

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

## ***Ken Beaton: this is your life!***

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## Your Committee: 2014-2015

### President

> Don Nicoll | (03) 9437 2787 (ah)  
 e: [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

### Vice President / Communications

> Murray Finlay | 0416 247 677  
 e: [editor@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:editor@mx5vic.org.au)

### Secretary / Public Officer

> Peter Dannock | 0408 522 093 (ah)  
 e: [secretary@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:secretary@mx5vic.org.au)

### Treasurer

> Dave Collins | (03) 9755 2167 (ah)  
 e: [treasurer@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@mx5vic.org.au)

### Club Captain – Motor Sport

> Tim Emery | 0424 091 167 (ah)  
 e: [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

### Assistant Club Captain – Motor Sport

> Randy Stagno Navarra | 0409 210 872  
 e: [captain2@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain2@mx5vic.org.au)

### Club Captain – Social

> Cary Warren | 0418 368 246 (ah)  
 e: [social@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social@mx5vic.org.au)

### Assistant Club Captain – Social

> Alex Hailstone | 0414 155 383  
 e: [social2@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:social2@mx5vic.org.au)

### Social Media

> Ben Sale | 0434 906 673 (ah)  
 e: [facebook@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:facebook@mx5vic.org.au)

### Membership

> Will Campbell | (03) 5261 4816 (ah)  
 e: [membership@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:membership@mx5vic.org.au)

### Merchandise

> Bruce Gray | 0478 219 856 (ah)  
 e: [merchandise@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:merchandise@mx5vic.org.au)

### Points

> Coral Campbell | (03) 5261 4816 (ah)  
 e: [points@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:points@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Central

> Geoff Roche | 0409 039 867 (ah)  
 e: [central@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:central@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Eastern Victoria

> Alan Laine | (03) 5195 5375 (ah)  
 e: [eastern@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:eastern@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - North-Eastern Victoria

> Ron Gillick | (02) 6033 0253 (ah)  
 e: [north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Western Victoria

> Ian Bradshaw | 0407 556 135  
 e: [western@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:western@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Northern Tasmania

> Bruce Harvey | 0438 562 224 (ah)  
 e: [northtas@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:northtas@mx5vic.org.au)

### Chapter Captain - Southern Tasmania

> John Waldock | 0409 658 716 (ah)  
 e: [southtas@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:southtas@mx5vic.org.au)

**12/2014**

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**Cover image:**

Northern Tassie legend Ken Beaton is all smiles after receiving his Life Membership award on 16 November. *Photo: Kelly Berggren.*



Find us at:  
**MX-5 Club of Victoria**

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- e-mail: [editor@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:editor@mx5vic.org.au)
- post: **mxtra**, Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania, PO Box 7438, Beaumaris VIC 3193

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# Don's Drive(l) ...

■ Don Nicoll – President [president@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:president@mx5vic.org.au)

Welcome to our last edition for the year.  
It has been quite a month.

As you will read, **Life Membership was awarded to Ken Beaton** for his outstanding service to the Northern Tasmanian Chapter. Richly deserved as it is, you can only marvel at the efforts made by Ken to get the Chapter up and running. The Chapter and the Club are all beneficiaries of Ken's enthusiasm, energy and determination.

**In November we also celebrated 25 years of the car at Sandown.** What started as low-key event to recognise the birthday of the car (the Committee having decided that *the big event* should be the birthday of the Club), we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of great enthusiasm to meet at Sandown, show off the cars and watch the motor sport guys doing their stuff on the track. I think all those who participated went home with a smile.

**So, not being one to look back, what have we got in store for 2015?** Well we start with the Vic /SA biennial get-together, this year in Robe on SA's Limestone Coast. Already we have 75 people from the two States expressing a desire to participate. If you haven't claimed a spot, you better hurry as I think Robe may be running out of accommodation.

**2015 is the 25th birthday of the Club.** There are actually two dates to recognise. The first is on 6 May when Mazda invited all MX-5 owners from Victoria to a gathering at the Cheese Factory in Berwick – then the largest gathering of MX-5s in the southern hemisphere. The second is on 10 August when the Club was formerly convened. We are still in discussions with Mazda but we hope to celebrate both dates, the first with Mazda and the second as a special Club event possibly along the lines of the 20th birthday party we held at the Lexus Centre in 2010. *Stay tuned.*

**February 2015 will be 12 months from the next NatMeet**, which our Club is hosting. We are well on the way to being able to announce formally the outline of the event to be held near Launceston in Tasmania. Dave Collins and Bruce Gray together with Bruce Harvey have been very busy getting the early planning in place, accommodation reserved and motor sport events planned. It should be a fabulous NatMeet, very much based on the fantastic MX-5 roads available in Tasmania.

**2015 also marks the next step** in the slow change of the motor sport competition to a calendar year, so that we can tie in with the other Clubs with whom we share events, particularly AROCA.

**We also hope to bring** all the Club membership and event payments in-house in 2015. Northern Tasmanian members, Kelly Berggren and her husband Carl, have been working away on a software package which we hope to start using soon. It will allow us to create a Clubroom on the website which we have been talking about for nearly two years, however I'm reliably informed we are getting close.

**Finally, 2015 will be the year of the ND launch.** We know a lot already about the car thanks to Ben Sale's reports. It will not be long before we should be seeing the car in the flesh. The Club hopes to be very much a part of the events planned by Mazda, more of which we can communicate as and when Mazda are ready.

**That just leaves me to wish** you a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year. Take care on the roads over the holidays and keep an eye out for all those who think they know how to drive – *but don't.*

Must go – the driver's seat is getting cold!

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

Don

*For your diary ...*

**See the full calendar for details**

## December

- 13 NE Vic: Christmas run
- 13 Sprints 2014-15 Rd 6: Broadford
- 14 Central: Annual CFA run
- 14 Eastern: Social night
- 14 Western: Christmas run
- 20 STas: Christmas run

## January

- 11 Central: Grantville run
- 25 Western: Australia Day run
- 31 Sprints 2014-15 Rd 7: Phillip Island

## February

- 14 Central: Two Spurs run (joint)
- 14 Western: Two Spurs run (joint)
- 14 Sprints 2014-15 Rd 8: Sandown

## March

- 6-9 South Australia/Vic-Tas biennial weekend, Robe SA
- 21 Central: Midnight MX-press GOR run
- 29 Sprints 2014-15 Rds 9/10: Winton – Double Header!

## April

- 4 Central: Bendigo run
- 17-20 Central: 4-day high country run



# Scene about ...

■ Photos: Rob Tanner, Karen Bradshaw





# Membership

Current  
membership count:

524

and growing!

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

G'day!

This month, I would like to welcome the following new members and wish them all the best for a long and happy association with the Club. They are:

## Central Chapter

Andrew Alexander	1989 Classic Red NA
Peter Arnold	2005 Sunlight Silver NB
Craig Bryant	2006 Copper Red NC
Julian Casson	1989 Classic Red NA
Kenneth Galbraith	1993 White NA
Nur Abdul Kadir	2006 Blue NC
Peter Mustow	1989 Classic Red NA
Joseph Roccuzzo	1989 Classic Red NA
Arthur Rosa	1992 Classic Red NA
Costa Tzalis	1989 Orange NA

## Eastern Victoria Chapter

David Evans	2009 Sunburst Yellow NC
Paul and Maree Sertori	2005 Classic Red NB

## Southern Tasmania Chapter

Dennis and Ann Rau	2005 Copper Red NC
--------------------	--------------------

To all I have met, and to all those I am still to meet, have a safe and happy festive season.

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

*Will*

## Trading Post



### For Sale 1989 Classic Red Eunos Roadster

For details of this and other items to buy, swap, sell and borrow, see the "Trading Post" section in the "Clubroom" section of the Club's website, [mx5vic.org.au](http://mx5vic.org.au)

## Burson automotive products at trade prices



Current financial Club members can purchase automotive parts, tools, accessories and car care products at trade prices from **Burson Auto Parts** stores.

Simply ask for your discount when you purchase, present your current membership card and quote account number **112558**.

Burson Auto Parts have more than 100 outlets on the east coast. Check out the range at [www.burson.com.au](http://www.burson.com.au)

## Repco VIP Club retail discount



Financial MX-5 Club members may join the **Repco VIP Club** for 10% off full retail at any time, and up to another 30% off full retail with advertised offers.

Enter your details at <http://vip.repco.com.au/registration/register/1160>.

You'll receive a temporary "VIP" card via e-mail, with a plastic barcoded card and key tag following within 14 days.

Repco will e-mail you online catalogues and offers.

## AutObarn Eltham 9/256 Bolton St, Eltham



... are proud to offer all Club members a big discount (up to 15%) off their full range of merchandise.

For info or orders, please contact Peter Rutherford\* at [autobarn-enquiries@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:autobarn-enquiries@mx5vic.org.au) or phone 0414 630 024 or 9439 1466.

*This offer is exclusive to AutObarn Eltham.*

Please identify yourself as a Club member to obtain your discount.

**\*Note:** only Peter Rutherford or Hayden Dally are authorised to offer Club discounts in-store.



## Car care products - member discounts

**Waxit Car Care** in Tullamarine is offering Club members 12.5% off all products (**excluding** already-discounted kits and the following brands/products: Polishangel, Vikan, Flex and Concours 900 Polisher).

Check out the Waxit range and order online at [www.waxit.com.au](http://www.waxit.com.au). Our Club coupon code is **mx5club**. Please add your Club membership number to the "comments" section of your order.



# Loz Thomas

## The MX-5 Club Grill

### Assistant Chapter Captain ~ North-Eastern Victoria

**Name?** Lorelei (Loz) Thomas

**Age?** By publication I'll be 50! 😊

**Born?** Brisbane

**Current abode?** Bright, Victoria

**Profession?** Registered Nurse

**Partner?** Shane Thomas

**Pets?** We had Goldie, a gorgeous Labrador, for 17 years and some free range guinea pigs, but since moving to Bright in 2012 we haven't got around to getting another dog as we are always going back to Rockhampton to see our kids

**Fave food?** Too hard to choose just one favourite but if I have to I'd say crispy skinned pork belly

**Can you cook?** My friends think I should go on Masterchef! 😊

**Favourite tippie?** Sav Blanc

**First drive?** Nissan Bluebird

**First car?** Suzuki Hatch called Chookie

**First fender bender?** Running up the back of a trailer which I didn't see stopping to turn because I was too busy looking in my rear view mirror to see if the police car behind me had its flashing lights on telling me to pull over because I wasn't wearing my seat belt!

**Everyday driver?** Holden Barina RS turbocharged sports

**How many MX-5s have you owned?** Just the one ...

**Current MX-5?** 2007 True Red NC

**MX-5 improvements?** Chrome covers on the roll bar – otherwise perfect just the way they roll off the production line

**MX-5 dislikes?** What's there to dislike? ... it's perfect!

**Why an MX-5?** We always said that when we moved to Bright we would get a sports car as we have the best roads on our back door step. I always loved the MX-5 so there was never any other option

**Fluffy dice?** Definitely no!

**Passions besides the MX-5?** Family and friends, a tennis tragic (I love Roger Federer) and motor bikes. I have a Cagiva 650cc

**Favourite TV show / movie / book?** Masterchef and My Kitchen Rules

**Dream wheels (money no object)?** Aston Martin V12 Vanquish

**Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong?** Well, not directly, but I believe the Holden Captiva and Barina are rebadged Daewoos marketed under General Motors Holden ...

**Favourite other Mazda?** We used to have a Mazda Tribute but I like the new MX-5

**If not a Mazda (gasp!), then what?** BMW Z4

**How long in the Club?** Only 15 months

**How many MX-5 Club runs or track events?** Only missed a couple since joining and that's usually because we are traveling back to Queensland to see family

**Favourite Club run/track?** Summit to Sea – overnight run to Paynesville

**Have you been to DECA or NatMeet?** No

**Ford vs Holden?** Holden

**What's playing in your MX-5?** Angus & Julia Stone

**Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)?** Don't follow football!

**Final comments?** I love being part of the MX-5 Club. I have met great people and look forward to the monthly get-togethers. I am looking forward to taking a more active role within the North East Chapter in the future. ●



# My favourite MX-5 road ...

■ Words: John Waldock, Southern Tasmania Chapter

*A particularly good road in Southern Tasmania is the road to Police Point.*

It can be located by driving south from Hobart to Huonville and on towards Dover.

It runs back northwards along the Channel, providing lovely views of Bruny Island. But its greatest attraction is how it undulates and winds its way along the coast.

It's an old fashioned road – there are no bridges or major cuttings and so the road is forced to follow the terrain, providing an exciting and challenging experience for the driver.

Among its advantages are that it is a fairly isolated country road. It is seldom used by caravaners and has a realistic speed limit, so it can provide an exciting experience.

**This side trip is a must if going south of Hobart. ●**



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!

25th anniversary

## 2015 Club calendar : it's here!

Next year we celebrate our 25th anniversary – and you can mark every day of the year with our fantastic Club 2015 wall calendar.

For those who receive **mxtra** in the mail, your copy was included with this December edition. For those who receive the magazine online, it will arrive separately soon (one per household for all financial Full and Family members).

We're sure you'll agree it's a very fitting tribute to the first 25 years of the much-loved Mazda MX-5, and to the first 25 years of our Club (we turn 25 in August next year).

All the cars shown in the calendar belong to our Club's own MX-5 enthusiasts. We received more than 200 photos from 25 amateur snappers from across all six Chapters.

The final choice wasn't easy. A sub-committee (including a graphic designer) undertook the first selection and then President Don helped narrow the selection to the final 13. Then the Committee voted on the pic to be awarded the limited edition print (#46/100) of the 1993 "Classic" NA (below right) by motoring artist Fred Briggs and signed by Toshihiko Hirai, Program Manager for the first MX-5 development.

That coveted prize went to Alan Bennett, and was presented at the Sandown celebration day on 23 November.

**Sincere thanks to everyone who submitted their favourite MX-5 shots – you all helped produce a magnificent calendar! ●**



**JANUARY**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31







# Track Torque

■ Tim Emery – Club Captain - Motor Sport [captain@mx5vic.org.au](mailto:captain@mx5vic.org.au)

## Sandown '25 Years of MX-5 Motor Sport'

Well, it started out as an idea to get a few of our social members along to our Sandown round of the *City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship* to have some parade laps to celebrate 25 years of our great cars competing on race tracks ...

*It turned out to be a gathering of almost 100 MX-5s from the Club!*

Regular rounds of our Sprint Championship often see 25-30 MX-5s from our Motor Sport Team at our events but to see 80-90 cars lined up ready to take to the track for the parade laps was a wonderful sight.

Another great aspect of the day was the chance for members from 'Social' and 'Motor Sport' to socialise at the one event. Check out the reports and some great photos from the day on pages 12 and 28.

Thanks to all involved for making the event run smoothly and fun for everyone, special thanks to Cary and Geoff for their work on the 'Social' side of activities, and a big thanks to City Mazda for the supply of the MX-5 Safety Car.

## 2015 MX-5 Sprint Championship

As most of you will know, a year ago we made the decision to bring the calendar for the *City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship* in line with a traditional calendar year format.

This was decided both to help our competitors to commit to the season dates for the year, and to make it easier to set dates with event organisers (such as AROCA and the WRX Club).

After 18 months we are now in a position to finalise the transition and have now set dates for both the remaining rounds of the 2014-2015 season and the new 2015 calendar year season.

To enable us to secure the number of events for the 2015 season we will again be joining the WRX Club for a few rounds and again include Calder Park in the Championship. Another exciting inclusion for 2015 is that the annual NSW/Vic-Tas *Interstate Challenge* for 2015 will be held at Sydney Motorsport Park (Eastern Creek) for the first time. I for one have already circled the date in the family calendar!



### 2014-2015 Championship dates

Rd 7	31 Jan (Sat)	Phillip Island (WRX Club)
Rd 8	14 Feb (Sat)	Sandown (AROCA)
Rd 9-10	29 Mar	Winton (AROCA) 'Double Header'

### 2015 Championship dates

Rd 1	12 Apr	Calder Park (WRX Club)
Rd 2	9 May (Sat)	Sandown (AROCA)
Rd 3	14 Jun	Broadford (AROCA)
Rd 4	4 Jul (Sat)	Phillip Island (AROCA)
Rd 5	2 Aug	Winton (AROCA)
Rd 6	29 Aug (Sat)	Sydney Motorsport Park (inc. Interstate Challenge)
Rd 7	6 Sep	Sandown (AROCA)
Rd 8	10 Oct (Sat)	Calder (WRX Club)
6 Hour	18-19 Oct	Winton (AROCA)
Rd 9	1 Nov	Broadford (AROCA)

*MX-5 Sprint Championship Awards – December (TBA)*

## Winton 300 – BMW vs MX-5

Regular readers of my report may remember me mentioning last month that I was offered a drive in the *Winton 300* in a BMW E30. I am happy to report that, despite never having driven the car before, I helped to qualify 16th. Then, after two hours (100 laps = 300km) of *real* racing, pit stops and driver changes, to finish 9th outright and 4th in our class was an amazing experience.

The *Winton 300* is a fantastic event, but I must admit I did feel a little regret that I was in a BMW after seeing how many MX-5s were in the event!

So, if anyone needs a co-driver for an MX-5 in the *Winton 300* in 2015, call me! My report on the event is on page 30.

*Tim*

*"The older I get, the better I was!"*



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# Club plates for beginners ...

■ Words: Peter Ferguson, Eastern Victoria Chapter

*The first MX-5s are now 25 years old.*

In Victoria, this allows an owner to get “club plates”, a permit system that allows limited use on the road, at a much cheaper registration rate.

The club plates allow the use of the vehicle for 45 days a year or, if extended, up to 90 days a year. The owner must fill out a logbook for each use and the process of getting the plates has to be overviewed/authorised by the MX-5 club.

My NA is build number 51 for Australia and turned 25 in September.

So I decided that, rather than renew its road registration, I would cancel the reg and put it on club plates. (I also have a 2010 NC2 so the use of the NA is very limited anyhow.)

The process is relatively simple (or should have been!):

1. Check the vin plate to confirm the build date, to make sure it's 25 years old
2. Get a roadworthy certificate (RWC)
3. Download the application for club plates from the “Club Permit Scheme” section of the Vicroads website ([www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/registration/limited-use-permits](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/registration/limited-use-permits))
4. Download the Club application and instructions from the Club's website ([mx5vic.org.au/membership/club-permit-scheme](http://mx5vic.org.au/membership/club-permit-scheme))
5. Fill out the application, take photos of the car and the VIN plate and send both it and the RWC to the MX-5 Club Secretary for endorsement – this will then be returned to you to take to Vicroads
6. Take the paperwork to a Vicroads office, or send it in to Vicroads for processing and issuing of new club plates (I also took the car to their office, but they did not require this and did not bother to view the car)
7. Fit the new plates, and return the old plates to Vicroads
8. Let your insurance company know of the changed registration and, if you're comprehensively insured, you could be due for a refund due to the (now) very limited use of the car



**My NA was the first car in the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania to go through the process so ... was it this straightforward for me?**

The simple answer is no. Although the Club had done all it had been told to do, the Vicroads “system” had not caught up.

When I first presented at Vicroads, I was told that there was no authorised signatory for the Club on their database and that the club name was incorrect.

I contacted the Club Secretary, Peter Dannock, and filled out an amended form. Peter contacted Vicroads and believed all was well, so I re-presented at Vicroads only to be told that there was still no authorised signatory. Aaaagh!

The issue now was that my roadworthy, good for 28 days, had by this time run out. I went to see the RWC station to see what



could be done, given the car had an extra 100km only since the last one but they pointed out a new RWC must be carried out – another \$180!

Peter contacted me to say that Vicroads had now assured him their system had been updated so I re-presented the third time and had no issues whatsoever. New club plates issued, old plates handed in and a rego sticker affixed to the car – all in about 10 minutes.

**Note that rego stickers** are no longer required in Victoria, but they ARE required for club plates as they are a form of permit rather than registration.

As we can now be confident that the authorised signatory is now properly in place, any further applicants should go smoothly – in theory.

I look forward to seeing other NAs with club plates on very soon!

PS: I had changed the timing belt some months back and did not have a crankshaft seal at the time so took a chance and did not replace it – my bad! Guess where the engine started leaking oil? The RWC picked up this oil leak and I gave the bottom of the engine a thorough clean up with degreaser and a water blaster. But it was still obvious there was an oil leak.

I did not fancy pulling the front of the engine apart again, especially as I have another engine I plan on putting in sometime soon. So I tried one of these engine stop leak compounds – I have to say I was worried what other damage it might cause.

**So far, no further damage and the front seal has stopped leaking – result! It breezed through the RWC with a couple of globes replaced. ●**



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\*RRP

\*John Benson – Davies, Craig:  
(03) 9369 1234, ext 204



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# Celebrating 25 years of MX-5s in motor sport

*It'd been 25 years in the making, but the wait was well worth it.*

Sixty-eight MX-5s turned out at Sandown Raceway on Sunday, 23 November, for the show'n'shine to help support the Club's motor sport crew and to celebrate 25 years of MX-5s in motor sport. And that didn't include the 30-odd MX-5s that were doing battle on the track itself.

There was plenty of oo-ing and ahh-ing and looking under bonnets, as cars of each generation and almost every variation and colour came to strut their stuff and, under brilliant blue skies, they were magnificent!

Judging the show'n'shine and separating the cars was a challenge, but we were judging "best presented", not originality, and there were some clear standouts among many beautiful examples. Winners on the day were:

- » NA: Barry Hollands, 1991 Classic Red NA
- » NB: Kevin Parry, 2004 Classic Red NB
- » NC: Ron Rodgers, 2011 White Pearl Mica
- » Motor Sport car: Christine Boak, "Elements" NB SE
- » President's Choice: Ray Monik, Black NB track car – #199

The only things to rival the beauty pageant were the three parade laps on the Sandown track during the lunch break, and the yummy BBQ lunch.

Thanks everyone for making it a great Club event. ●



# Chapter chatter ...

26.10.14 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words: John Poletti ■ Photos: Morgan Fisher ■ Organisers: Jenna Perks & Peter Ferguson

*Cam belt done, check. Water pump done, check. Idle adjust done, no, I just can't get it right! It'll just have to do, because old mate Morgan Fisher (Classic Red 1990 NA) and I are about to embark on our first Club day run!*

We come from the “deep south” (well I do anyway), so we decided to meet up at Meeniyar and take off early to get to Trafalgar (Traf), the starting point. This meant our run started an hour before everybody else's.

The run out of Meeniyar to Dumbalk is quite flat and straight but that soon changes when we hang a lefty just past Dumbalk and start the serpentine climb of Loves Lane, a road we would all experience later in the day. It's right now the smile begins as a quick glance in the rear view mirror reveals a red NA nipping at the white NA's heels! As the altitude climbed, the temperature dropped. Off went the cap, on went the beanie!

We drive through Mirboo North and on to the Thorpdale road. Another piece of magic black top – fifth gear, fast-losing connected sweepers lined with overhanging trees.

It's not long and we're passing through the “Spud” capital of Gippsland and heading for Traf. At this point the weather closes in a little and there is a slight shower. Unfortunately the fantastic views of the hills are obscured by mist. Thankfully it doesn't last long.

Upon arrival at the official run start point a little (a lot!) early, Morgan and I figure we overestimated our travel time (or we drove a little bit fast?). We then noticed one other MX-5 parked up, so now there were three!

Within half an hour there were eight, so that would be the number of participants for the day. Three NAs, two NBs, and three NCs

It was great to finally meet some other “5r” enthusiasts and plug into the wealth of knowledge about these cracking little roadsters.

A quick cuppa and muffin from the corner bakery and we're off! For a first timer it was a new experience to be in a convoy of 5rs rolling down the road.

Heading out of Traf toward Melbourne, we turn on to Sunny Creek Road. Narrow, winding and undulating, typical 5r territory. About half a km in I realise that these runs can be quite brisk!

I had read in the Club welcome pack that UHF radios are used for contact and safety, so I had dug my old hand-held ones out and added them to the “run kit”, which was a handy thing being harvest time in the area. What you don't need is a nasty surprise around a blind turn – ie, big tractor! It's reassuring to hear Jenna's voice crackling over the air in the lead car, giving us fair warning of any dangers ahead.

Just as we make the town speed restrictions into Boolara, we turn left and head towards the famous Grand Ridge Road, then on to the Limonite Rd. Lots of fun, fourth, third, and sometimes second-gear twists and turns ... eventually making it back to Mirboo North for a

comfort stop and a photo session.

After our regroup, we head back towards Dumbalk again, down Loves Lane for a second time (for Morgan and me anyway), and wouldn't you know it, the GoPro battery dies! Oh well, at least I captured some good stuff on great roads that I hadn't been on before earlier in the day.

From Dumbalk we wind our way up over the rolling hills of South Gippsland to Leongatha, where we park at the RSL for lunch.

With our bellies full and a great time of 5r fellowship, it's the end of the run for Morgan and I. We had driven full circle, having driven an hour to get to the starting point, then back to Leongatha, the halfway point for very body else. So we thought we would break away and head home. For me another half hour south, but not before a quick group photo by our new Chapter pro photographer ... that's right, Morgan just happens to do that for a living!

I trust the rest of the crew had a blast snaking along South Gippsland's wonderful secondary roads heading back to Traf. For me, my first run with the Club was all I imagined it would be. And the little white NA performed admirably. Can't wait to do it all again.

**Thanks everyone who participated and to Peter and Jenna for a well-organised run. ●**







# Leongatha run



^ Enough standing around ... let's go!





# *Life membership for* **Ken Beaton**





After playing a vital role in the Club's development for the last 15 years, it was a great pleasure to recognise Ken Beaton's selfless efforts with Life Membership on 16 November.

Life member Will Campbell, assisted by Coral (also a life member) and Northern Tasmania Chapter Captain Bruce Harvey, did the honours ...

*“Every so often it is the privilege of the President and the Committee to pay a tribute to someone who has made a special, lasting and memorable contribution to the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.*

*Today is one of those occasions ...*

◀ *Ken Beaton (centre) has a well-deserved moment in the sun, flanked by his wife, Ruth (left), Bruce Harvey and Will and Coral Campbell*



Photos: Kelly Berggren

*Ken Beaton joined the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria 15 years ago, and by any measure has been a larger-than-life character in its history.*

Ken bought his first MX-5 in 1998 after selling his MG Midget and his wife's, Ruth, Toyota Twin Cam. He joined the Club early in 1999 but his first real involvement occurred when he (with his brother, Don) travelled to Queensland to attend his first NatMeet.

In those early days, the Tasmanian membership was extremely small but Ken did not let that deter him. Whilst others came and went, finding the tyranny of distance from the centre of Club activity in Melbourne too much to maintain their involvement or interest, Ken persevered.

In need of someone to “play with”, Ken started gathering people around the northern coast of Tasmania, from Wynyard to Deloraine – even following some home after spotting them out and about – to form an unofficial northern Tasmanian MX-5 group. These “members” met in different homes along the coast and organised their own events.

With such vision and enthusiasm, Ken played a key role in building up the Tasmanian involvement that ultimately resulted in 2014 in the Club embracing its growing Tasmanian membership by changing its name to the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.

**In all, Ken has attended seven NatMeets** and, with Ruth's help, contributed significantly to the planning and running of four Tasmanian *Not the NatMeet* tours of Tasmania to host visiting Victorian Club members and show them the very best that his wonderful island has to offer. There's no doubt that Tasmania is perfect MX-5 country, and Ken's intimate knowledge of every inch of the best-kept secret roads (through his years of work with the Tasmanian Fire Service) helped make these tours among the most memorable Club events that participants had then – or since – attended.

Ken was the inaugural Convenor of the Northern Tasmania Chapter from its formation in June 2009 until, due to travel commitments, he stepped down in 2011.

Ken, with Ruth, has contributed many articles to the **mxtra** magazine over the years, as well as the Northern Tasmania Chapter's contribution to the *20 Roads for 20 Years* book to celebrate the Club's 20th anniversary in 2010.

**Not content with that**, Ken produced his own monthly newsletter to keep Chapter members informed of upcoming runs, and built the size and success of the Northern Tasmania Chapter by encouraging members to assist in planning and conducting activities.

Ken's love of driving his MX-5 is well known in Devonport, as the roof of his shiny Classic Red NA is down in all but the most extreme weather conditions.

If he sees an unknown MX-5 parked anywhere in Tasmania, he always puts a card under the windscreen wiper to make sure the owner is aware of the Club, and makes it his business to follow up if they make contact.

His friendship, camaraderie and generosity has also been extended to many other interstate MX-5 Club members who have travelled to Tasmania, with never anything asked in return. Throughout his time with the Club, there has never been any agenda seeking personal recognition for Ken Beaton.

**The conferring of Life Membership** of this Club is not something that is done lightly. It has gone to only 12 other people in our 24-year history.

Our Statement of Purpose and Rules only allows it to be awarded to a *member with at least 10 years of Club membership, during some of which they have performed a Club role and provided exceptional service to the Club. It also requires a unanimous vote of the Committee in favour before it can be conferred.*

I'm very pleased to say that Ken has more than qualified on each of those requirements. Indeed, he is the first Tasmanian to join these esteemed ranks.

**So, today, it is with great pleasure on behalf of the President, Don Nicoll and the Committee, I invite Ken to accept this award of Life Membership of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.** ”

◀ *Ken Beaton ... this is your life!*

# Chapter chatter ...

1-2.11.14 | Western Victoria ■ Words & photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Organisers: Ian & Karen Bradshaw



## Skipton Show'n'Shine 1/11/14



*A double show 'n' shine weekend – a double whammy for wet, windy weather.*

What a big weekend we had planned with two show 'n' shines, a weekend that turned out to be cold, wet and windy! BUT nothing deters us MX-5ers. It was the first weekend of November – closer to summer than winter and the weather was like the middle of winter!

◀ **The first of our show 'n' shines** was on Saturday at the *Skipton Primary School's Fete and Show & Shine*, to help the township celebrate its 175th year. Although lots of flyers were distributed to many car enthusiasts near and far, the weather discouraged many. Alas there were four diehard MX-5ers lined up looking very smart amongst the company of a 2009 Monaro, a Peter Brock Commodore, a Jack Brabham racing car, a Jag and a Mini.

Many thanks to Lawrie Hocking, Jeff Woolf and new member Robert Neighbour for venturing to Skipton to keep me company. Ian rode his Vulcan motor bike, so I actually got to drive the MX ... such a rarity (think I will have to sneak it out more often!).

We checked out the fete and food stalls in between the gusty winds and showers before calling it quits and heading home after lunch. I stayed for the unveiling of the bust of Sir Henry Bolte, who lived in Skipton for his first 26 years and attended the Skipton Primary School (my work place).

▶ **Our second show 'n' shine** was on Sunday at *Springfest* around the picturesque Lake Wendouree. The weather presented as a bitterly cold wind blowing off said picturesque lake, the sun having gone on holidays for the day, but at least the rain was gone too!

True blue MX-5ers that we are, we had 12 cars present themselves for the *Shannons Show & Shine*, including two new members. Neil and Mary Parker travelled the furthest having come down from Rochester. John G had his work ute there to hang the Club banners from ... but it also made for a great wind break, sheltering us from the cold while we had lunch and chattered to keep our jaws warm!

Despite the weather we had a merry old time catching up and renewing acquaintances and also introducing our super shiny MX-5s to the curious public who stopped to chat and admire the cars.

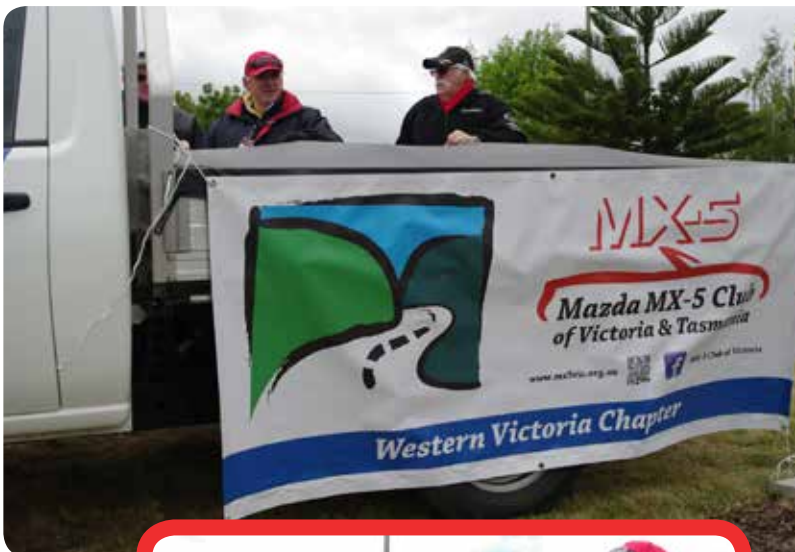
**We had a great weekend; the weather did not defeat us!** ●







# Springfest 2014 2/11/14



^ Ian Bradshaw (left) with Neil Parker. Must have been cold ... Ian's not in shorts!

^ Alan White, Mary Parker, John Gleeson and Chris Van Velzen



# Chapter chatter ...

**15-16.11.14 | North-Eastern Victoria**

■ Words: Loz Thomas & Bronwyn Roche

## Day 1:

*Nineteen cars and their proud owners all arrived at McDonald's in Wodonga at 8.30am on the Saturday, eagerly anticipating an excellent weekend touring the magnificent roads of Victoria's high country.*

Members from the Central and Western Chapters joined us for our inaugural Omeo weekend run. The road from Mitta Mitta to Omeo was recently completely sealed and, for many of us, it would be our first time travelling it. Expectations were high.

Before setting out, an award was presented to the former Western Victoria Chapter Captain, John Gleeson and his wife Noellene, in recognition of their five years' dedication and service to our wonderful club. Their Chapter members have been great supporters of our runs and this award was a token of our appreciation. The glass award had a "No U Turn" sign etched on it – John is renowned for missing turns on runs, resulting in the whole convoy having to do a "U" turn. Congratulations John and Noellene on a job well done!

After a briefing from run organisers, Stuart and Sue James, we set out with tops down despite the threatening clouds. After travelling alongside the southern banks of Lake Hume we farewelled the Murray Valley Highway to take Bryant's Gap, and then up over the brilliant Lockharts Gap. This is a very scenic and winding 23km that bypasses the township of Tallangatta and climbs up through native bushland with great views of the surrounding farm country. Descending, we joined the Omeo Highway and followed the crystal clear waters of Mitta Mitta River which rises in the snow country of the Bogong High Plains. After passing through Eskdale we reached Mitta Mitta and the recently-renovated (though losing none of its historic charm) *Laurel Hotel*, which was to be our first stop for morning tea.

After enjoying coffee and cake and each other's company, it was time to leave Mitta Mitta in our rear view mirror and follow Snowy Creek. There were many glimpses of this alpine waterway and the scenic gorge country (for passengers at least) as we passed through gold mining settlements such as Lightning Creek, Sunnyside and Glen Wills.

Much of today's route was pioneered by gold miners, and those who supplied the goods and services to keep the gold mines operating. Stopping at Glen Wills, one of the major early goldfields in the northeast of Victoria, and wandering around the relics of the bygone era was very enjoyable and one of the highlights of the weekend.

Leaving Glen Wills behind, it was a short run to the rustic *Blue Duck Inn* – a traditional country pub which has been a popular stopover for motor bike and car enthusiasts alike. It was a mighty site seeing 19 MX-5s in amongst about 60 motorbikes arrive at Anglers Rest at the same time but probably not what the catering staff wanted to see. We all enjoyed sitting on the veranda overlooking the Cobungra River and despite the crowds our lunch was served promptly – it was delicious.

After Anglers Rest it was only 40km or so to Omeo. Apart from the occasional glimpses of the Mitta Mitta the best of the scenery was behind us and we were left to enjoy the pastoral country that provides the final run into Omeo. We had made it through the whole day with the tops down. We all checked in to the *Golden Age Hotel* and met for pre-dinner drinks, dinner and more conversation and reminiscing of a great day driving and sightseeing and contemplating how it could possibly get any better the following day. ●





.....  
■ Photos: Loz Thomas, Ron Gillick, Bronwyn Roche, Alyssa Finlay ■ Organisers: Sue & Stuart James



# Omeo Gold

## Day 2:

*We were surprised to awake Sunday morning to a light dusting of snow – even more surprising was that it appeared only to be indoors, and on the balcony, of the Golden Age Hotel where most of us had stayed.*

Whether it was the itinerant shearers, or some of the locals celebrating after the Omeo Show, the party had truly 'gone off' on Saturday night, along with the hotel's fire extinguisher!

Whilst the chamber maids grumbled, we tucked into the cooked breakfast before heading off for our Day 2 run.

Now although it was a Sunday and it wouldn't be proper to start the day with a four-letter word – it had to be said ... RAIN. We had rain, and plenty of it, to start the day but it didn't dampen our enthusiasm for those curvy high country roads.

We headed south through some high plains pastures where fat Herefords could hardly be bothered to stop eating the lush grass and glance at our (now) 17 MX-5s winding their way down to the sawmilling town of Swifts Creek. We then left the stunning views of the Tambo River and turned right from Swifts Creek on to a loop track back up towards Omeo, passing the Wallabies playing the Kangaroos on the local football oval.

Continuing on from yesterday's historic goldfields theme we passed through the tiny settlement of Cassilis, now just a few houses and a very old cemetery, but a former gold rush town. There was even evidence of an old distillery, although not for us on those windy roads.

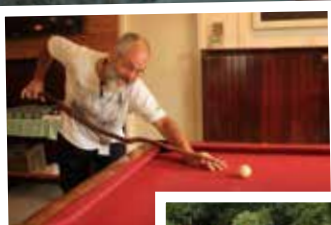
We turned left on to the Great Alpine Road west of Omeo, climbing up to the village of Dinner Plain for a morning tea and coffee stop. The fog and mist set in and we carefully followed the snow poles into Mt Hotham – denied the great views but enjoying the fantastic curves that this road offers. The temperature gauge on the mountain top car park indicated a chilly 5°, although that quickly warmed up as we descended the mountain, snaking steeply down and arriving in sunshine at the beautiful Ovens Valley.

We zoomed through the sub-alpine village of Harrierville and the tiny settlement of Smoko, arriving at our final destination, Bright. Some of the group headed off home whilst others made an extra-long weekend of it.

It's no exaggeration to say that over the weekend we had zoomed along some of Victoria's finest MX-5 roads. We also explored some old gold mining history, some mighty fine country hotels and enjoyed the company of friendly fellow MX-5 enthusiasts.

Thanks to the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter crew and Stuart and Sue for organising such an enjoyable run.

Looking forward to the next one. ●



# Chapter chatter ...

## 16.11.14 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Paul Sertori, on his first Club run ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Organiser: Travis McInnes

*On a cloudy Sunday morning, eight cars assembled in Yarragon.*

An even dozen enthusiasts disembarked and gathered at the rotunda to hear the pre-ride briefing. Run notes were handed out with Fish Creek being the turnaround point. Mt Worth was to be skirted on the return leg. Notably, two 'newbies' – myself and David Evans – fronted, complete with spouses and the ink still drying on our official name tags.

There had been a lot of rain overnight and early on it looked like it might rain again at some stage. Defiantly, Ron Diprose and Sarah joined Ian and Karen Bradshaw in embracing the full joy of springtime driving by going 'al fresco' (as a minor concession they did don hats, scarfs and coats). Mother Nature wisely backed down on this challenge and allowed it to stay dry for the whole day.

Travis McInnes led the way. First lesson of the day was that birds are meant to fly and not stand on the roadway. Several birds aggressively stood their ground in the middle of the road trying to block our path. These birds were kindly assisted into taking flight by Travis using his front spoiler as an improvised bird plough. A roaming rosella was the first student to relearn how to fly and a meandering magpie soon followed. The flight lessons were all over after two smaller "little black birds" had their feathers ruffled and were promptly propelled skyward. The message must have got around ... thereafter all birdlife yielded and surrendered the roads to our convoy.

The rest of the ride into Fish Creek (lunch stop) was a dream run. However it was here that Peter Shinn announced that he was having relationship issues with his NA. Peter wasn't weeping (yet) but his clutch slave cylinder certainly was. Maybe lunch time would fix things – certainly couldn't hurt.

All members indulged in a hearty lunch at the pub. Unable to

join the run, Peter from Fish Creek dropped in at the pub to make sure that all members behaved themselves. Suitably refreshed, the group hit the road for the return journey. A little section of unsealed road provided a change of tempo but no drama. Steve Banks peeled off towards his (very close) home, which left us with seven cars.

At Dumbalk, Peter Shinn's man/car relationship issues took a turn for the worse when it became evident that a trial separation was inevitable. The NA said 'na' to any more gear changing shenanigans. No choice but to give the car time to reconsider its bad behaviour leave it all alone at the CFA depot. Now there were six cars remaining.

Later the cost to Travis of using his spoiler as a bird plough became evident when hitting a little 'twig' on the road became the final straw ... so to speak. Result – one little twig and one spoiler both severely cracked. A high price to pay for keeping the highway clear!

At the Hulls road turn off, the ride leader decided that the run notes saying 'RT' was advisory only – RT and could also mean 'right through'. The convoy (trusting souls that they are) followed the leader and kept going straight on. Apparently this was a deliberate manoeuvre and was for the sole purpose of giving the group a practical demonstration what a Western Chapter 'U bolt' looks like (it looks a lot like getting lost then doing a 'U' turn).

Later that evening Peter and his estranged NA were reunited via the mediation of a car trailer.

The remaining six cars regrouped at Yarragon for a debrief ... consensus was the combination of good weather, great drive, good company all produced another great day. ●



^ From left: Ian, Travis, Maree, Helene, Arthur and Paul





✓ Gippsland sunshine!



Peter Shinn's NA says "na" >



# Chapter chatter ...

## 16.11.14 | Southern Tasmania

■ Words: Mike & Liz Williams ■ Photos: Rob Tanner ■ Organiser: Mike Williams

*In spite of forecasts to the contrary, the weather on this Sunday morning was fine and it improved all day – typically delightful southern Tasmanian Spring day of course.*

When Liz and I arrived at the gathering point at Rosny there was already a significant gathering of cars: with us there were 12 in total and 20 enthusiasts waiting for the “off”.

John welcomed everyone, including new starters, Heather and Damian Memeo, and gave us a bit of a pep talk before I took people through the intended route, the end point of which was to be *The Possum Shed* café in Westerway just south of the Mt Field National Park.

We had originally intended to make a trip to Carrick in the north to visit the house and car collection of old friends there but sadly this had to be delayed until next year due to a sudden illness. (We wish Chester a quick recovery and look forward to experiencing his and Sally’s hospitality in the not too distant future). Unfortunately John and Michelle Waldock were non-starters as John had pulled a fetlock (or some such) a few days before and was sporting a moon boot.

With yours truly in the vanguard and John Hadrill bringing up the rear, we wended our way through suburbia and over the Bowen bridge before heading up into the back of Mt Wellington towards Collinsvale. On reaching Glenlusk we turned on to the Molesworth road and followed this delightful narrow and windy corridor down to the banks of the Derwent near New Norfolk.

After a brief break there, we then headed up the west bank of the river past the Salmon Ponds and through the township of Plenty until we reached Bushy Park, where we cut back across the Derwent and headed up the main drag (the Lyell Highway) through the villages of Gretna and Hamilton before turning off over the Dunrobin Bridge (once again over the Derwent) on to another great, virtually empty road through some burnt-out country (from a year or two ago) then over hill and dale via Ellendale until we hit Westerway dead on time for lunch.

*The Possum Shed* is an excellent little café literally on the banks of the beautiful Tyenna River (complete with trout and platypus) where we were able to sit outdoors and polish off some of their simple but excellent menu – both Liz and I tried their Aussie burgers: huge and delicious. *(I finished off the second half of Liz’s the following day for lunch!)*

After lunch, the route home was free and we headed directly back through Glenora, Bushy Park and New Norfolk and arrived home having covered almost exactly 200km of terrific roads, great scenery combined with excellent food and company. Some of the others intended to detour through Bothwell to take in a bush fair. Hardly another car to be seen for most of the run: *bliss!*

Next month we’re all looking forward to the annual Christmas BBQ at the Tolosa Reserve. ●







# Lunch at the Possum Shed





# Chapter chatter ...

## 16.11.14 | Northern Tasmania

■ Words & photos: Kelly Berggren ■ Organisers: Ken Beaton with Carl Berggren

*This run was a special one for us.*

Ken, our previous Chapter Captain, came out of retirement to organise a fantastic run around the back roads between Sheffield and Ulverstone.

We all met at the Bluff in Devonport. After a quick catch up with old members and greeting of many new ones, we all gathered for Ken's run briefing. Bruce had been doing some scheming and had organised a surprise for Ken – Will and Coral visiting from Victoria so Will could present Ken with his 15-year badge. After some words and razzing, we all set off for Ulvestone – via the long way, of course, past Roland!

As our Chapter runs are well attended, and the numbers are getting a bit unwieldy for the curvy runs we like, we decided to try splitting the group into two teams: *Cruisers* and *Zoomers*.

Ken took the *Cruisers* at a more relaxed pace, while Carl lead the *Zoomers*, who like to take the corners at full throttle. Even giving Ken's *Cruisers* a 15-minute head start, the *Zoomers* caught up with them at a comfort stop in Sheffield. The *Zoomers* decided to keep going ahead, so we could fit in a couple of rounds of the Palooona Dam circuit while the rest caught up. (Woo-Hoo!)

It worked really well, and we all had a great drive and a bit of fun waving to each group passing the other on opposite sides of the same road. We ended up in *Otto's Grotto*, a lovely park near the foreshore in Ulverstone for our picnic lunch. Bruce and Will had sneakily decided to save the special announcement until after

lunch, thus waylaying Ken's suspicions, of **Ken's Life Membership award** (the real reason Will and Coral came over to Tas!). Ken's surprise was total when Will said, "*Ken, this is your life!*"

Much laughter followed that introduction, then we heard the story of Ken's leadership over the past decade and a half. Ken is not only the inaugural member of our Chapter, he's been known to stalk MX-5s home so he can invite them to join us!

I remember that Ken, with Ruth at his side, made Carl and me feel very welcome and at home on our first run.

After the speeches and much admiration of Ken's new baby NA (and congratulations to Ken for the Life Membership, of course!), we said goodbye to some and headed out with the rest for the last leg of the run – through Kindred to Latrobe's *Cherry Shed* for coffee and ice cream.

*Would you believe there were roads that were new to me?!* Wonderful stuff, and one section took us through some great dog-legging paddocks, with a bit of extra fun: some of us got caught in a couple of irrigator sprays! Should I mention a few were ~~wusses~~ – I mean sane – and actually stopped to wait for the spray to pass? 😊

**It was a wonderful day – one of the best runs we've been on – and a special one to share with Ken and Ruth. Thanks for all the hard work organising and scheming, guys! ●**

## Ken & Carl's Scenic Picnic Drive



^ A winding road in Tassie ... who knew? Roger following Carl through the bush section of the Palooona Dam Circuit, with Michael N behind ...





✓ Picnic at Otto's Grotto, Ulverston



◀ Ken Beaton receives his 15-year membership pin from Coral and Will Campbell



^ The "Zoomers" in flight!



^ There's gold in them thar hills! The "Cruisers" come down as the "Zoomers" head up the Paloona Dam Circuit ...



# There's no better way to spend a Sunday!

■ Words: Ray Monik ■ Photos: Vanessa Macaulay, [www.redbookphotography.com.au](http://www.redbookphotography.com.au), Mark Fitzgerald



*Ready for action*



*Noel Heritage*



*Daniel White*



*Max Lloyd*



*Alan Conrad*

## City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship standings after Round 5 | Sandown ~ 23.11.14

(corrected points)	1st	2nd	3rd
Overall Champion	= Russell Garner, Ray Monik » 50		Dean Hasnat » 42
Standard NA	Robert Downes » 40	---	---
Standard NB	Dean Hasnat » 42	Jeremy Fredersdorff » 31	Peter Dannock » 28
Standard NC	Alan Conrad » 40	---	---
Clubman	Max Lloyd » 38	Peter Phillips » 36	Noel Heritage » 34
Modified	Ray Monik » 50	Gavin Newman » 25	Daniel White » 21
Super Modified	Russell Garner » 50	Robert Parr » 34	Randy Stagno Navarra » 7
Restricted Open	Paul Ledwith » 47	Brendan Beavis » 17	---
Open	Dave Moore » 20	Mike Kirby » 10	---



## 2014-15 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship | Round 4 ~ 23.11.14



*For those of us who did not take part in the Winton 6 hour in October it was a welcome return to the track after a two-month break ... which felt like an eternity.*

With unpredictable weather leading up to the Sunday we were well and truly blessed with a stunning Melbourne day for our Club sprint.

With a healthy MX-5 entry of some 30-plus cars for the event and another 68 additional vehicles at the venue on display to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the MX-5 there was a wonderful feeling of festivity and enjoyment and it affirmed to me once again what a great club we are and of how professionally events are organised and so passionately attended.

I reflected on how our motor sport side of the Club has grown over the years and how well so many of the vehicle are presented by their drivers for these club sprints ... Randy's NC, the NBs of Tim Meaden, Daniel White and Leon Bogers, as well as Robert Downes's very respectable NA ... to mention but a few.

The day ran extremely well with no major incidents, giving us all plenty of track time to get on to the black stuff to do our thing and enjoy ourselves – *there is no better way to spend a Sunday.*

The track conditions were really good, however not conducive to setting any lap records as there was always some head wind on the straights and, being a hot day, the air was a little too warm to get the best performance out of our cars. Unfortunately Robert Parr and Robert Downes had to end their day early with mechanical issues, but as always the next event beckons and I'm sure we'll see them back in time for Broadford.

As always the Clubman class was highly competitive with Noel Heritage and Peter Phillips giving it a red hot go. Modifieds also had some good rivalry with Daniel White and Gavin Newman posting close times. Alan Conrad in his quick NC and yours truly had an enjoyable time mixing it on the track with some very close laps. Frank Nathan going nice and quick in the standard NB class.

Paul Ledwith and Russell Garner were out there doing their usual quick times showing the other makes of cars just what the MX-5s are capable of doing.

**A most enjoyable day with good company and great cars. Hope to see you all at Broadford on 13 December. ●**



*Paul Ledwith*



*Randy Stagno Navarra leads a Group A Skyline*

## City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - Round 5 | Sandown ~ 23.11.14

Results - Round 5	1st	2nd	3rd
Standard NA	Robert Downes » 1:38.4908	---	---
Standard NB	Dean Hasnat » 1:36.6855	Jeremy Fredersdorff » 1:37.4556	Simeon Ouzas » 1:37.5637
Standard NC	---	---	---
Clubman	Noel Heritage » 1:35.8635	Peter Phillips » 1:36.0084	Max Lloyd » 1:37.0599
Modified	Ray Monik » 1:33.9794	Daniel White » 1:36.4353	Gavin Newman » 1:36.6308
Super Modified	Russell Garner » 1:30.1176	Randy Stagno Navarra » 1:32.7520	Robert Parr » 1:51.9692
Restricted Open	Paul Ledwith » 1:26.8821	---	---
Open	---	---	---

\*\* New Club lap record

# Winton 300 ... *real* racing!

■ Words & photos: Tim Emery – Club Captain - Motor Sport

*Ring – ring, Ring – ring ... Hey Dave ... yep great thanks, you?*

*"What am I doing November 8 and 9 ...? You want me to what?... Co-drive a BMW in the Winton 300!"*

*"Ahhhh, I'll have to check with my darling, gorgeous, generous, understanding and amazing wife. I'll call you back!"*

Well, that's how my Winton 300 experience started about six weeks ago with a phone call from one of my best mates and the offer of a drive in one of the biggest endurance races for amateur motor sport in Australia.

He had already entered to drive the freshly-built BMW E30 race car with the car's owner but after some driver reshuffles with some other E30s there was a seat free. Having had just competed in the AROCA Winton 6 Hour the thought of getting back out on the track for some real racing, in a real race car was a real buzz. I couldn't wait!

The Winton 300 and the Wakefield 300 are run as a series of endurance races to allow amateur racers to have the opportunity to compete in 'real' endurance races that have all the tactics, strategy, pit stops and driver changes of all major events of this type. The class structure of eligible cars also means that there are no factory teams, or million dollar budgets to compete against. The cars competing are a mix of improved production cars, sports cars and touring cars and a lot of MX-5s! The classes are based on the qualifying time, not on your car, meaning you are competing with similarly-paced cars, regardless of what they are.

Arriving at Winton the Saturday of the event, the scale of the event was the first thing I noticed: transporters, tyres, crews, fuel etc. We were lucky to have had Brad (the car owner) run the car on Friday practice so we felt very special arriving to the garage all set up, car set up and ready for Dave and me to practice and qualify. A quick walk around the pits to say hi to some people and it was great to see some familiar MX-5 faces around. Owen and Chris Boak's *Elements Racing* had two cars entered with Mark Fitzgerald and Rob Hart sharing one of the team's MX-5s with Chris, and Owen sharing another with Brad Goss. Another MX-5 Club member, Tony Heasley, was also competing, sharing a Commodore with Ian Cowley.

Because of the class structure MX-5s are a popular choice with over 20 among the total of 70 cars.

After making it through practice and qualifying in 16th place in the Division 2 race, it was time to prepare for the big race. Every car must complete a five-minute compulsory pit stop, allowing for fuel and driver change. The rules are very strict on the pit stops and safety is paramount. The team takes time at the end of the Saturday to practice some stops and Dave and I practiced getting in out of the car for the driver change ... *it looks so easy on TV!*

Race day arrives and the Winton 300 Division 2 race starts at 10.30am, so still in the cool part of the day which is a blessing for a couple of unfit drivers. Dave starts the race and quickly gets into a rhythm, before too long we are up to 10th, then 9th and after 50 laps ready to pit for fuel and driver change. My time has come and getting strapped into the car I can't wait to get out there. Cruising up pit lane the car feels great and we are back racing. Because of the compulsory five-minute pit stop we have dropped down to 16th place; looks like I have got some work to do!

The hour passes fast, locking on to a car ahead and pegging it back and it only feels like 20-30 laps. I see the guys hold out the pit board, 'L 75-P4', Lap 75? Position 4!!! I set about catching another BMW E30 I can see 300m in front of me ... I do the sums: that BMW must be third in our class. I am now on a mission! The next 15 laps are a blur, passing two or three cars to get to that 'other BMW'. I catch it and pass it with three laps to go!

The race is over and, pulling back into pit lane, I am pumped knowing we have made the podium in our class. The team are happy, telling me I set my fastest time of the race on Lap 78. "So, third in class boys, sensational effort ..." What!?" they replied ... "Third in class ... I passed that other BMW, just before the finish."

"Ah, sorry Tim, that BMW was two laps ahead ... we are still 4th in class."

S#\*T! **That's motor racing!** ●

(A massive thanks to Brad, Dave and the crew at EWR Motorsport.)



Team Emery / Whitehead  
BMW E30



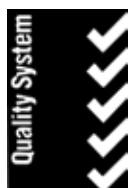
MX-5 vs BMW



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