

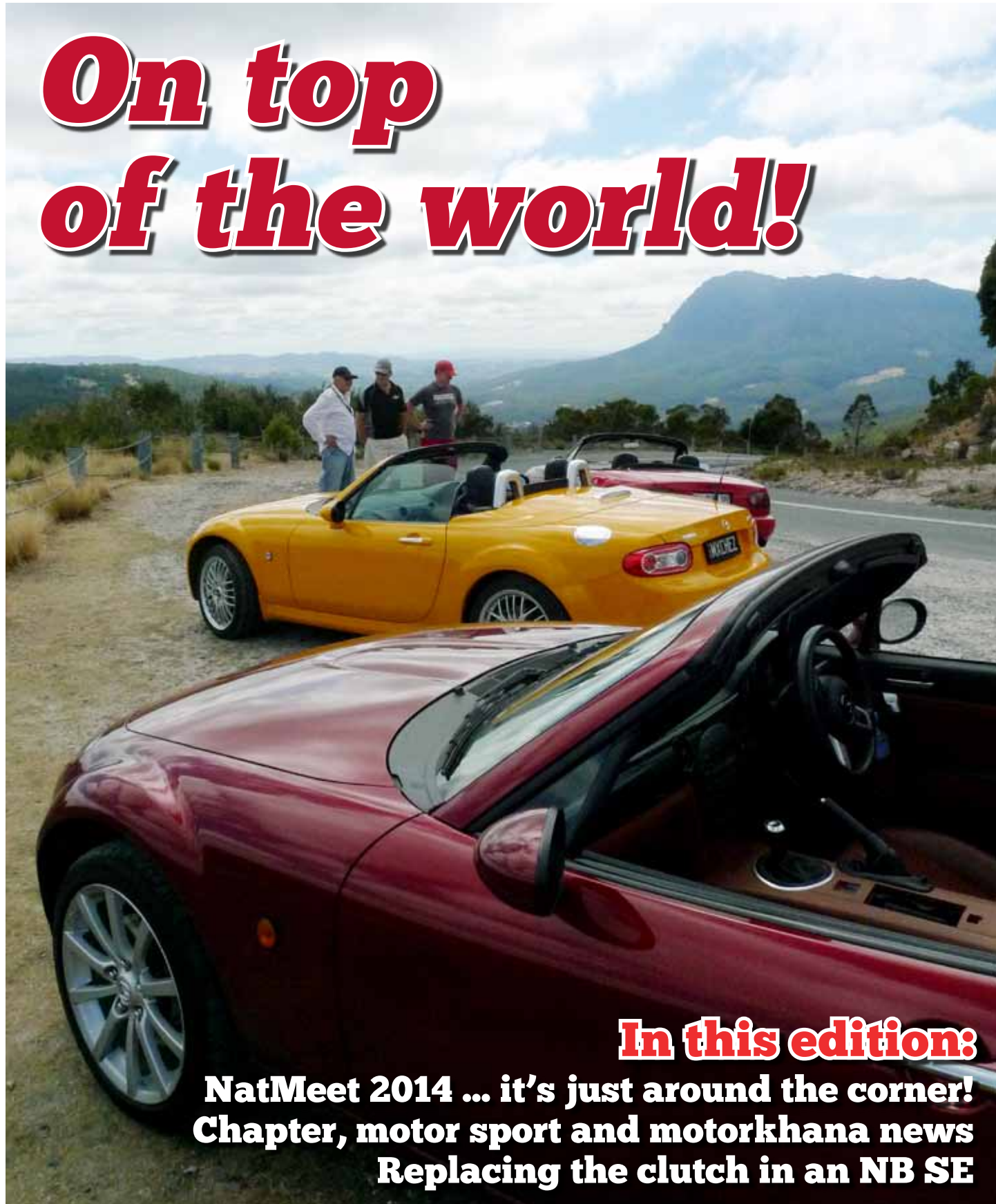
mxtra

3/2013

www.mx5vic.org.au

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

On top of the world!



In this edition:

**NatMeet 2014 ... it's just around the corner!
Chapter, motor sport and motorkhana news
Replacing the clutch in an NB SE**



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Cover image: North Tassie Chapter members at the top of Oliver's Rd lookout, overlooking Mt Roland and the Sheffield Valley, discuss the curves just travelled and the hairpins ahead.

Photo: Kelly Berggren



Find us at:
MX-5 Club of
Victoria

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Don's Drive(l) ...

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



Hi everyone!

Welcome to the *real* March issue of *mxtra*. Yes, those of you who were inclined to read my article in last month's edition of this magazine will have noticed that I got my months confused and wished February away before it had a chance to reveal itself.

Last month I mentioned that the Queensland Club was looking at alternative dates for NatMeet 2014 outside Easter. Well, they have bitten the bullet. They will hold the event between April 12th and 15th which is *before* Easter in 2014.

A website has been created especially for the event at: http://www.mx5clubqld.com.au/?page_id=1915

I visited the event location (Oaks Oasis Resort) in Caloundra when I attended a conference there some years ago. I think it will be perfect for an MX-5 gathering as well as a great holiday destination for those of us in need of a summer that goes beyond February.

I received an interesting snippet of information the other day from Alan Laine, our Eastern Chapter Captain. He'd received an enquiry from a prospective member about the Club. Alan did the right thing, gave him an overview and answered all his questions. In the return email Alan discovered that *the enquirer didn't actually have a car ... he was checking us out along with other clubs before deciding what kind of car he should buy!*

I'm guessing that with over 500 members in the Club, there will be a multitude of reasons why folks choose an MX-5 as well as membership of our Club and this gentleman will not be alone in his method of deciding. We hope he takes up Alan's offer to join a Club run to see what he's missing if he doesn't buy an MX-5.

At the Club's February Committee meeting we welcomed Cary Warren to the Committee. He has volunteered to take up the position vacated by Janette Todd at the end of last year. We were fortunate that the team behaved themselves on the night; as a result Cary had a fairly gentle introduction to our way of getting down to business. Ron Macdonald, Central Chapter Captain, took up the standing invitation to all Chapter Captains and Club members to attend Committee meetings as they wish. For those new to the Club, the meetings

occur on the second Wednesday evening of every month at the Albert Sailing Club by Albert Park Lake. Our only request is that you let the Secretary, Peter Dannock, know if you intend to participate. Just to be different the March meeting will *not* occur at the usual location due to the Australian Grand Prix taking place that week. However, we will be back there in April.

I'm not much of a politician, but I'm even less of one after the announcements by the Victorian Government about road safety in the last week of February. I just do not understand how they expect further penalties to have any impact on road accidents. There is really good evidence to show that the "P" plate system has had a significant impact on traffic accidents in the under-25 age group. Increasing the fines for these people is not going to act as a deterrent in my opinion.

Driver training would seem to be a better way to me. Having spent some time living in Germany, I cannot help but compare the statistics between under-25s in the two countries. The accident rate in Germany for young drivers is no different from any other age group and these folk are driving on autobahns at speeds some of our kids can only dream about.

So, what's the difference? The simple answer is driver training. In Germany before you can take your driving test you must undertake the equivalent of our advanced driver training programs; you must be able to drive the car between cones on a very slippery skid pan set up a bit like our motorkhana courses and you have to pass a test on the workings of a car. Kids in Germany treat their driving licence like gold dust; they had to work so hard to get it. If the Government was serious about addressing traffic accidents it would take a good look at the German approach and focus on driver training for young people rather than penalising their parents with increased fines.

Phew, I feel better for that!

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

Remember ... Safety first!

Don

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

March

- 23-24 North Tassie: Strahan overnighter
- 24 South Tassie: the March Little Bit Nice run
- 24 Motorkhana – Pakenham

April

- 13 Eastern Vic: Bryant Park hillclimb track/Baw Baw run
- 16-24 Club: Tassie Tour
- 20 Motor Sport Rd 7 – Phillip Island
- 27-28 Autocross/Motorkhana – Deniliquin, NSW

May

- 3 Annual Motor Sport meeting, City Mazda
- 5 Central: Anzac Tour
- 5 North-Eastern Vic: scavenger hunt
- 12 Motor Sport Rd 8 – Sandown
- 26 Eastern Vic: Moe/Rawson run

June

- 2 Eastern Vic: Technical day (TBC)
- 14 Eastern Vic: Social night (TBC)
- 16 Motor Sport Rd 9 – Broadford

July

- 6 Motor Sport Rd 1 – Phillip Island
- 21 Motor Sport Rd 2 – Broadford
- 28 Club: Awards lunch, Mazda Australia, Mt Waverley

August

- 4 Motor Sport Rd 3 – Winton

September

- 21 Motor Sport Rd 4 – Calder

October

- 18-20 NSW Club 3-day weekend
- 19-20 Motor Sport: Winton 6 Hour

November

- 2-3 Motor Sport: NSW/Vic Interstate Challenge, – Wakefield Park
- 9-10 Eastern Vic: Bright overnighter
- 9-10 NSW Club Canberra Chapter weekend



Membership

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

Hello everyone ...

Another busy month this time around, with 13 new members (and one renewal – eight months late!). Well done to all of them for their impeccable taste in motoring, and welcome!

Current membership count:

515

Central Chapter

Stephen and Susan Bagnall	2003 Green NB
Margaret and Ken Cadden	2003 Silver NB
Loretta Collins	1998 Red NA
John Fredersdorff	2007 Black NC
Iain Johnson	1995 Classic Red NA
Stuart Mason	2001 Blue NB
Terry McGovan	1998 Black NB
Dianne Maxwell	1997 Neo Green NB
Phillip and Amanda Noblett	2005 Silver NB

Western Victoria Chapter

Karren South	2003 Black NB
--------------	---------------

See you out and about ...

Will

Club video - spread it around!

We have added a new promotional Club video to the home page of the Club's website.

Inspired by Central Chapter Captain **Ron Macdonald** and produced by Committeeman **Ben Sale** of "Otherside Productions", it gives a brief (one minute 40 seconds) insight into the Club's range of activities. Check it out at www.mx5vic.org.au.

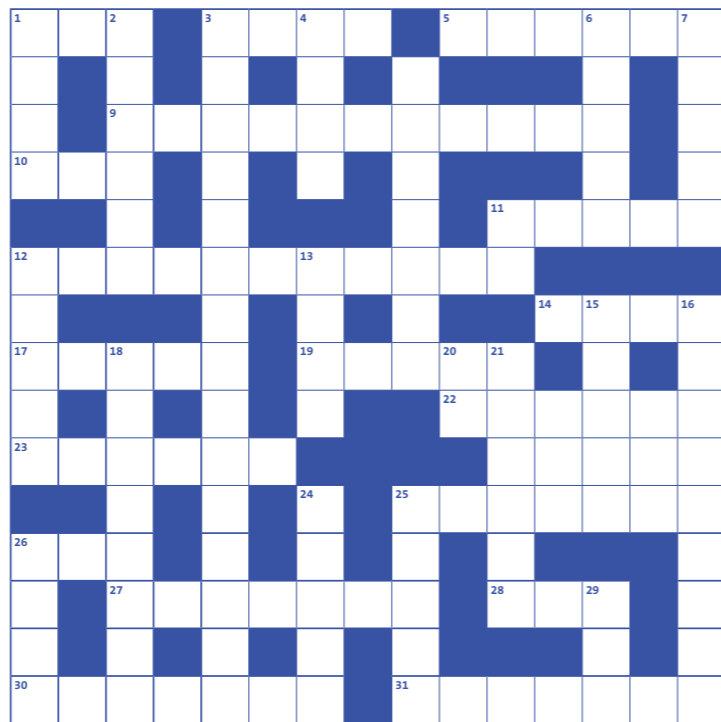


So next time someone asks you, "Just what does the MX-5 Club do?", point them to the home page ... the pictures tell several thousand words!

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

Alan Bennett's MX-5 crossword #7

Theme: Vic/Tas postcodes



Across

- In-grained and proclaimed a Victorian town in 1861 (3)
- Near Maryborough, this small town's almanac show less than 700 people in the 2006 census (4)
- A nong near Horsham would know that this is definitely not shorter! (6)
- Take the zig zag road from Konongwootong, turn right onto the C203 to get there (7,4)
- Take Ye Olde road from Colac heading SW? (3)
- Kitchens have them for cooking (5)
- Feign being in a dad? (11)
- North of Warracknabeal and filled to the ? (4)
- A seaside town and a convenient stop on the GOR run (5)
- A camera lense focuses on this area along a Bogong (5)
- A town with a lake and a national park with oil in the den perhaps? (6)
- A dog almost yelps backwards in Tasmania or Victoria (6)
- Is this town north of Taggerty in a quiver? (7)
- One of the Kelly gang was cornered? (3)
- If Bong and a Bung is a place, go west about 10k to the gold rush of 1853 (7)
- A submerged coastal landform, aka a drowned river valley, a part of Riana? (3)
- A beach on Port Philip Bay that plays soccer in the UK? (7)
- Near a hanging rock it does not sound like an old pig! (6)

Down

- A gem of a place west of Kurumburra (4)
- Not wearing a balaclava, go south past the rip on the lea (6)
- Between where the sun shines and the Bombers fly up (8, 7)
- Celestial object seen in Moonah (4)
- An area of land, dating from medieval times, near Hobart (5)
- Did you have a daughter in 1970 west of Melbourne? (5)
- Literally, for example, old car roof covering from Dingley Village (2,5)
- Is travelling from Vic to Tas a short from of the overseas experience? (abbrev) (2)
- Found in Melbourne and a tub of frozen desert made in a suballocation (5)
- MX5, and it's parked south of Garfield (4)
- If speeding, it gets you both ways! (5)
- Remain Inn for drinks south of Ararat (8)
- Purchased or leased, not for sale but close? (8)
- The hearse finally travels in this direction (abbrev) (2)
- It could be Tassy or Vic but found in neither? (6)
- Fill 'er up with mostly Europa petrol! Joyful some would say (5)
- Act on this beneath the crest of a hill (5)
- Is he looking for drugs in Mount Lonarch? (slang) (4)
- Adapting between three bridges and an icy creek (3)

Answers next month ...



Full Throttle!

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



Interstate Challenge confirmed

The date for the annual NSW vs VIC interstate challenge has now been confirmed as 3 November 2013 at Wakefield Park. It is Melbourne Cup day on the following Tuesday the 5th, so if you're planning to make a long weekend of it, I suggest you get your annual leave forms in now.

Further details will be issued closer to the event.

Simmons Plains - Tasmania (WRX Club)

For anyone interested in heading to Tasmania for a weekend of motor sport at Simmons Plains, the WRX Club are heading over for round 9 of their championship and MX-5 Club members are more than welcome to enter the event.

This is *not* an MX-5 Club Vic/Tas event or Championship Round, however for Tassie-based members who have been considering doing a track day, this would be a good opportunity for you.

The event is on over the weekend of 2-3 November. Anyone interested should contact Dirk VanHeer from the WRX Club on 0411 087 314. Or check out this link www.wrx.com.au/forum/viewtopic.php?t=7708

Brown Davis roll bar (NC hardtop) & NA/NB side intrusion protection

Available for order now!!! I have been advised by David and Kevin from Brown Davis that a roll bar is now available for NC's with collapsible hardtops. The guys have developed a bar which is fully functional with the hard top and replaces the existing OEM loop bar arrangement. This is great news for anyone currently competing or looking to compete regularly with their NC and increase safety and now means we have a bolt in style bar available for all MX-5 models.

Brown Davis also offer side intrusion protection bars for anyone looking to upgrade the safety on their NA or NB. Whilst not mandatory, this might be worth considering, especially if you are intending to compete in higher level events. These can be made to order for around \$250-\$300 and are a bolt-in bolt-out arrangement.

To place your order or for any questions please contact Kevin or David at Brown Davis on 9762 8722.

Important safety gear update from CAMS for all MX-5 motor sport competitors

The following information is from CAMS Technical Bulletin B13/013 and applies to *all vehicles* used for competition and fitted with a roll cage. All competitors are advised to ensure that your vehicle complies with this regulation prior to entering your next event.

The padding is available from various motor sport equipment outlets. I have spoken with James Tinsley from MX5 Centre and Revolution Racegear and he has stock of this padding available now from \$40 per 900mm length. You can contact James on 9376 5330.

Bulletin



Page 1 of 1

Bulletin Number: **B13/013**
Implementation Date: **12th February 2013**

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Schedule J- Safety Cage Structures

REFERENCE:

http://www.camsmanual.com.au/10_gen_req.asp

RATIONALE:

To include SFI 45.2 as an alternative safety cage padding for 1st category vehicles incorporating a head rest

ACTION:

Amend Schedule J Article 11 as follows:

11. PROTECTIVE PADDING

11.1 Helmet and Head Protection:

- (a) Where the helmet of an occupant could come into contact with the safety cage, protective padding shall be fitted in that area, which complies with:
 - (i) International competition and below, FIA standard 8857-2001, type A (see FIA Technical List No 23 "Roll Cage Padding Homologated by the FIA"); or
 - (ii) For national competitions and lower, SFI specification 45.1. **For each 1st category vehicle manufactured prior to 1st January 2012, the use of SFI specification 45.2 for the head rest is permitted.**

(b) Implementation Dates

Padding of the type specified in 11.1(a) is required as follows:

- Any FIA category vehicle (eg, Group N, Super 2000) – refer FIA Appendix J, Article 253 – currently in place;
- National competitions – from 1 January 2012; and
- All competitions – from 1 January 2013.

The use of the specified padding is highly recommended in the meantime.

END

© CAMS (Confederation of Australian Motor Sport Ltd) 2012

NatMeet 2014 - it's closer than you think!



Every two years, the Mazda MX-5 clubs of Australia get together for a national gathering that we call "NatMeet".

The next one, the eleventh to be held since the inaugural event in South Australia in 1994, will be in Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland in 2014.

It's planned for 12-15 April - which means that, for the first time it, will *not* be held over the Easter weekend. And that means less-congested roads, better access to accommodation and venues and a more cost-effective event.

NatMeet is five days of fun and frivolity, and a perfect chance to spend time with like-minded enthusiasts who share your love of the wonderful



Mazda MX-5. Being involved is an experience you will never forget.

If you have been to a NatMeet before, you'll know how much fun it is and will be keen to get along to this one.

And if you haven't, please consider this one. There's the full gamut of favourite MX-5 activities, from social to motor sport. You should get to at least one NatMeet in your life ... it's a great chance to get together with MX-5 friends, old and new.

More details can be found via the host Queensland Club's website at http://www.mx5clubqld.com.au/?page_id=1915

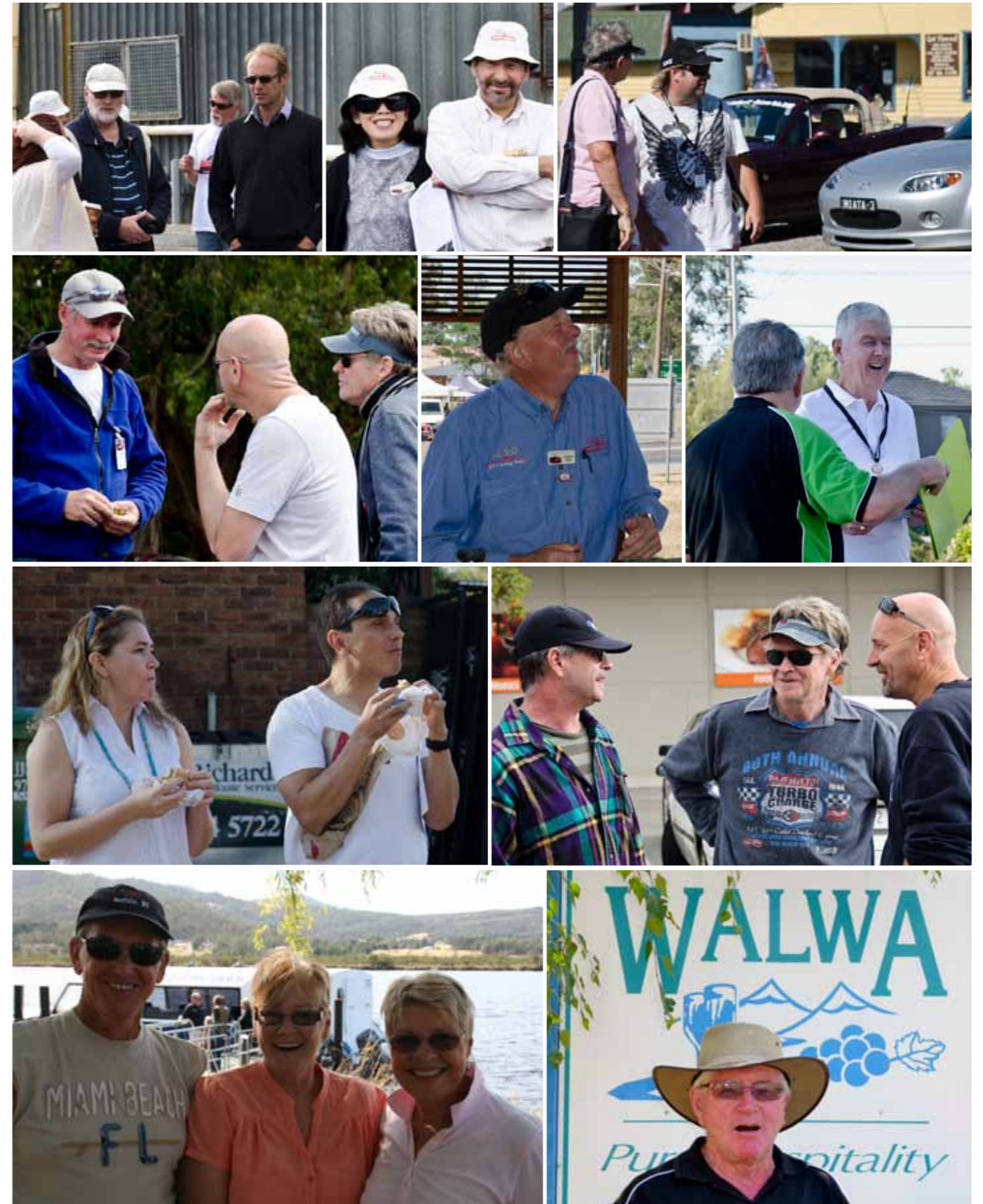
Registration, accommodation booking and other details will be available soon.




Scene about ...



Photos: Wendy Clark, Ron Macdonald, Marg Gillick, John Waldock





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My favourite MX-5 road ...

Words & photos: Murray Finlay

The Whitfield Road

Life member Grant Butler introduced a number of us to this road back in 2007 en route to Beechworth for a NatMeet planning weekend.

The road runs from Mansfield, 185km north-east of Melbourne (you'll need to refill the tank here), over the Wombat Ranges to Whitfield at the southern end of the King Valley.

It's only about 60km long, but it has everything an MX-5 enthusiast could want in a road ... hairpins, sweepers, undulating crests and dips, long straights, tight tank-slappers, steep ascents and descents ...

Be warned though; in winter the perpetual shade on some of the more challenging twists towards the northern end of this road can harbour treacherous ice patches on the road surface. And there are some hard rock walls and long drops facing you if you get it wrong!

The scenery ranges from open farmland to dense bush, road cut through rock and breathtaking valley and mountain views. Which also makes it ideal for adventurous motorcyclists – and other wildlife – so keep your eyes open!

And if you like bushrangers, there are some interesting side trips as well, to the Kelly Tree at Stringybark Creek, and Power's Lookout (inset, above). ■

If you have a favourite MX-5 road, you're welcome to submit a short description (150 words) and a photo to <editor@mx5vic.org.au> and share it around!

Of course, you can discover the Club's favourite MX-5 roads with your own copy of our book, "20 Roads for 20 years" ... just \$20 + postage from merchandise man Steve Dunlop, merchandise@mx5vic.org.au. Perfect for a glove box near you!



Slow-cooked Moroccan lamb

Recipe: Daniel White

Cooking time: 4-5 hours
Serves: 4-6

Method:

Pre-heat the oven to 160*.

Cut away any excess fat from the underside of the lamb, then make deep incisions all over the meat on both sides.

Mix the garlic, cumin, paprika and butter together with 1 teaspoon of salt and spread this all over the meat, working it well down into all the little slits.

Place lamb, skinned side up, on a shallow trivet in the base of large roasting tin, and roast for 4-5 hours, basting it every 30 minutes with the buttery juices from the tin, until it is well coloured on the outside but still juicy on the inside. This will give you meltingly tender lamb. If you would like it to be

falling off the bone, cover the top of the lamb loosely with a sheet of foil and cook it for a further hour.

Meanwhile, for the cumin sea salt seasoning, heat a small, dry frying pan over high heat and as soon as it is hot, add the cumin seeds and shake them around for a few seconds until they darken slightly and start to smell aromatic. Tip them into a mortar and grind them slightly with a pestle, but don't render them to a fine powder. Stir in the sea salt and pepper and tip the mixture into a small shallow serving bowl.

Remove the meat from the bone and break it into small chunks. Arrange the lamb on a warmed serving platter and serve at once with the cumin and sea salt seasoning for sprinkling.

Ingredients:

- » 1 x whole shoulder of lamb on the bone, approx 2-2.75kg (ask the butcher to joint it with a few cuts)
- » 2 x fat garlic cloves, crushed
- » 1 x tablespoon cumin seeds, freshly ground
- » 1½ heaped teaspoons sweet smoked paprika
- » 50g butter softened
- » Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the cumin & sea salt seasoning:

- » 1 x tablespoon cumin seeds
- » 1 x tablespoon sea salt
- » 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

The MX-5 Club Grill



Introducing ... Brendan Beavis

Motor Sport competitor



Name? Brendan Beavis
Age? 26
Born? Nurburg, Germany
Current abode? Depends on the day of the week
Profession? Computer nerd
Partner? Sometimes ...
Pets? An Audi and an MX-5
Fave food? Things cooked by Mum
Can you cook? Reasonably well
Favourite tippie? N/A

First drive? Probably Dad's work ute

First car? VL Calais 3 litre

First fender bender? The middle car in a multi-vehicle rear-ender on the Monash

Everyday driver? Audi S4 V8

How many MX-5s have you owned? Three [see below]

Current MX-5? Nearly finished putting together a White NB8B

MX-5 improvements? Sh*tloads of race car bits

MX-5 dislikes? Too small, not enough grunt

Why an MX-5? Lightweight, rear-drive, race car

Fluffy dice? No. Too heavy ...

Passions besides the MX-5? Cars, motor sport, Rubik's cube

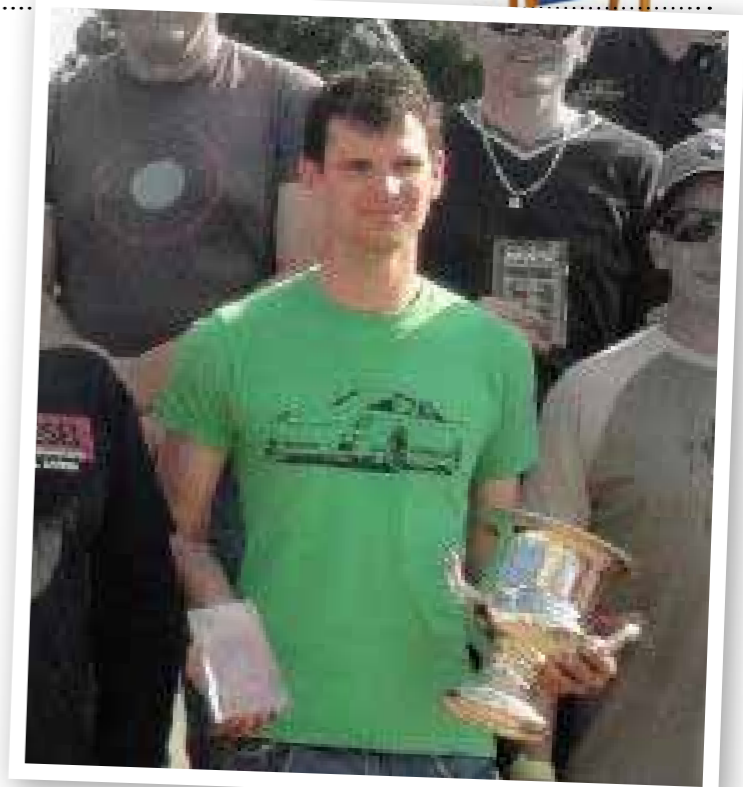
Favourite TV show / movie / book? Star Wars, Back to the Future, Indiana Jones, The Matrix ... trilogies. They're all equally awesome

Dream wheels (money no object)? Audi R8 V10 or Aston V12 Vantage

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? Only as a hire car ... handbrakes

Favourite other Mazda? None, all boring

If not a Mazda (gasp!) what? That new Alfa 4C looks all right



How long in the Club? Four years

How many MX-5 Club runs? None

Done DECA? A few times, both as an entrant and to help run the day

Ford vs Holden? Holden, although the new HSVs look horrid

What's playing in your MX-5? Engine noise, no radio

Footy team (AFL/NRL/Soccer)? Footy is for bogans! How about F1 driver of choice: Mark Webber and Jenson Button

Final comments? If you want to learn to drive on the track, head to my YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/BEAVISHSV

Brendan proudly holds the NSW/Victoria Annual Interstate Challenge cup at Wakefield in 2011 ... the first time the "away team" had won. Brendan also won the NSW Modified 1.6 litre class and the Victorian Restricted Open class on the day



MX-5s #1 and #2 ...



Above: MX-5 #3 ... almost complete work-in-progress

Chapter chatter ...



Leongatha lunch run 3.2.13 | Eastern Victoria

Words: Jenna Perks ■ Photos: Jenna Perks, Wendy Clark, Ron Macdonald ■ Run organiser: Alan Laine

Dark and stormy clouds, that had poured down on our Melbourne friends during their trip, loomed heavy and close.

However, once again, the angels showed their appreciation for the MX-5s and allowed only a little spitting – to settle the dust – and even put on the occasional sunshine!

To start with things were looking a little lean with a show of four cars but this quickly grew to a dozen – a baker's dozen that is thanks to a little 'Girl Power': Rob pulled in followed by a Silver Bullet with Mel behind the wheel! The Silver Bullet even had *PINK* personalised number



← Mel's Silver Bullet



Eastern Vic Chapter Captain Alan Laine, in the "Gippsland sunshine"

plates!! Well, game on I say – looks like *Little Red Riding Boots* could be up for some fancy footwork to keep this one tame! Wonder if she will compete with his red driving shoes and get some pink ones ... meanwhile the rest of us watch on, green with envy, as their MX-5 collection grows from four to five.

The run, put together by Alan, was sensational as usual! I'm not sure when he sees his wife because I'm sure he must spend all his spare moments sussing out EVERY road from Licola to Pakenham! Devotion ... obsession ... ? *Who cares, we love him for it!!*

Starting in Trafalgar, this run wound its way through and around Mirboo North, Boolarra, Dumbalk, Leongatha, Morwell,

Meeniyana and Thorpdale. We parked for lunch in Leongatha at the RSL and I have to say, once we found our way into the dining room, the meals were lovely. (I was so content on the way back that I swear the car was singing 'Rock A Bye Baby' as it swayed me to sleep!)

Amazingly, we had no *idgits* pulling into the middle of our convoy or stalling the leader for the first 81km so, as it should be, we owned the road. Unfortunately, on two occasions, echidnas missed the memo and charged across the road 'suicide style'. Lucky for them the MX-5s are made to 'handle' and they proved only as little 'skill tests' for our snappy drivers!

Seven of our convoy departed after the lunch stop. While this was a shame, from the social side of things, I was really impressed that they came for the first leg and look forward to seeing you all again next time – let no-one escape in future without me talking their ears off!

The final leg of the day forced the remaining six of us to share the road. We were grouped up behind a truck for about 15km. Mind you, the way he was hoofing that dinosaur through the hills, I'd like to see him out with us for a run some time!!

Looking back on the day there are a few things I would like to note:

- » OMG – we have some awesome roads in our backyard and a really good crew to drive them with;
- » Baw Baw Shire – we need to chat about some of these pot holes and the general maintenance of these fantastic roads!
- » Central Chapter – you guys are fantastic! Thanks for coming to so many of our runs and we look forward to seeing you next time;
- » Mel – *you rock*, and I'm glad to hear that you really enjoyed yourself;
- » gravel – Alan, you spoke of a possible future run that has an unavoidable 3kms of gravel – I say bring it on! If any of you would consider such a run could you please let Alan know ASAP;
- » lights – As the regular 'acrobatic' paparazzi photographer for the Eastern Victoria Chapter, I would like to suggest that lights be ON when in convoy. This not only makes the photos 'POP' but it also highlights to others that we are in a group – perhaps this might prevent some of our 'Cut-In idgits' too!

Thanks everyone for another awesome Sunday of fantastic people, tops down and wind through the hair! ■



Chapter chatter ...



Cethana run 17.3.13 | Northern Tasmania

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



It's always guaranteed to be a great run when we aim for any Targa Tasmania roads, and Bruce had set this run up just for that!

We started at Deloraine Train Park with nine sexy little MX-5s all lined up and gleaming in the sun. Time for a quick take-away espresso (or a hot chip breaky for Carl) before we headed out towards Mole Creek.

Bruce knows the area well, and took us on a great looping spin through the curvy hills around Caveside. From there we headed out on one of our favourite roads: the back way around Mt Roland on Oliver's Road, past Lake Cethana and over, up to the lookout for a comfort stop, (behind the bushes!). An ideal place for pics.

We were all holding up well with no car sickness, so off down the side of the mountain and around some sweet hairpin turns. Left at the 'T' towards Cradle Mountain instead of Sheffield, for another really windy road down to the Cethana dam bridge crossing the top of Lake Barrington. Climbing back out of the gorge takes you up another winding road, in great condition, with a couple of hairy tightening hairpins.

I took over the driving from Carl for this leg, and that gave us a chance to work on my style ("What style??" Carl would say!). I have a tendency to brake hard, down shifting into the corner and accelerate out fast, which is often jerky and heavy on the brakes.

So, remembering my defensive driving lessons along with Carl's tips (:P), I tried hard to drive smooth instead of fast, tapping the brakes just to tuck the nose in, then trusting the tyres to stick through the turn in a smooth line. Our *Mixie* has a *Flyin' Miatas* set-up with its suspension, fatter lower tyres and huge brakes ... this means I feel distinctly like I'm pushing it (since I'm still used to our previous standard NA) when in fact *Mixie* isn't even breaking a sweat!

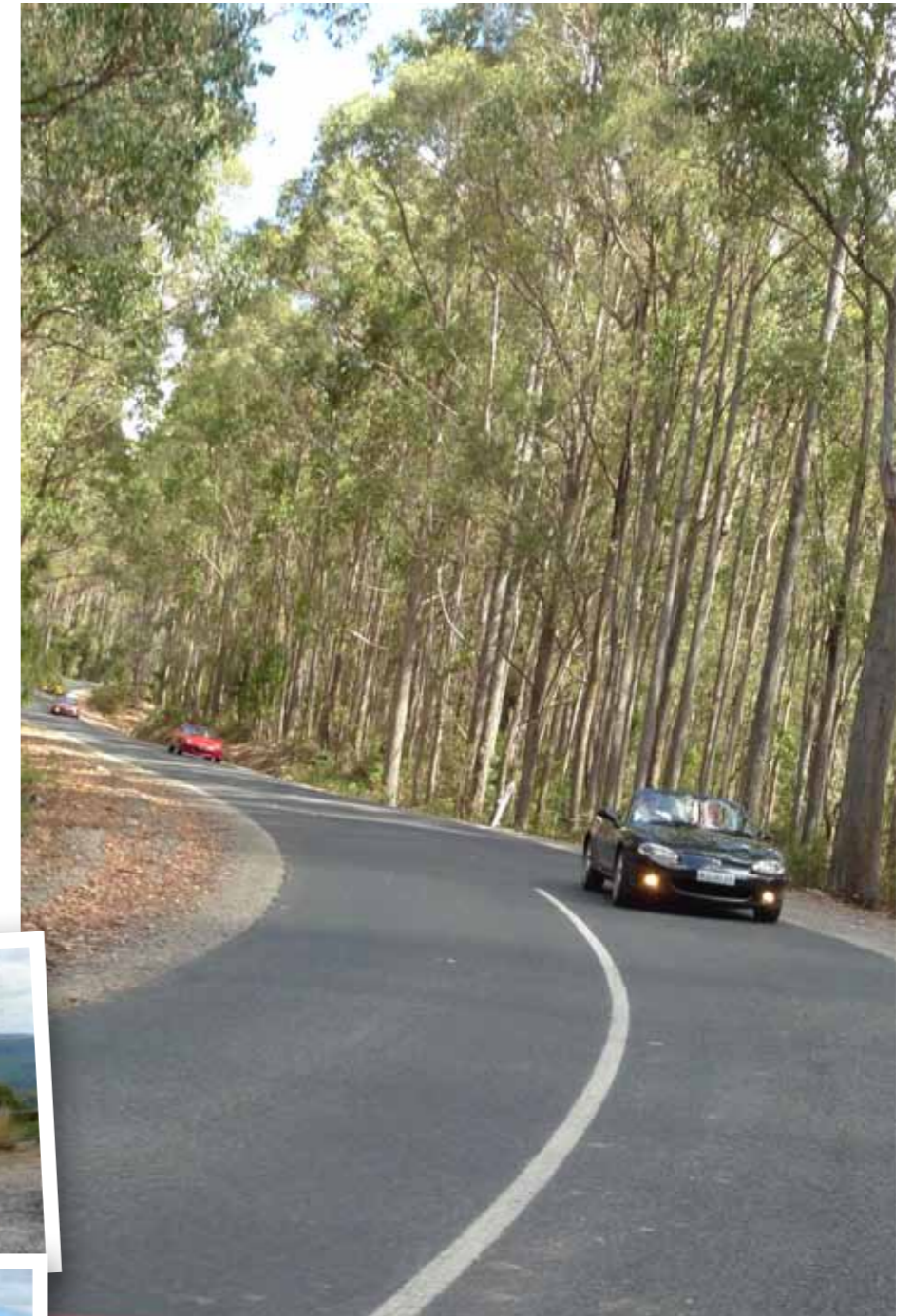
Well, I managed OK and that is something to work on! I swapped with Carl at Moina, where we turned off towards Wilmot, which is another of my favourite roads, with lots of little tight esses and great views over Lake Barrington towards Mt Roland. Mt Roland is just magic from this angle.

On up through Wilmot towards Kindred and down in to Forth, for a yummy lunch at the Bridge Hotel in Forth. A good stop to catch up on everyone's news.

Carl led us out after lunch, as he often runs *Mixie* over the local road on his (LONG!) way home from town. His favourite stretch is the short section (Targa road again) from the Paloona Dam to Lower Barrington. We actually did a circuit around to the back of Melrose and back down to the dam again, as we didn't get a clear run due to a local truck! I don't think anyone minded and it's given Carl some ideas for a run for the future 😊.

So, back around to Lower Barrington, through to Melrose by the top road and then down past our house on Buster Road (another Targa road) to end up in Latrobe via Tarleton. I took a movie of Trevor coming down Buster, so I'll have to post it on YouTube and get a link put on the website!

A good day had by all – thanks Bruce! ■



Chapter chatter ...

Postcards from the Snowy 16-17.2.13 | North-Eastern Victoria

■ **Participants:** Ellen & Gerry Engwerda, Ron & Marg Gillick, Wendy Clark & Ron Macdonald, Dave & Gail Collins, Noellene & John Gleeson, Jeff Woolf, Deb & Ron Diprose, Dawn & Alan Everett, Anita & Peter Silva, Debbie & David Hurstwaite, Brian Raine & Maree Connell, Mark Clayton ■ **Photos:** Marg Gillick, Wendy Clark, Ron Macdonald ■ **Run organiser:** Gerry Engwerda

This run is almost that of the run written up by Mark Clayton, in the Club's "20 Roads for 20 Years" book. Mark joined us for part of the run.



Sunday, 17/3

Over breakfast at The Inn, we are greeted with a picture card view to die for: the Jindabyne lake with its islands bathed in sunshine. Looks like another beautiful MX-5 day.

At 10am we head off along the Alpine Way towards Kosciuszko National Park, passing Crackenback Resort and calling in to Wild Brumby Schnapps to sample their wares.

Then it is up the gently winding roads to Dead Horse Gap, the highest point of the Alpine Way, for a group photo. Down through sweeps and bends, beautiful scenery, this is one of the best MX-5 roads you could ever experience.

Just after passing Geehi Picnic area we pass through large cuttings in the hills where everyone makes the most of the echo effect from their exhaust, especially my driver! We continue to Khancoban for lunch and plenty of chatter.

Noellene & John



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



Saturday, 16/3

We all assembled in Wodonga, raring to go for a fantastic weekend. Gerry presented us with a run folder – not just notes, a folder with info and maps. Really lifting the standard! We were warned to watch out for not just kangaroos, but emus and birds ... some run this is going to be.

Off we go – 194km before lunch with plenty to see. First stop was at the lookout where old Tallangatta used to be, now covered, when there is water, by the Hume Weir. Brian & Maree joined us here.

With the dam to our left and the rolling hills to our right, we were in Switzerland – stunning, no snow though! Through Granya, Walwa, Tiltalra, Towong, what beautiful views and the sounds and smells of the outdoors. A great start to the weekend.

Gail & David



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Sunday, 17/3

We left Khancoban at 1.15 after having a lovely lunch. Then we took a lovely scenic route towards Corryong with mountains in the distance.

We went through Tallangatta to see alpacas at Brian and Maree's property, who were on the run with us! Then we travelled to Wodonga and said goodbye to some of our fellow Mazda crew.

Our next journey was to Corowa, where we had tea with Ron and Marg and stayed the night. In the morning we headed back to Ballarat. We had a fabulous time with a lot of delightful people, among them some who had travelled down from the Canberra Chapter of the NSW Club.

Dawn & Alan



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



Saturday, 16/3

Leaving Khancoban Gerry lead us down a narrow road where he kindly organised a demonstration of how to replace a blown tyre on his NB. With Gerry's NB now limping, Ron Gillick took the lead and we headed off to the Tunit Pond Dam.

Mark Clayton led us for the last leg down into Jindabyne, the vistas across the mountains were magnificent and what a way to see them, top down and sun shining. One final stop in Adaminaby for an ice cream and it was time to head for the motel.

The day concluded with a lovely dinner at the Bacco restaurant in company with some members of the NSW Club.

Wendy & Ron



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Chapter chatter ...

The Claytons run 20.2.13 | Western Victoria

Words & photos: Lockie Story

Why the Claytons Run?

Because it was the run you have without having a run.

I received a call from Will Campbell asking for some help with the visit from the SA Club to Halls Gap over the long weekend – this being my home patch, so to speak. We agreed to meet midweek at Halls Gap for lunch to work on the details.

I mentioned this to my friend Shane, and asked him if he would like to bring his girlfriend Gai along for a day out taking my second NA, Rose. They thought this was a grand idea and so off we went. It was a beautiful day and the scenery on the trip over the mountain is always an absolute treat. Shane did not know the car well or the road for that matter and dropped back a bit as I hunted the car through the well-known twists and turns.

Nonetheless we arrived at Halls Gap together and met up with Will and Coral along with David and Gail Collins. We had a brilliant lunch ... we even discussed the SA trip (after a time)!

The ladies wandered off and did some shopping, I spent some time photographing a very obliging maggie and we all had a very relaxing time. As it came time for us to leave, we had to stop at the Ice Cream Shop for a mandatory ice cream. This is a tradition that goes back years for us.

Shane, Gai and I said our goodbyes and we headed back over the mountain. On the way back we stopped at The Balconies (Reid's Lookout) where we got a magnificent (and terrifying) look at the Victoria Valley fires. The smoke bloom was so big that we were unable to fit more than half into a photograph. We talked our way into the fire tower and took some dramatic shots.

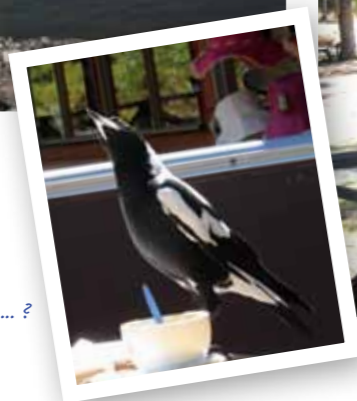
We stopped again at McKenzie Falls which were in full flow. I have no idea where the water is coming from as it has barely rained here for six months. Onward again and another stop, this time at Asses Ears, which was shrouded in dense smoke. We only found out later that the fire had crossed the range into the Wartook (our) Valley and was heading north. Once again we were able to obtain some amazing photographs.

Our last stop was at Wartook Pottery where we arranged the Saturday lunch for the Vic-SA run with Jenny at The Wander Inn. Some more photography, of wildlife this time, and a cool drink before the last leg home. We had had a ball!

Later in the evening Shane rang me to tell me that he and Gai were searching the internet for an NA. By the time you read this they will have bought one. ■



^ Where there's smoke ... the western Victorian fires look decidedly ominous



> Eddie ... ?



^ Tough work ... but somebody has to do it



Twilight run 23.2.13 | Western Victoria

Words: Karen Bradshaw Photos: Lockie Story, Karen Bradshaw Run organiser: Karen & Ian Bradshaw

Our twilight run started in Ballarat with four cars meeting in Alfredton.

Pam and Tony Stoffels, Lockie Story and daughter Emma, Lester and Lois Scott and Gwenda Parkinson ventured out in the heat to meet up with the rest of the group at Bradshaws' place at Wallinduc.

Pam and Tony led this group out to our farm. Unfortunately their navigational skills were not up to par as they went past the gateway. Luckily for them Geoff spied the four MX-5s cruise on by (one advantage of being on top of a hill), and a phone call to the lead car corrected their direction.

Bronwyn and Geoff Roche had travelled from Melbourne earlier in the day and were waiting with the Bradshaws, Dawn and Alan Everett and Neil Brownrigg. Meanwhile Ian was *umming* and *ahhing* as to whether he would go on the run due to it being hot and the possibility of thunderstorms – and they reckon *women* can't make up their minds!

We hit the road about 5pm and headed off through Berrybank and Foxhow, travelling between a dry-looking Lake Corangamite and Lake Gnarpurt.

We covered some very dry country side to Camperdown, Cobden and Timboon before arriving in Boggy Creek for a lovely picnic beside the Curdievale River. By this time it had cooled down and it was very pleasant by the river. David and Georgene Wrey from Warrnambool met us there too. We were kept entertained by a couple of young fellas jumping off one of the bridges – some will do anything for attention!

Then it was on to the Great Ocean Road through some more great MX-5 roads with lovely evening views of the sea, cliffs and the 12 Apostles to Lavers Hill. It was extremely pleasant travelling with the roofs down.

We travelled through the Otway Ranges via Gellibrand, stopping at Colac for petrol before heading to Cressy where we stopped and farewelled those travelling to Ballarat. The Everetts and Roches joined the Bradshaws at their hilltop abode for lots of reminiscing well into the night! ■



< Hey Bronwyn ... you want to sit where ...??



^ Sunset on the Great Ocean Road

Chapter chatter ...



Sauntering into Southport 23.2.13 | Southern Tasmania

■ Words: John Waldock ■ Photos: John Waldock, Rob Tanner, Rosemary Grubits ■ Run organiser: John Waldock

We decided to do the run down to Southport to share a great drive with a group of South Australian MX-5 Clubbers who were doing a tour of the state.

So, being super organised, the run leader decided to meet in a new place with a big carpark.

Oh well, best laid plans ... on arrival, I was greeted with most of the group parked across the driveway of the venue, as they had locked the gates to keep out undesirables.

Anyway, despite this hiccup (the South Tas Chapter are used to my small stuff ups by now) we headed off on time, with 18 cars in the group.

The weather was excellent and the drive south lovely. We did manage to enjoy the winding road without too many caravans or slow drivers. We lunched at Southport, enjoying the food, friendly chat and sunshine.

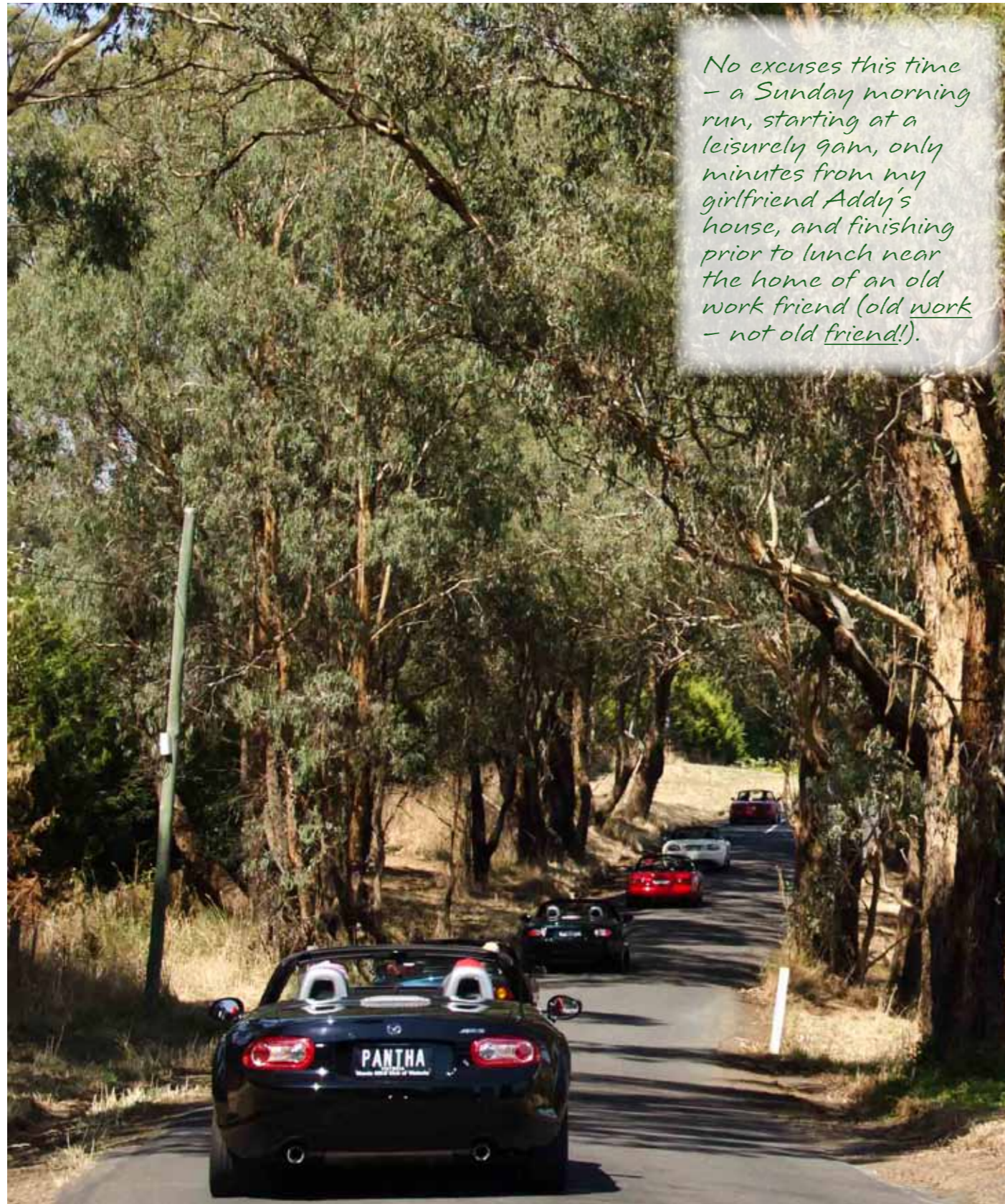
It was great to meet some new MX-5ers, and chat and compare our cars and our stories. Many thanks to Tony C for sharing the day with us; as you can see from the photos an excellent day was had by all! ■



Chapter chatter ...

Up the garden path, to Kinglake 24.2.13 | Central Chapter

Words: Colin Denman-Jones Photos: Ron Macdonald, Wendy Clark Run organisers: Ros & Rob Eastwood



No excuses this time – a Sunday morning run, starting at a leisurely 9am, only minutes from my girlfriend Addy's house, and finishing prior to lunch near the home of an old work friend (old work – not old friend!).

This was the perfect opportunity to take Addy on her first club run.

We had tried previously to join the run to last year's awards lunch; however a late start from home saw us chasing the pack all the way to the venue. Not that Adelaide was a stranger to the Club, having already attended DECA, Sandown twice and enjoyed high-speed passenger laps around the Phillip Island track.

With kids disposed of for the day, we grabbed a lazy breakfast from Macca's and then we headed next door to the rear of Sophia's restaurant. Sixteen MX-5s of all generations greeted a lovely summer morning with the traditional doffed cap salute to the sun. The pre-flight check revealed at least two new members in the field, along with the discovery that nearly everyone had a two-way radio. I had forgotten mine once again, along with my name tag. I use a checklist for motor racing days – it seems like I need one for Club runs too: name tag, hat, sunscreen and radio. Fortunately the sunscreen and hat are permanent fixtures in APTO's (Stormy Blue 2010 NC) boot.

We set off in tight formation on to the Maroondah, exiting very shortly after on to Yarra Road, passing (according to Addy) a lady walking a pair of lambs (well they might have been poodles... I had my eyes on the road). I grew up around these parts but had not been along these roads for decades, so the joy of nostalgia and perfect weather meant I was in danger of catching more bugs in my big grin than I would later have to polish off APTO's nose.

We headed north to Wonga Park, and then west and north again to pass through Warrandyte. We spotted a few other convertibles along the way, including a red Corvette which found itself for a while in the middle of the convoy. We took delightful, tight back roads to pass east of Kangaroo Ground, with Addy enjoying the glorious views while I revelled in the twists and turns. Somewhere along the way we passed post-bushfire regrowth, with bizarre trees straight from a Dr Seuss book. We found ourselves in hilly terrain, and the run notes cautioned of motorcycles

and cyclists, which were in plentiful supply. This was the point where I really missed the radios, especially when we encountered an oncoming 4WD with trailer in tow, which aggressively overtook some cyclists.

The first leg was only an hour, leading to a leisurely stop in Kinglake with coffee, cake and a mini-farmers' market on offer. Kinglake gave us the opportunity to reset the odometer, correcting the rapidly growing discrepancy compared to the run notes (with turns coming up sooner than expected). The day was warming up, but still perfect for topless cruising.

From Kinglake it was off to Whittlesea, the centre of town displaying significant greenery in defiance of the last days of such a hot summer. South, then east passed Yan Yean reservoir, we were soon back on to narrow back roads. A slight hold up behind a MAMIL (middle aged man in lycra), who didn't seem to realise the number of cars he was holding up. Fortunately he turned off, but we then found ourselves behind another rider. This one at least did pull aside and look behind, and nearly fell off in surprise.

The second leg was also an hour, finishing off at the train station in Hurstbridge. For Addy and me it was off to lunch at a lovely local café, followed by a drop in on that old friend.

Both Addy and I thoroughly enjoyed this run. We were near the front of the convoy for the whole trip, but from what I could see the group stayed together sufficiently throughout the run to prevent erroneous wanderings. This was aided by the fact that this run is relatively low speed due to the narrow, twisty roads and mixed traffic.

The run is quite short – over in time for lunch. The low speed, short duration, lovely roads and views make this a pleasurable run for all to enjoy. Hopefully we will be back next time – with Addy behind the wheel so I can get a glimpse of the lady walking the lambs. ■



Another huge, hot weekend of MX-5 motor sport

Words & photos: Daniel White, Club Captain - Motor Sport



Ray Monik

Results - Round 6	1st	2nd	3rd
Standard NA	Noel Heritage » 1:14.9817	Robert Downes » 1:15.3023	---
Standard NB	Steven Downes » 1:14.3488**	John Downes » 1:16.9394	Murray Seymour » 1:17.9275
Standard NC	Robert Hart » 1:11.9696**	Colin Denman-Jones » 1:13.1288	Alan Conrad » 1:14.6117
Clubman	Peter Phillips » 1:13.5446	Max Lloyd » 1:14.3423	Tim Emery » 1:14.8683
Modified	Dean Monik » 1:10.4185	Robert Parr » 1:10.7477	Gary Prescott » 1:11.3549
Restricted Open	Daniel White » 1:12.7820	Paul Murphy » 1:14.2244	---
Open	Mark Fitzgerald » 1:10.6835	David Bruce » 1:12.7048	Jim Bruce » 1:17.5118

** New Club motor sport team lap record

Saturday - Racecraft Training

Saturday was Racecraft Driver Training Day and we had 11 MX-5ers taking part, a combination of first-timers and others wanting to improve their skills and lap times, after having already competed in a couple of track days.

The day consisted of a rotation between group theory lectures and then change over 30-minute sessions on track.

Congratulations to these participants who took part and invested in improving their driving skills – well done!

Fabian Mastronardi	Rina Mastronardi
Matthew Gibson	Geoffrey Blick
Brian Marks	Travis McInnes
Kerry Fitzgerald	Troy Heasley
Christine Brymner	Frank Nathan
Dale Fitzgerald	

On behalf of all participants I would like to thank Sam Gumina for organising and conducting the Racecraft Theory lectures. It is a big day for Sam to drive up and back from Geelong and we appreciate him donating his time and knowledge.

Massive thanks also to the Instructors on the day: Robert Downes, Noel Heritage, Mike Kirby, Mark Fitzgerald, Tim Emery and Paul Murphy for giving their time to help others.

It was a very hot day, 35 degrees, and with 30-minute sessions I am surprised we are not all still dizzy!! Thank you to everyone who assisted.

Sunday - Sprints

It was hot!!! 35 degrees-plus air temperature and 52 degrees track temperature, it sure was a good day for Gatorade!!!

We had a total of 43 MX-5s entered for this event, thirty-eight from the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania and five from the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW. Despite the soaring temperatures most MX-5 drivers managed to get in 40 to 50 laps for the day – great value.

There was one incident for the day when an Alfa broke its left front wheel whilst going through the esses and unfortunately speared off the track head-on into the tyre wall. Thankfully the driver was fine, the car not so good and a one-hour delay to repair the tyre wall resulted.

Round 7 is at Phillip Island on 20 April, looking forward to seeing you all there. Remember – it's on a Saturday. ■

2012-13 Championship | Round 6 Winton Sprints Short Track & Racecraft Training ~ 9-10.2.13



On the grid ...



Alex Hailstone



Max Lloyd shaping up for a pass



Tim Emery



Travis McInnes

Championship standings after Rd 6 - Winton Sprints, 10 February, 2013

(corrected points)	1st	2nd	3rd
Overall Champion	= Stephen Downes / = Robert Hart » 60		Noel Heritage » 53
Standard NA	Noel Heritage » 53	Robert Downes » 46	John Stone » 24
Standard NB	Stephen Downes » 60	John Downes » 35	Murray Seymour » 30
Standard NC	Robert Hart » 60	Colin Denman-Jones » 38	Alan Conrad » 34
Clubman	Max Lloyd » 46	Peter Phillips » 40	Fabian Mastronardi » 36
Modified	Russell Garner » 44	Robert Parr » 36	Dean Monik » 29
Restricted Open	Paul Murphy » 27	Charlie Tickler » 17	David Bruce » 7
Open	Mark Fitzgerald » 27	David Wilken » 20	Brendan Beavis » 18

Werribee - how we missed you!

Words & photos: Bob de Bont

The first round of the NGK Victorian Motorkhana Championship for 2013 was the "Theo Wintels Memorial Motorkhana" held on 24 February, hosted by the Toyota Car Club of Australia at their grounds in Werribee and co-run by the Toyota Car Club of Australia and the Ford Four Car Club.

The year had really kicked off with a practice day on 2 February at Werribee which was a great day for anyone to try motorkhana. I don't think I managed a single run all day without a passenger.

For Round 1 we were presented with a very hot day with only a slight breeze to control the dust. With the heat building the main focus for the day was to try and find some shade (not that it helped) or find a car with air-con and keep hydrated.

A total of 51 competitors fronted for the drivers brief plus a further 6 "J Race" participants. Class B had nine competitors including five with MX-5s (two MX-5s were double-entered).

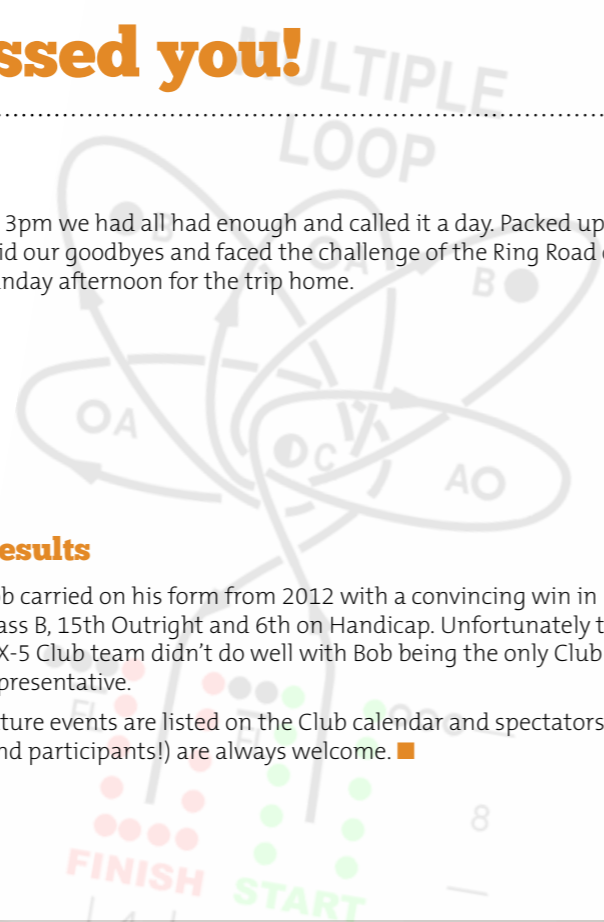
With such a large entry combined with being restricted to two test areas, the dust and the heat made for a slow day with only six of the proposed tests completed. The tests themselves proved challenging as many had not driven the tests before, this levelling the playing field for those with limited experience.

By 3pm we had all had enough and called it a day. Packed up, said our goodbyes and faced the challenge of the Ring Road on a Sunday afternoon for the trip home.

Results

Bob carried on his form from 2012 with a convincing win in Class B, 15th Outright and 6th on Handicap. Unfortunately the MX-5 Club team didn't do well with Bob being the only Club representative.

Future events are listed on the Club calendar and spectators (and participants!) are always welcome. ■



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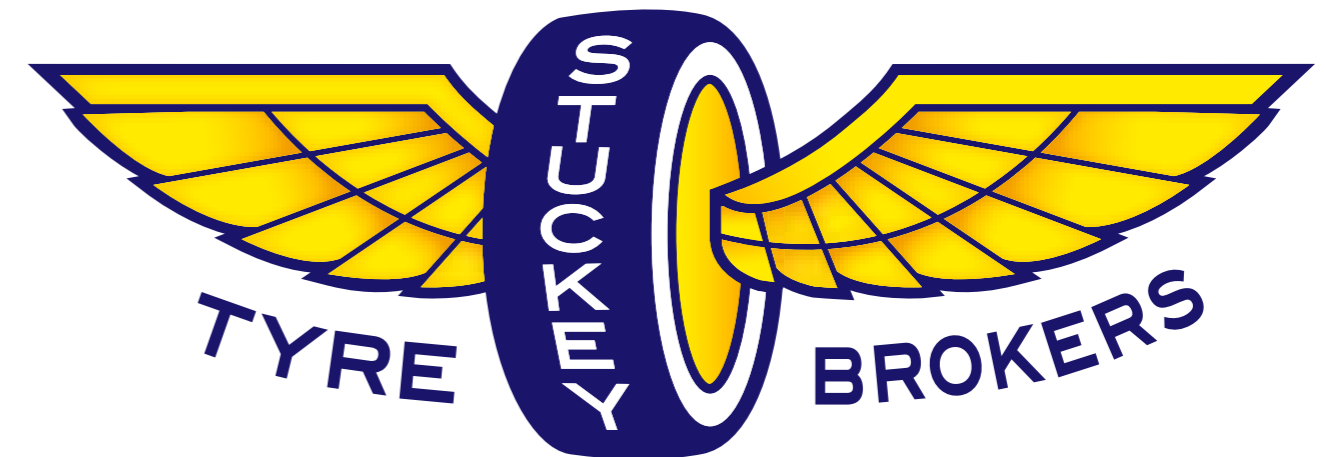


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Replacing the clutch ...

Words & photos: John Waldock

Last year my NB SE began to make quite pronounced throw bearing noises on gear changes.

Being industrious and keen to try most things once, I asked around the Chapter to see if anyone was brave, mad keen or foolish enough to help me through the process of replacing the bearing and clutch.

Several members ran for the hills, but my good friends Rob Tanner and Allan Pryer offered to do the job. Rob is quite experienced mechanically and so drove the process, with Allan and myself acting as apprentices and sounding boards.

We began by jacking up the car and putting it on car stands. It's really important to do this carefully and use the jacking points, as these points are reinforced and can take the load.



Mid-chassis brace

Once the car was up, we took off all the wheels to get easier access under the car. To access the gear box, there are a number of things that have to be removed from the car. Under the car, there are a number of chassis braces and other components which are in the way. There is a mid-chassis brace, a bar in front of the brace, a brace near the differential and a bar in front of the rear brace. These are all held with large bolts, fairly easily removed but a slow process. They will have some road muck on them no doubt, and small deposits of oil too. We removed these, cleaned with

turpentine and then washed them with water. They came up pretty well.

You will also need to remove the gear knob, then the centre console, take off the gear stick and the rubber boots. This is all fairly easy, we found both the chassis boot and gear box boot had perished and needed replacing. They are about \$40 each so expect to have to pay this when you do the job.

The exhaust needs to be removed; there are three bolts that connect it to the exhaust manifold, and they can be tricky to remove so buy some lubricant spray such as CRC or WD40. There is also a bracket with two bolts that needs to be removed.

Once these items are all clear, it's time to remove the PPF ... that's the power performance frame, though we had lots of other names for this beast, none of them printable. Firstly, you will need to unplug the speedometer wire and reversing light connection. You will see these at the back of the gearbox. You will also need to loosen the attachments for the cable that runs along the PPF. This is all fairly straight forward to do; just be careful not to break the plastic clips.

The PPF is held to the gear box by two long bolts; when these are removed the PPF is loose at the gear box end. You would be wise to support the back of the gear box with a jack to take its weight.

At the other end of the PPF is the diff. There are two large bolts here also, harder



Braces, exhaust and tail shaft removed

to remove as there are sleeves at this end of the PPF. It appears to be a pretty complicated process, and we ended up loosening the bolts, but not removing them. You may wish to mark the bolt positions as they are important for the handling of the car.

Since we didn't fully remove the PPF, we pulled it sideways and held it away with wire. Not ideal, but it did work and saved us some headaches with the rear bolts. You will need to remove the tailshaft; it's held on with four bolts, which allow it to be lowered and pulled away from the back of the gearbox.

Next we needed to remove the bolts around the bell housing and starter motor to remove the gear box. These bolts are not easy to access and we used a number of long socket extensions to get up in there. We went slowly and carefully as we didn't want any damage to the bolts. The gearbox should have a jack underneath it to take the weight of the gearbox as you release the bellhousing nuts.

As the bolts come away, the gearbox should now be loose and balanced on the jack. Be careful, as it could easily fall off (and damage itself, other components or you!) and that's not good. Lower the jack, pulling it backwards. Ensure you have the car high up on stands, so the gear box can be lowered and pulled backwards and out. Put the gear box to the side, but check the condition of the boot which surrounds the throw out arm. Mine was damaged and needed replacing (\$15).

You will need to remove the pressure plate to get at the clutch. It is held on with a number of bolts (eight if I recall correctly). Store them carefully as you will need them again. The pressure plate will come off, exposing the clutch and behind it the flywheel. The flywheel will also need to come off to be machined, which can be done by any good automotive engineering business. Mine cost \$62 to be machined, and it's best to have the flywheel machined so it has a new smooth surface for the clutch to bed into.

We replaced not only the clutch, but also the throw bearing and the pressure plate itself, as the old one was damaged when the throw bearing failed. You should also look at the rear engine seal, as this can leak oil and its easy and cheap to replace while you're there.

... or clutching at straws!



A very chewed-up pressure plate



What a mess!

Now we can install the new clutch. The flywheel needs to be bolted back on. You will need a tension wrench as these bolts need to be tensioned to factory specs. We also used a little loctite on the bolt threads so they can't come loose during the life of the clutch. Make sure you have at least one, if not two or three MX-5 workshop manuals on hand as they give really good tips on how to avoid the pitfalls. They also should have the bolt tensions numbers in them.

The flywheel goes on with six bolts. Add the bolts in pairs and tighten them in pairs too.

The next stage is to use the clutch alignment tool to slide the clutch and pressure plate into place. We found a really useful clutch tool from the UK which holds the clutch and pressure plate together as you slide them into place. As these are centred, they need to be aligned carefully or excessive vibration can occur. Bolt the pressure plate back

into place. Reattach the bolts, again using a tension wrench.

The next step is to put the gear box back in. You will need to clean the clutch fork arm and put it back in place with the rubber boot. Do this before you put the gearbox back in; you will need some room to do it. Slide the throw bearing onto the spindle, we put some general grease on the spindle to make sure the bearing slides along nicely. Now slide on the new boot.

The gear box goes back on in the reverse way you took it off, be careful using the jack as its a heavy thing. It took a little jiggling to locate the



Throw bearing

spindle on to the clutch, but it went in with a little work. Note: there is a bracket on the driver's side associated with the starter motor, and this needs to be in place, or you will have to re do the bolts and that's a hassle (just ask Rob T).

Once the gear box is in place, the other components go back on in reverse order. We cleaned all the underneath and bracing so that they went back on nicely. We noted that the universal joints on the

tailshaft were a little stiff and had a small groove, but after some consulting online this appears to be normal.

As for the brand of clutch fitted, I purchased an Exedy "stage one" racing clutch, as I wanted to make sure that I had a heavy enough clutch as the SE is of course a turbo. Post-fitting, I have found the clutch to be nice and firm, but certainly not heavy. Exedy also make a heavy-duty clutch which would have served the purpose just as well. I have had the SE back on the road for two days, and there is a little bedding-in vibration on downshifts, but overall the clutch

seems to be working very well so far.

Some final thoughts: You will definitely need to have a large assortment of tools. We used a lot of socket extensions to get to some of the bolts. You will also need a torsion wrench, mallet and hammer and definitely a clutch alignment tool.

A note of caution: I did let my throw bearing get pretty much chewed up before I replaced it and I definitely don't recommend that you drive your car to the point that the bearing fails. The failed bearing parts made a mess inside the clutch and bellhousing as the photos illustrate only too well. ■



New clutch and bellhousing, with clutch alignment tool

Stretching it?

Words: Will Campbell PhD

Driving in convoy: the "elastic band effect"

We first published this article back in 2009, but it's worth revisiting to explain to newer members why those at the rear of a convoy sometimes feel that those at the front "must be" speeding ...

There are many facets to our great Club, but social drives continue to be popular with a majority of members.

I still thrill at the prospect of being one of a group of MX-5s driving snake-like through our State's many scenic regions and love seeing our little cars stretching out into the distance, both in front and behind me.

However, driving with a group of vehicles can be daunting, particularly for new-comers, as they try to keep up with the leader. Over the 14 years I have been in the Club, I have participated in well over 100 such events and have often heard the comment that *because a car toward the back of the pack has had to exceed the speed limit to keep up, then the lead car must also be breaking the law.*

It would be naive to suggest that this doesn't occasionally happen but, in the main, group leaders adhere to the Club's strict set of convoy rules.

So, what is going on ... and why is there this perception that, because you need to speed to catch up, then the leader is driving too fast ... ?

It's a question that a number of us have pondered and for, obvious reasons, the situation has been dubbed the "elastic band" effect.



The "herd" instinct is very strong, so the tendency is for trailing drivers to catch up and rejoin the group ...

Let's consider a common scenario of a group of cars travelling through the open country side at 100km/h.

If we allow the required two- to three-second gap suggested in the convoy rules, then a group of 20 cars will stretch out approximately 1.25 kilometres. If the group is as large as 30, then the convoy will cover around two kilometres.

Of course, in any group, not all cars maintain a constant 100km/h and this often allows slower traffic to enter the convoy.

When this happens, the result is that whilst the front group continues at 100km/h, those behind the slower vehicle can be travelling at a considerably reduced rate.

However, let's simplify the situation so that our convoy consists of only two vehicles, with both initially travelling at 100km/h (see scenario tables, below).

If the second car is forced to reduce its speed to 80km/h for three minutes, then the distance between the cars grows to approximately one kilometre.

If the lead car continues at 100km/h, then for the second car to catch up, again say in three minutes, it would need to travel at an average speed of slightly more than 120km/h.

Of course, if the second car decides to accelerate only to 100km/h, then it would not catch up until the first vehicle either slowed down or stopped.

The "herd" instinct is very strong, even amongst MX-5 drivers, so the tendency is for the driver of the second car to catch up and rejoin the group.

These figures have been simplified and rounded, and some assumptions made. However, the fact remains that, in order to catch up even short time delays, speeds above the posted limit would be required.

It isn't practical for safety reasons for the lead car to constantly vary its speed so that everyone stays in convoy and retains the two- to three-second gap. However, reasonably regular stops in appropriate areas do overcome the problem.

For those new to convoy driving, it is important that you drive to the conditions and at a speed you find comfortable. If you do get behind, be patient and wait till the convoy regroups.

The Club has an enviable safety record, and it's one that we want to maintain.

Our regular runs are meant to be fun and you should finish the day relaxed! ■

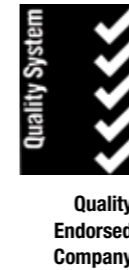
Lead car speed (km/h)	Trailing car speed during delay (km/h)	Delay (minute/s)	km apart	Distance lead car has travelled in next 3 minutes (km)	Distance trailing car has to travel in next 3 minutes (km)	Average speed required for trailing car to catch up (km/h)
Scenario 1:						
100	80	1	0.3	5.0	5.3	106
		2	0.7	5.0	5.7	114
		3	1.0	5.0	6.0	120
		4	1.3	5.0	6.3	126
		5	1.7	5.0	6.7	134
Scenario 2:						
100	90	1	0.2	5.0	5.2	104
		2	0.3	5.0	5.3	106
		3	0.5	5.0	5.5	110
		4	0.7	5.0	5.7	114
		5	0.8	5.0	5.8	116

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11:30am - 12:30pm	Book in now and have the car before lunch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1pm - 2pm	Beat the traffic rush, this could be your spot	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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