 - Monday, 22 October

We had a great start to today's run - Alan locked his keys in the boot. Yes, Alan locked his keys in the boot!!!

Thus it was an 11.15am start from Yarragon with six NCs and one terrific black NB.

We stopped at Heyfield where Grant lost his coin purse, but was soon found by Alan! Where are your car keys Alan? We were followed by a cop from Maffra to Stratford where we stopped for lunch. *Where are your keys Alan?*

To get to Lakes Entrance, we went via Wattle Point, Eagle Point (for a group photo), Paynesville (thank you Gail for the ice cream) and Metung. Had tea at the RSL, then had birthday cakes for Bruce and Coral back at the motel.

All in all, a great day, but ... *where are your keys, Alan?*

Karen & Ian



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^ *Saeko, Will, Phil and Grant*

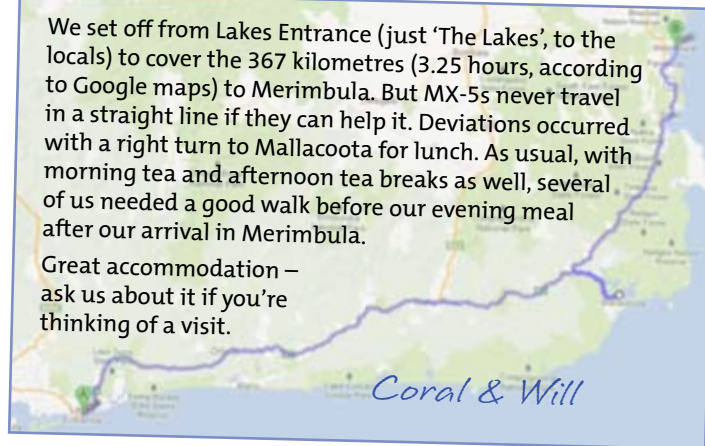
✓ *We all scream ... Alan,
Dawn & Ian tuck in ...*



Day 2 - Tuesday, 23 October

We set off from Lakes Entrance (just 'The Lakes', to the locals) to cover the 367 kilometres (3.25 hours, according to Google maps) to Merimbula. But MX-5s never travel in a straight line if they can help it. Deviations occurred with a right turn to Mallacoota for lunch. As usual, with morning tea and afternoon tea breaks as well, several of us needed a good walk before our evening meal after our arrival in Merimbula.

Great accommodation - ask us about it if you're thinking of a visit.



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Day 3 - Wednesday, 24 October

Our first day starting from Merimbula, we are heading north towards Batemans Bay. We experienced a day of fantastic contrasts.

The freedom and joy of roads less travelled, to the occasional, thankfully, drive on boring highways – all up, 313km.

We visited the traditional beaches like Merimbula to the beautiful, secluded and unspoilt Tura beach.

We experienced the delight of an echidna joining us for morning tea and seeing a family of eagles soaring, to the sad number of dead animals on the side of the road. We passed through modern towns and those holding on to their old heritages like Tilba Central.

What a great day!

Gail & Dave



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Grant & Saeko's

Merimbula morning



Day 4 - Thursday, 25 October

We left Crown Apartments at 9 am and headed for Bombala for morning tea and then Jindabyne for lunch.

We saw snow on the mountains and it was very windy and rocky country. After lunch, we left for Cooma – a lovely drive where we saw a couple of donkeys and the biggest car yard we have ever seen.

After ice creams, it was back to Merimbula with a quick stop at Pipers Lookout. You are meant to be able to see the ocean, but it was very hazy!

Thanks Grant and Saeko for a great day.

Dawn & Alan



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^ Karen & Dawn



"Sapphari" ...

Day 5 - Friday, 26 October

Shortly after Eden our group turned onto Imlay Road through Yambulla State Forest. Our brief was to watch out for log trucks; there was no mention of dead wombats, live wallabies, potholes or road deformities caused by the trucks, so bad at one point where the top of a significant raised section of asphalt on the white line was painted blue.

The road itself was 53km of true *Jinba Ittai* motoring – just made for MX-5s. Winding through the forest from 150 metres above sea level, the road drops to about 50 masl before rising to 650 masl, punctuated every now and then with a test of our cars' – and drivers' – reflexes to dodge a pot hole or other obstacle.

Truly a great road on our trip's penultimate day – pity only one car experienced this with the top down!

Morning tea was at Cann River before a side trip to Cape Conran, lunch at Marlo then a quiet transport section to Lakes Entrance to finish the day.

Jenny & Bruce

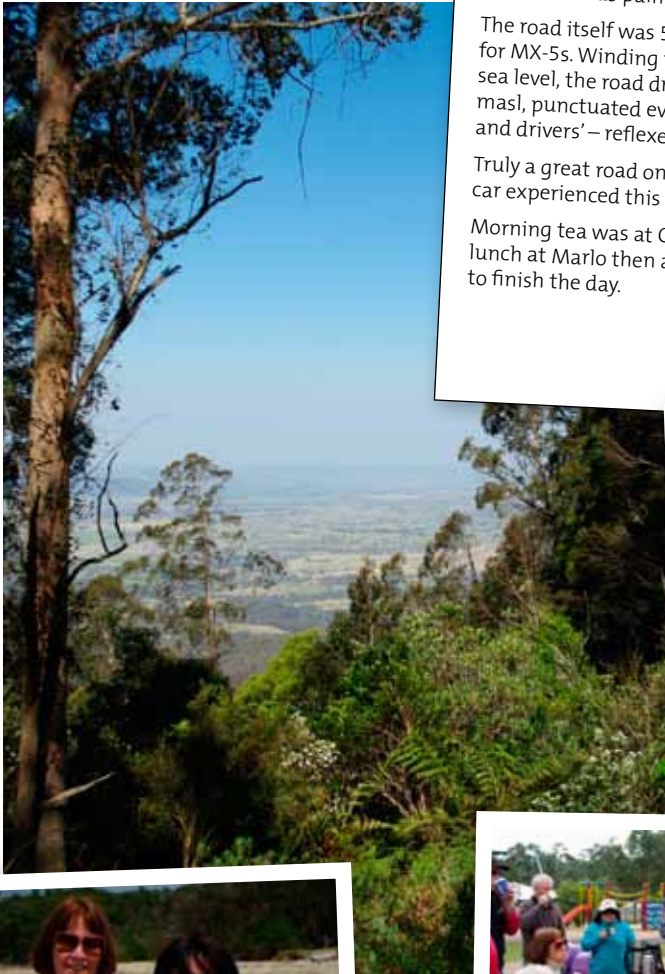


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➤ *It's the shorts, Ian!*



^ *Gail & Jenny*

Day 6 - Saturday, 27 October

After farewelling four of our intrepid travellers who were heading off to Buchan, the remainder of our convoy left Lakes Entrance on the last stage of our journey. During the next few hours I mused over the pristine beaches and the winding roads and sweeping curves through the hinterland of the Sapphire Coast.

And then we arrived at Yarragon where we had late breakfast / early lunch and recollected the experience of the past week. And so after about 1800km our getaway had come to its finality.

So many thanks to Grant and Saeko who can be proud of organising a very enjoyable experience indeed.

Phil



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At Lakes Entrance

Market place ...

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For sale 1999 10th Anniversary NB

- » all the 10AE goodies
- » 56,663km | RWC
- » reg. to September 2013
- » great condition
- » 6-speed manual
- » 6-disk boot-mounted CD player

Asking price:
\$13,500

Contact: Martin (non-member),
Seaford (03) 9786 7404



For sale 2004 Silver NB

- » 6-speed manual softtop
- » 90,523km (no RWC)
- » reg. to February 2013
- » good condition
- » selling due to loss of licence

Asking price:
\$17,000

Contact: Sarah Jayne (non-member),
Ringwood 0433 839 278



For sale 1999 Silver NB

- » very little use, mainly rural roads
- » mostly garaged; exc. condition
- » 63,000km
- » woodgrain interior trim
- » new Toyo tyres fitted
- » new battery
- » will come with full fuel tank!

Asking price:
\$13,500 neg

Contact: Marcus (former member),
Tasmania 0419 585 584



For sale NA/NB hardtop storage frame

- » hang your removable NA or NB hardtop from the roof of lean against a wall without distortion
- » professionally-made frame
- » powder coated

Asking price:
\$225

Contact: Wayne (former member),
Brighton, Vic 0417 532 412

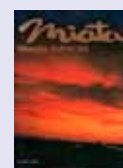
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- » 1.6 NA
- » 1.8 NA
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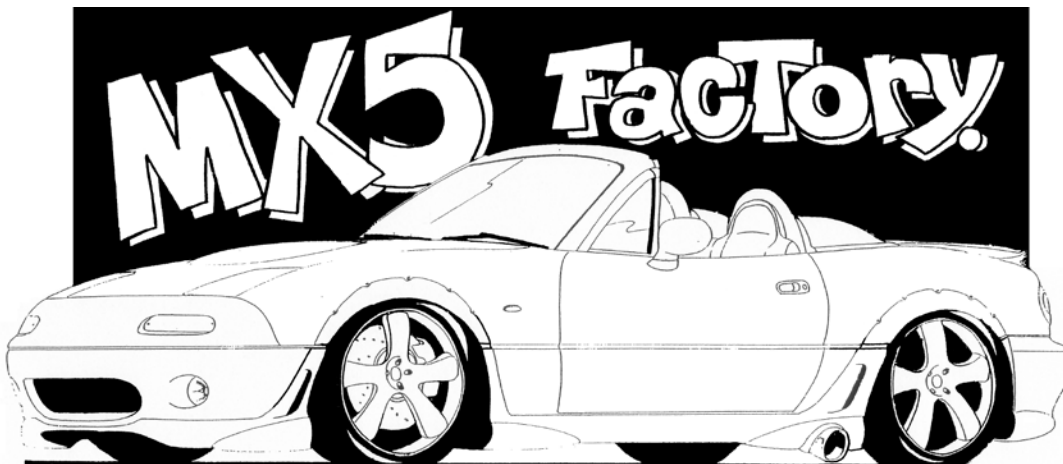
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