

mxtra

1/2016

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

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Pete's Prespective...

■ Peter Dannock – President president@mx5vic.org.au

Happy New Year to all our members. I hope that you and your family had a relaxing and joyous holiday period.

This edition of *mxtra* is my first as President and, with the support of the members and the Committee, I am honoured to be entrusted with the role of President.

Thank you to my predecessor, Don Nicoll, who has left the ship in great shape, as is evident with the growth of the membership over his three and a half years as President. Join me in wishing Don and Linda luck with their move to Hobart; I look forward to their continued involvement with the Club. Don and Linda will remain as members in the Southern Tasmania Chapter and Don has agreed to take back the role of Editor for *mxtra*.

As a member of the Club for the past eight years and Secretary of the Committee for the past six years, I have enjoyed a large range of social and motor sport activities. My wife Jane and daughters, Melanie and Georgia, are also members of the Club and I've owned three MX-5s over that time. My daily driver is a 2008 Stormy Blue NC and my weekend roadster (primarily for motor sport) is a 2001 Silver NB. Unfortunately, my 1990 Crystal White NA was sold to make way for other cars in the garage. If you need to find out a little more out about me, turn to page 9, as I get 'Grilled'.

The Club would not be successful without the support of its members and those who volunteer to participate on the Committee, take on the Chapter Captain roles or help in organising runs and events. I look forward to getting out to provide ongoing support to those who volunteer their time to make the Club what it is today. In advance, I thank those people for their continued support and I encourage others to become involved.

Symbolic of this volunteer spirit within the Club, I am pleased to introduce Richard Acfield as a new member of the Committee to replace Don Nicoll. Richard

has recently acquired a 2005 Velocity Red Limited Edition NC, previously owned by other members of the Club, and had expressed a strong desire to get involved. As Richard says, "You get out of the Club what you are prepared to put in." I would like to welcome Richard to the Committee.

The past year has been a big year, with the Club celebrating its 25th Anniversary, the launch of the ND and another record membership. This year appears to be just as big with the Club hosting NatMeet in Tasmania in February, many great runs scheduled for each of the Chapters and another full year of motor sport activity. For NatMeet, we have 185 participants, in 106 cars. This will be my first NatMeet and I am looking forward to participating.

Thanks to our Club Captain - Motor Sport, Tim Emery, the motor sport calendar has been finalised for 2016. The Championship will be over nine rounds between January and December – plus two additional motor sport days in Tasmania as part of the NatMeet events.

2015 was also the first full year where Club vehicles were eligible for the VicRoads Club Permit Scheme. This scheme allows Club members with an MX-5 car that is 25 years or older to register their car at a reduced cost, which is particularly useful if you only use your MX-5 on an occasional basis. To date, 38 members have successfully registered under the scheme. The Club is pleased that it can support its members under this scheme.

I recently had the pleasure of test driving both the 1.5L and 2.0L NDs and was impressed with both of them. The 1.5 is quite spirited and likes to rev, but the 2.0 does give you a little more grunt. Regardless of which one I would choose, you can't go past the GT Roadster with its upgraded stereo and leather sets. I look forward to having one in my garage in the future.

If you have any suggestions or comments

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

January

- 24 EV: Fish & Chip run
- 24 NTas: Summer & Shade
- 26 Western: Australia Day run
- 31 Central: Mornington Peninsula run

February

- 7 EV: Maffra Shed run
- 13, 15-18 NatMeet XII, Launceston
- 21 CEN: Bob's Boolarra lunch run
- 21 EV: Boolarra lunch run
- 21 NEV: Mitta Mitta run
- 21 WV: Run to Somewhere ...

Mark those corners!

Please remember, on social convoy runs, to mark the corners for those following.

It's very simple: when you get to an intersection or a point where the route of the convoy might be unclear to the car behind you, please wait at the corner until you're sure the following vehicle has seen you.

If it's unsafe to wait at the corner, please wait in a visible position nearby.

You won't get lost because, if everyone complies, the car you're following will be waiting for you at the next corner!

for the President, don't feel shy in airing them with me. Please just drop me an email at president@mx5vic.org.au.

I look forward to meeting a lot more members in the near future.

And remember ... leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.

Pete



Scene about

Photos: Cheryl Murray, Bronwyn Roche, Geoff Roche, Peter Ferguson, Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw





Membership

Current membership count:

635

and growing!

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

G'day again!

We're off to a good start for 2016 with 35 new members, including six who drive NDs. Congratulations to all for their fine choice of a motor vehicle!

Central Chapter

Bruce & Elizabeth Diamond	1991 Neo Green NA
Geoff Graham	1990 Neo Green NA
Brian Hammett	1991 Neo Green NA
Alf Katz	2015 White ND
Michael Kogan	1991 Classic Red NA
Stephen, Sharyn, Alexander & Charlotte Lanham	2013 Midnight Blue BC
Daniel Luong	2003 Sunlight Silver NB
Nicole Lynch	2015 Soul Red ND
Philip, Esperance & Ethan Menezes	2015 Soul Red ND
Lori & Mary Mercieca	2006 Burgundy NC
John Osmotherly	2004 Velocity Red NB SE
John, Katrina, Matthew & Ben Palmer	2015 Soul Red ND
Russell & Suzanne Pata	2015 Soul Red ND
Arthur & Lyn Smith	2015 Crystal Pearl White ND

Eastern Victoria Chapter

Peter Prysten & Sonia Zalucki	2012 Blue NC
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North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Peter Battison	2006 Galaxy Grey NC
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Western Victoria Chapter

Roger Wood	1989 Classic Red NA
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Northern Tasmania Chapter

Peter Jahnz	2003 Silver NB
Tim & Dot Manion	2000 Heritage edition NB
Darren Watts	1990 White NA

Southern Tasmania Chapter

Michael Collinson	1990 Classic Red NA
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To all I have met, and to all those I am still to meet, have a safe and happy 2016

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

Will

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Track Torque



■ Tim Emery – Club Captain - Motor Sport captain@mx5vic.org.au

2015 City Mazda MX5 Sprint Championship Awards Night

After a busy 2015 the Motor Sport Team got together to award the winners of class trophies and overall Motor Sport Champion.

Although we were back at the same venue as previous awards nights, this year's function on a Thursday night was a more casual night and again it was great to see so many of our Motor Sport Team attending in the busy weeks before Christmas.

New Club president Peter Dannock (right) took out the 2015 Motor Sport Champion title.

Although many of the class results had been decided before the last round, a couple of classes had gone down to the wire – including an epic point-by-point battle between Tim Meaden and Gavin Newman in Modified Class, with Tim coming out on top by one point!

I would also like to congratulate Gavin Newman on being awarded the 2015 **Sportsmanship Award**. Gavin has competed in two Championship seasons and has approached his entry into MX-5 motor sport with the right mix of attitude, competitiveness, comradery and fun.

With some new members joining the Motor Sport Team in 2016, as well as some previous competitors re-joining after a break, the 2016 MX-5 Sprint Championship season is looking like another great year of MX-5 motor sport.

Tim

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



Notch up another state class championship to the MX-5!

Bob de Bont (left) and Stephen Gallagher finished first and second in Class B in the 2015 NGK Victorian Motorkhana Championship. Bob says, "We have owned Class B since 2012 and have won it five times in the last six years."



Peter Dannock (right) with Tim Emery

2015 Motor Sport Champion : Peter Dannock

Sportsmanship Award : Gavin Newman

Standard NA	NA Clubman	Super Modified
1st Robert Downes	1st Tim Emery	1st Russell Garner
Standard NB	2nd George Vellis	2nd Robert Parr
1st Peter Dannock	NB Clubman	3rd Colin Denman-Jones
2nd Simeon Ouzas	1st Noel Heritage	Restricted Open
3rd Geoff Sanders	2nd Max Lloyd	1st Paul Ledwith
Standard NC	3rd John Reid	2nd Fabian Mastronardi
1st Alan Conrad	Modified	Open
2nd Ian Vague	1st Tim Meaden	1st Dave Moore
	2nd Gavin Newman	
	3rd Leon Bogers	



Photos: Suzanne Newman

More gongs for the ND!

Japan's 2015-16 Car of the Year



The fourth-generation MX-5 ND has collected another major prize – being named the 2015-2016 “Car of the Year Japan”.

“This result is thanks to everyone’s enthusiastic support, and we are both grateful and proud that our Roadster has received such a prestigious award,” said Masamichi Kogai, President and CEO of Mazda. “Inspired by this win, we will continue building cars that offer driving pleasure, aiming to become a ‘one-and-only’ for our customers that they will choose again and again.”

The Roadster follows the Mazda Demio (Mazda2) last year to become the sixth Mazda vehicle to take the *Car of the Year Japan* award.

In Australia so far, the MX-5 has finished third in the Herald Sun *Cars Guide* Car of the Year 2015 judging, and was named “best convertible” in the *The Age Drive* Car of the Year award (fourth overall).

Can the ND join the 1989 NA and the 2005 NC to take out Australia’s “big one” – *Wheels* Car of the Year award – to make it three generations out of four? ■

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Peter Dannock

New Club President

Name? Peter Dannock

Age? 53

Born? Melbourne

Current abode? North Ringwood

Profession? IT Consultant

Partner? Jane Price

Pets? One dog, Elmo

Fave food? Steak (medium rare)

Can you cook? A little

Favourite tippie? Coffee

First drive? 1974 Holden Kingswood (my father's car)

First car? 1964 Ford Falcon

First fender bender? Ran into the back of another car in my '64 Falcon

Everyday driver? My 2008 NC

How many MX-5s have you owned? three, including a 1990 NA Crystal White, 2001 NB Silver and 2008 Stormy Blue NC

Current MX-5? 2008 Stormy Blue NC, 2001 Silver NB Series 2 (track car)

MX-5 improvements? None needed

MX-5 dislikes? NC seats could be a little more comfortable (and appears to be improved in the ND)

Why an MX-5? Great car to drive, light weight with great handling

Fluffy dice? Definitely not

Passions besides the MX-5? Family

Favourite TV show / movie / book? TV – Mad as Hell; Movie? Pulp Fiction; Book? Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania – the first 25 years

Dream wheels (money no object)? Ferrari 250 GT

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? No

Favourite other Mazda? Mazda 6 Classic Sports Hatch

If not a Mazda (gasp!), then what? BMW M4

How long in the Club? Eight years

How many MX-5 Club runs or track events? Lots of both – I have lost track of the numbers

Favourite Club run/track? Track – Phillip Island; Run – Great Ocean Road (Lorne to Apollo Bay) in the early morning

Funniest thing seen at a Club event? Seeing MX-5s travel in the rain with their lids off. Apparently travelling at 100 km/h, you don't get wet ...

Have you been to DECA or NatMeet? Two DECAs; my first NatMeet is coming up next month ...

Ford vs Holden? Holden



What's playing in your MX-5? Spotify streaming of The Beatles collection

Favourite holiday destination? Italy

Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)? AFL – Richmond Tigers

Final comments? I enjoy being a member of the Club and look forward to being involved for a long time to come. ●

Going Topless!

With the weather warming up - and seemingly getting hotter - Will Campbell has a timely reminder for we lovers of top-down driving ...



Eighteen months or so ago I had a rather nasty melanoma removed from my face.

That's not exactly a pleasant way to start an article but I think the context is important.

All went well with the surgery but one outcome is that I need to visit the specialist involved on a six-monthly basis. My last visit was a few weeks ago.

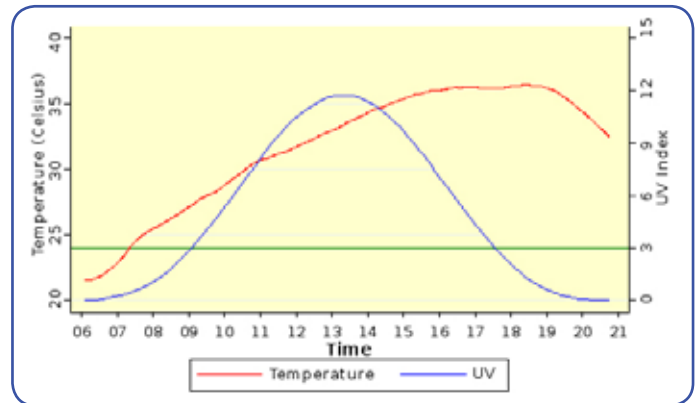
The specialist knows of my interest in MX-5s and he asked if I was adequately protected from the sun when the roof was down. I thought I had the perfect answer when I told him that the roof only came down when it wasn't hot – for me, that's any temperature above about 25°C.

"Hang on," he said. "Do you realise that there is no link between UV levels and how hot the day is?"

I'll leave the conversation at that, but I must admit that whilst I probably should have known, I had considered myself safe if driving conditions were on the cooler side.

So, let's set the record straight – there is no link between UV levels and how hot or cold the temperature is.

There are differences between UV levels during summer and winter, but this is mostly due to the angle of the sun in the sky. UV levels generally peak around the middle of the day, whilst the temperature may still be rising towards its maximum in the afternoon. The graph below outlines this relationship.



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Taking care in the sun

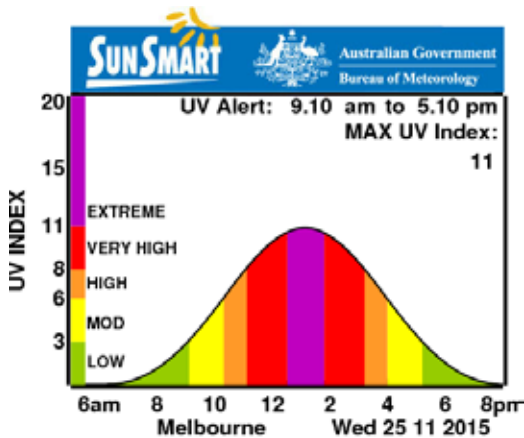
■ Words: Will Campbell, Club Life Member



There is also a widely-held view that overcast skies reduced the risk of UV exposure. *Whilst there is some truth in this, it's not that simple.*

Clouds can either reduce or *actually increase* UV levels. This depends on the thickness of the cloud and whether it is deep right through the atmosphere. If the cloud layer is thin, then you'll still get high levels of UV radiation at ground level. On days that are only partly cloudy, a phenomenon called *broken-cloud effect* occurs where UV levels can be up to 50% higher than on a correspondingly clear day. Research suggests that one of two things appears to be happening: the UV rays are reflected off the sides of dense clouds, or they are redirected as they pass through fine, wispy clouds.

So, what do you do? The Bureau of Meteorology updates UV Forecasts on a daily basis. They produce graphs that are easy to understand and clearly illustrate the times of day when you need to be most careful. But the best advice can be found on the SunSmart webpage (www.sunsmart.com.au) and it's advice you'll be familiar with – **slip** on clothing, **slop** on sunscreen, **slap** on a hat, and **slide** on sunglasses!



(Source: www.bom.gov.au)



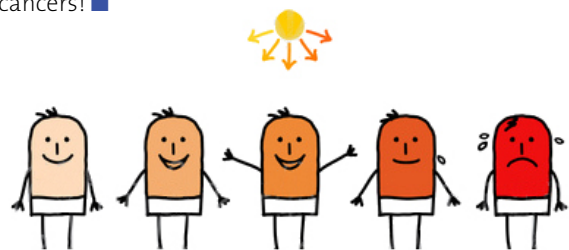
I tend to do all the wrong things as far as clothing is concerned – my general summer attire is shorts and a short-sleeved shirt.

• **With the roof down, long trousers** or slacks with a long-sleeved top is much more appropriate.

• **Try to wear items are tightly woven** and that are **not** form-fitting. Layering can help, as well as choosing darker-coloured clothes as they absorb more UV radiation.

• **A decent brimmed hat** is also preferable, as most caps provide little protection for your ears or your neck.

• **A good-quality sunscreen (SPF 30+ or higher)** is crucial, and should be applied every two hours. For the average sized person, The Cancer Council of Victoria recommends using around 3mL (one teaspoon) of product for each arm and about the same for your face and neck. I am aware that some folk shy away from sunscreens because of the use of nanoparticles. However, up to this point, the Cancer Council argues that there is no credible evidence that sunscreens containing nanoparticles pose a health risk. On the other hand, sunscreens have been scientifically proven to reduce the risk of melanoma and other skin cancers! ■



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Chapter chatter ...

6.12.15 | Central ■ Words: Alan Bennett ■ Photos: Alan Benntt, Clark Menze

It's not about the destination as the saying goes, it's the journey. With this in mind, I paused on the way to the meeting point to get some photos of aircraft landing at Tullamarine.

After seeing several planes take off but away from where I was waiting I was able to observe a number of MX-5s driving towards the meeting point while I waited fruitlessly. Immediately upon deciding to give up my quest, of course, I noticed a plane coming in to land on a direct path towards me. Rushing around the other side of my car to get a pleasing foreground I managed to get in a few shots as the plane slowly descended. Another speck in the sky turned into superman, no! I mean a plane, and it too started a final approach.

Time to get going ... so I rushed off to join another 22 cars and organiser Bob de Bont. The drive itself was divided into two with a 75km run to Lancefield followed by a break and then a longer run (122km) to Lancefield. It felt a bit like *deja vu*, however there were enough sweeping corners and hills to more than satisfy us as we headed towards where we had just left.

As we approached Lancefield the second time, we saw first-hand the results of the devastating fire that raced through there after a 'controlled' burn went awry and razed four homes and 3,100 hectares of land in the second week of October. The devastating fire tracked the road in places with one of those houses and shed a few metres off the road being completely destroyed. Rushing through on our drive was a sobering experience. So afterwards I had to go back for a closer look.

However before I forget, there were prizes! Yes, a drive with rewards.

Another three cars awaited us, as advertised ("find your own

way"). After refreshments, we gathered around in a circle while Geoff made the announcements we had been waiting for:

- » **Best-dressed car:** Ron Diprose
- » **Best-dressed car and driver:** Geoffrey Cooney
- » **Best-dressed Club members:**
Helen Lehman, June & Dennis Barry

Chatting to Richard, a new Club member of all of three weeks (red NC that has been in the Club since registration but now on its thidrd owner), about tyres and hard tops he mentioned that he'd seen me near to where he lives and it turns out I live around the corner from him. Small world, going to Lancefield twice to meet a near neighbour! Chatting also to Geoffrey, prizewinner and proud NA owner – he attended a car club event two years ago that cost him \$20 to get into and \$3,000 to get out of. What? Well, it seems he saw some very attractive wire wheels and one thing led to another and now his car shines at all four corners.

And afterwards, the throng slowly thinned out, including a L-plater stalling her way out as she tried to navigate a manual gearbox while trying to keep a low profile – not to worry, no-one noticed (lol) as we had all been there, done that.

There are interesting things to do in Lancefield as well as the surrounds – the Mad Gallery for food and coffee on High Street, there are walks and forests and, if you are into antiques, a three-storey treasure chest right in town (*look out for their January sale – where they get rid of old stock!*).



^ Geoff and his best-dressed car



^ June, Geoff, Dennis, Helen and Ron



.....
■ Organisers: Bob & Marg de Bont, Geoff & Bronwyn Roche

Dreaming of a ... safe Christmas!

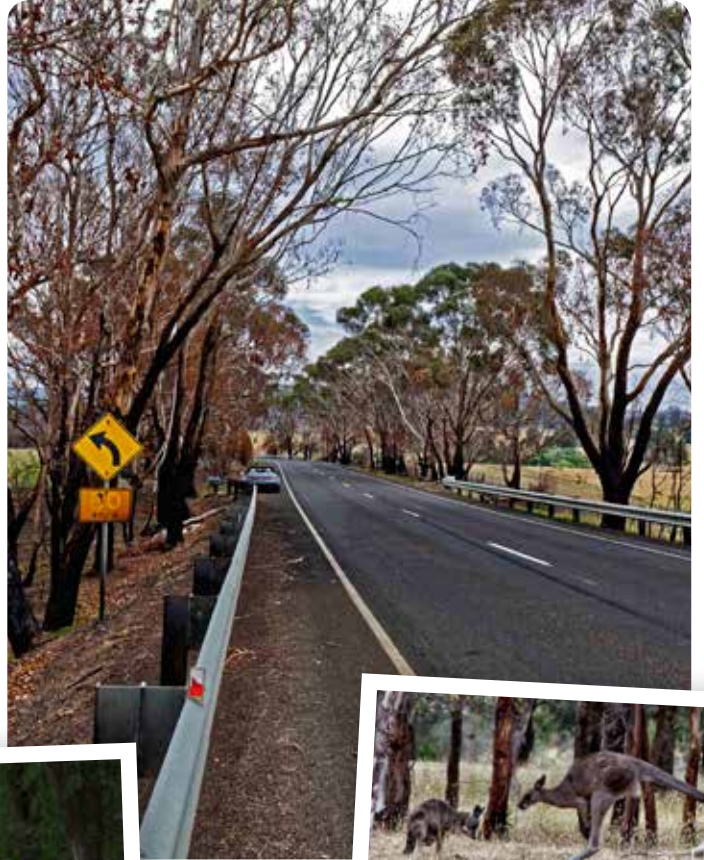
So, afterwards – I found an historic stretch of road called the Burke-Wills Track courtesy of two kind ladies at the Information centre. It's a narrow road that runs 37km from Lancefield to Mia Mia (population 265) and is named after the famous explorers and traces part of their journey in 1860. A quiet road by CBD standards, I saw two cars and one motorbike – whose rider had stopped like me to investigate a memorial (a propeller nailed to a plinth) commemorating the first recorded flight of an Australian-built airplane and its short 7m historic journey in 1910. There was a lonely sign for a shire but no hobbits.

The farmland was dry, dry, dry. The stock water dams were low. Only the vineyards were green – and the occasional drought-proof letterbox. As the sun finally burnt through the cloud and the temperature hit 35, the cattle stood under any tree they could find. Did I mention that everything was dry?

Time to continue the journey towards home and, since I was in the neighborhood, a circumnavigation of Hanging Rock was in order. About 100 kangaroos interrupted their grazing and stood silently watching me watching them. There were no picnickers in sight; perhaps they were lost?

Ever wondered about injured wildlife? Seems they are keeping up with modern technology to call for assistance. The evidence? Signs beside the road saying "Injured wildlife call 0404". At least the marsupials have a handy pocket to carry their phones in.

Be fire safe this season. ●



^ Who knew?!!

Chapter chatter ...

13.12.15 | Northern Tasmxtra ■ Words, organiser: Bruce Harvey

■ Photos: Alana McDougall, Jill Steer, Cheryl Murray, Kelly Berggren

The historic town of Deloraine is right in the middle of our chapter membership being 50km to Launceston and 52km to Devonport.

The town is split by the Meander River which starts up in the Western Tiers and after a couple of irrigation/hydro dams flows right through the centre of the town on its way to the ocean.

The river banks are flat and wide with well cared-for grassed areas perfect for a Sunday picnic lunch. Twenty MX-5s eventually lined up while the occupants formed a circle complete with chairs, rugs, tables and food to socialise and enjoy the warm December sunshine. The length of the river is interlaced with walking trails as well as numerous bridges and with the (very) impressive line of cars there were plenty of walkers and sightseers eager to look and find out more about the club and the cars.

A gazebo that will fit in an MX-5 boot was recently donated to the chapter (*thanks Pete*) and despite the mostly unhelpful advice from onlookers was soon up and positioned alongside the council seating providing shade for both food and body. This was the cue to open the cooler bags and for the next half hour there was an almost continuous passing around of plates of tasty snacks brought for us to share and try.

All this time some of the bigger kids among us had been eagerly eyeing the picnic rug that was ankle deep in presents, each one wrapped in brightly coloured paper. One of our annual traditions is for everyone to bring a small gift which are then mixed up and handed out often accompanied by plenty of amusement or bemusement. Ken Beaton (above right) volunteered to play the role of Santa and revelled in the opportunity to closely question certain individual's behaviour in the last 12 months in order to assess their suitability to receive a present. Once the laughter had faded and the resultant rubbish was collected everyone relaxed and enjoyed the gentle afternoon cooling breeze.

Some of the ladies had been extremely busy judging by the plates of sweet treats that were now being passed around to enjoy. The numbers slowly dwindled as the afternoon sun became lower but everyone was agreed that the day had been a success. ●



Recognition from CAMS

11.12.15 | CAMS Motor Sport Awards 2015



The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport, the governing body of Australian motor sport, recently awarded the Club a special recognition in honour of our 25 years of CAMS affiliation.

The award was made at CAMS' gala presentation night for their 2015 CAMS Motor Sport Awards on Friday, 11 December, 2015.

◀ Suits us! CAMS CEO Eugene Arocca (left) with President Peter Dannock, Club Captain - Motor Sport, Tim Emery, and Assistant Captain, Randy Stagno Navarra at the awards night



Trading Post



For Sale 1990 Classic Red NA (Southern Tassie) ...

For details of this and other items to buy, swap, sell or borrow, see the "Trading Post" section in the "Clubroom" section of the Club's website, mx5vic.org.au

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My favourite MX-5 road ...

■ Words & photos: Richard Dear, Canadian Rockies Miata Club

A few years back, **Richard and Jeanette Dear** from Alberta in Canada – stalwarts of the Canadian Rockies Miata Club – joined us on our dawn run down the Great Ocean Road.

Here is one of their favourite “local” roads ...

Friday on the Highwood Pass *Alberta, Canada*



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!



I had the day off on Friday, 18 September and took a visitor from Britain on a run over the Highwood Pass.

He is the owner of a Morgan Plus 4 replica and confessed later that he had always considered the *Miata* a “Hairdresser’s Car” – that’s “Girlie Car” in Canadian English-speak – but he came away suitably impressed with the handling, not to mention the linear power delivery of the wailing supercharger. The interesting thing was, we found that my car actually gave better fuel economy with 50% more horsepower on tap than the 2.0 later normally-aspirated Ford engine.

Friday was fantastic. There was hardly any traffic once we turned west at Longview and we were rewarded with autumn colours along the riverbank with snow capped peaks and brilliant sunshine. My friend commented that there are virtually NO roads in England that are so quiet. He also bemoaned the fact that they have now set up cameras on most roads that record your licence plate number at each one and calculate your AVERAGE speed between check points so that you will get a ticket even if you are doing the speed limit at the camera locations. (*Sounds familiar! ~ Ed.*)

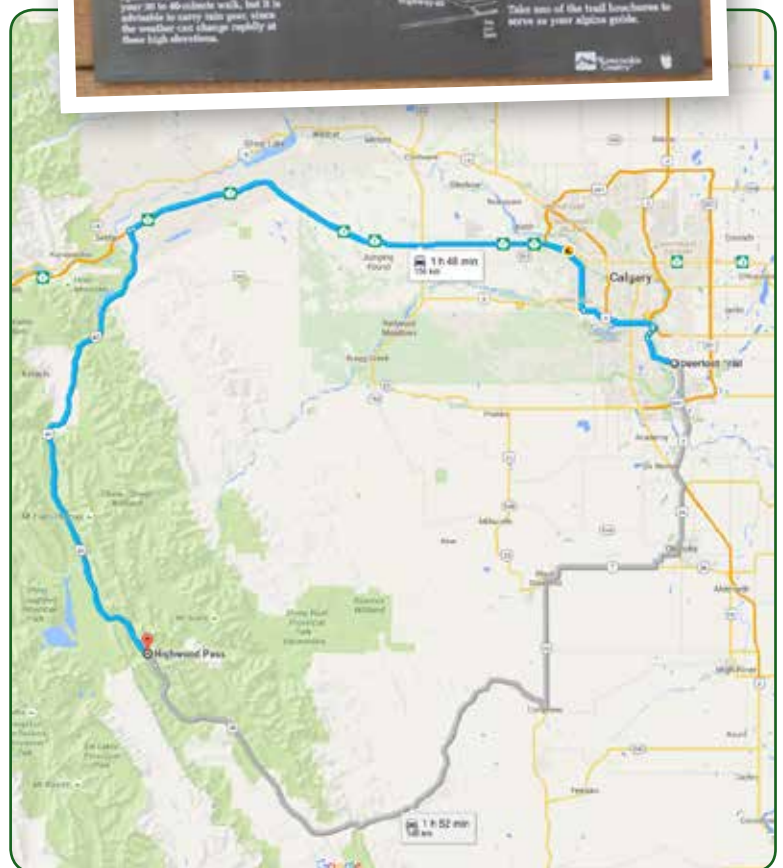
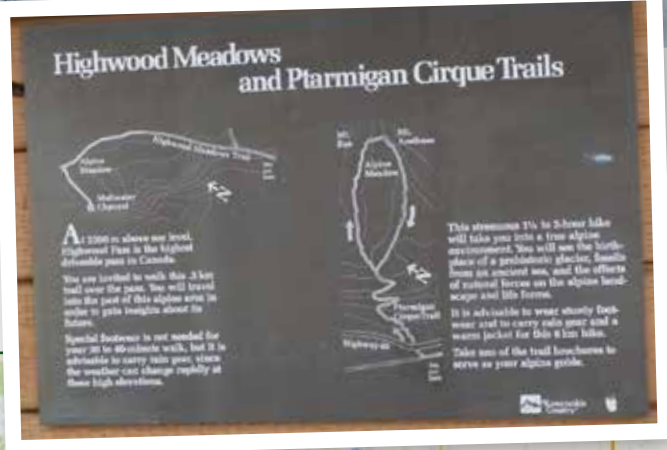
As we went by Eden Valley the gas gauge was indicating that we would be on fumes by Calgary, so we decided to stop for a splash at the gas station runs by the First Nations. All the folks were very friendly but it was quite a laid back affair and a cultural revelation for my friend. We pumped our own gas on the honour system and were told by the folks to put a rock on the fuel shut-off lever as the unit was broken.

We climbed the highway going north and were greeted by a family of Big Horn Sheep (or goats?) that were looking for handouts. They had absolutely no fear of the cars and one came within 6” of us sitting the *Miata* with the top down – he was so close that the final picture was too close for the camera to focus!

We continued to climb and the air got noticeably cooler, snow began appearing the trees and then by the side of the road. The road was bare and dry but there was two feet of snow at the parking lot at the top of the pass. *This was a good reminder that we on the highest paved road in Canada at 2200 metres elevation.* The clouds rolled in at the summit but as soon as we began descending the steep northern road towards Kananaskis Village we were back in brilliant sunshine and the temperature rose 5-10° Celsius.

We stopped at the bar of the Delta Hotel for a late lunch of Sliders beef on a stick and had a pleasant view towards the ski hill – no snow there yet, but not long now! Suitably fuelled up we headed to the Transcanada Highway east to the Bragg creek turn off then Hwy 8 back to Calgary. In all, it’s a loop of 350km – not too bad a way to spend five hours, especially when most of the club members were hard at work in an office.

This really put me in the mood for the trip to Kimberley the next weekend. I’ll report on that in a future edition. **Happy motoring. ●**



Chapter chatter ...

12.13.15 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words: David Salter ■ Photos: Geoff Roche, John Poletti, Peter Ferguson

The Gippsland run was on and the meeting point was at Yarragon by the old steam train.

I am told it was the site of the old Yarragon train station but they could have said anything as there is no sign of an old station that I can see – just an interesting group of shops including one of our favourite morning tea spots.

It was a beautiful, cool clear morning in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne with a perfect 28° Melbourne and Gippsland day expected with clear skies. So I was keen to take my baby out for the day.

I took the car cover off, gathered my wife and the bits and pieces we needed for the day and set out at 8am for the 100km journey to Yarragon.

Alan [Alaine] Laine (right) had organised a great run from Yarragon through Childers, Thorpedale, Mirboo North, Mardon, Dumbalk North, Mirboo, Boolara, Thorpdale South, Moe South, Narracan, Coalville and finishing in Trafalgar. I believe this is a re-run of the original Eastern Chapter run from 2011! We had 17 MX-5s of all ages including David's shiny new ND, David's gorgeous NC, my NA and everything in between.

Geoff Roche (Central Chapter Captain), below, had brought along his mum, Dot, who is 95 and I hear had a lovely day out. Chris had just become a father three weeks earlier and was lucky enough to get the OK from his partner Kiri to come along while they stayed at home. So congratulations Chris and Kiri and thanks to Kiri for letting Chris come out to play, for the second weekend in a row!



We headed off about 9.45am and John's NA was sporting a nice new set of Federal tyres after he had had a flat with one of the old tyres at the last run. I was following John and they seemed to perform particularly well on the way out of Yarragon.

We all regrouped on the highway for the first turn off on to Williamsons Road. First there were cows then sheep and then best of all a sign saying *8km of winding road*. That's when the smiles widened and the cars started to spread out.

Soon it was time to stop at Mirboo North for a short break. There was some discussion by those who were caught in the downpour from the sprinkler on the way past the potato farm but the real excitement was about David and Leanne's new braless look. In the end it was agreed that their gorgeous yellow NC did look better that way.

By 10.50 we were back on the road again and travelled through Mardon, Dumbalk

North, Mirboo, Boolara where we regrouped before stopping at Mirboo North again for lunch in the park or for most of us at the *Inline 4* café.

It was about Mirboo that I realised the sandwiches I'd made for lunch were tucked up nice and cool in the fridge at home so my wife Chris and I headed down to the café with most of the group before the other clubs arrived as it was expected to get very busy. I can certainly recommend the chicken curry toasties – very tasty and, as was pointed out to me, it was a good thing we had a convertible ... !

After lunch we headed through a great selection of windy roads including some tricky blind crests and later the suburbs of Moe before the spectacular views around Coalville and on to the finish at Trafalgar.

On the run through Moe, John's car was getting so excited to be near the finish it just kept 'going off' – until he finally got the chance to stop and disconnect the alarm and regain some peace.

A couple of the passengers swapped cars for this last section of the drive and I'm sure I heard a drivers' debrief going on in the car park at Trafalgar. David and Leanne had kindly invited everyone back to their house for a BBQ after the run and about a third of the people made it back there. I hear they had a great late arvo/early evening.

It had been a lovely day, beautiful convertible weather, a great selection of windy roads, some friendly locals waving on our way past and my baby performed faultlessly all day. So I gave my baby a wash and a check over and tucked it away for another day. ●





Organiser: Alan Laine



Chapter chatter ...

13.12.15 | North-Eastern Victoria ■ Words: Marg Gillick ■ Photos: Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw
■ Organiser: Ron Gillick



*T'is two weeks before Christmas, we gather in Yack;
picnic and pressies all packed in the back.*

*Ron gives the low down and heads up the crew –
two reds and two silvers and one of dark blue.*

*Our new member Keith in artillery grey
and Ian and Karen from down Western way.
Tangambalanga and Tallangatta too,
along Yabba road, admire the view.*

*We enter the forest toward Lockhart Gap,
Margaret and Ron nearly have a mishap ...
Hiding in shadow a dead kangaroo;
it's now a bit flatter, the air slightly blue!!*

*We break at the top to have morning tea
and gaze through the haze down the Mitta valley.
Boots all pop open, out come the supplies,
next we are swatting hundreds of flies.*

*Off again now with Shane and Loz leading,
along by the river zipping and weaving.
They've found a great lunch spot – they know where to go:
turn left at Tawonga, near Mt. Buffalo.*

*At the end of the tar we find Mountain Creek,
a great little spot for our picnic to eat
We enjoy lunch and a chat, but no time for a nap,
the next part of the run ... Tawonga Gap.*

*Zoom up the hill but nearly stop dead ...
a gaggle of pushies ... Oh dear! Enough said.
BUT they let us go by, so past them we glide,
through Bright and Porepunkah we continue to ride.*

*Stop at the Berry Farm, a good thing it would seem,
with all sorts of berries and home-made icecream.
We've had a great day, so all give a cheer,
Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year.*

(With apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)



✓ Loz Thomas

Ian Bradshaw, Marg & Ron Gillick >



A North-Eastern Christmas



Chapter chatter ...

20.12.15 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Karen Bradshaw ■ Photos: Marg Gillick, Karen Bradshaw ■ Organisers: Dawn &

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh, what fun it is to ride in an open MX-5!

After much deliberation by Ian and Alan – will we or wont we? – they decided we will!

So once again the MX-5ers gathered at Phoenix College to be led out to the Wallinduc Fire shed by reindeer Jeff Woolf. Jeff led out reindeer Lucas Fitt, reindeer Lawrie and Virgie Hocking and reindeer John and Noellene Gleeson ... *and there were no U-turns this year!*

They were greeted by run organisers, reindeer Alan and Dawn Everett, visiting Central Chapter Captain reindeer Geoff Roche and wife Bronwyn, reindeer Ron and Marg Gillick from North Eastern Victoria Chapter and we Bradshaws.

There was a vast array of Christmas nibbles on offer for our morning fuel up. There was much animated chit-chat as old friends caught up with each other. After sufficiently filling up on Christmas fuel it was time for eight MX-5 sleighs to head off on the Christmas Run lead by #1 Reindeer pairing of Alan and Dawn, the rear bought up by the #8 reindeer – the Bradshaws.

Up the road we travelled to Cape Clear, seeing the smoke from the Scotsburn/Elaine fire in the far distance – a stark reminder of nature at her worst. The clouds were rolling in so the sun only made intermittent appearances; it was pleasantly warm with a breeze – not the extreme heat of the day before.

From Cape Clear we took the back road to Linton, then had a stop off at the Flagstaff Hill Lookout a couple of kilometres up the Glenelg Highway. So up the lookout some of us went, for the 360° view of the vast surrounding area. Once again we could see the smoke from the fire in the far, far distance.



We had the obligatory group photo, then it was it was back in our MX-5 sleighs. BUT wait, our leading reindeer had a flat battery (reminiscent of a previous run, think it's time for a new battery Alan), but this time he had jumper leads so with the help from reindeer Lawrie we jump-started Al's sleigh and we were off again. Back

to Linton we went, where we turned off and traversed the winding Devils Kitchen Road. Then it was the back road to Berringa, Cape Clear and then a quick pit stop at Rokewood – it was very warm here.

We then headed back to the fire shed, via more back roads where we went past the spot where the Wallinduc fire had started and which Ian and Alan had attended, carrying out their fire fighting duties the previous day. Wait, what was that on the windscreen? No ... it couldn't be! Yes, it was rain – the cool change was here!

Back at the fire shed Kevin and Jan were waiting for us so it was out with the BBQ (our Captain donned his Santa apron and matching chef hat for BBQ duty), more nibbles, salads and Christmas cheer. The rain continued most of the afternoon and our thoughts were with the Scotsburn/Elaine communities.

After stuffing ourselves with food, Christmas cheer and lots and lots of chatter, members gradually drifted off home in their MX-5 sleighs. What a wonderful day had by all. Thank you to Alan and Dawn for organising such an interesting and fun day. ●



^ Lucas, Ian, Jeff and Ron ...



Alan Everett

✓ Clockwise from left: Virgie, Lawrie, Dawn, Alan, Bronwyn, Marg, Geoff, Ron, Jeff, Lucas, Noellene, Ian and John



^ Three wise men!

Chapter chatter ...

19.12.15 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words, photos, organiser: John Waldock

The Chapter met on a warm Saturday morning (a change from our regular Sunday events) for a short drive followed by a Christmas BBQ.

After a chat and drivers' briefing, we headed off. As usual, the group was slightly broken up by traffic lights but we soon cleared Hobart on our way up to Fern Tree and then down to Lower Longley.

This road has some terrific corners, but is often frequented by cyclists and slow vehicles. Luckily for us the road was clear and we were able to enjoy the corners and challenge of this short run down to lower Longley. It's easy to see why they used it as a Targa stage last year.

At Lower Longley we had a short break, with lots of stretching and chin wagging going on. I was keen to find out about Eddie's NC, which had to return early from the last run with noticeable smoke. Unfortunately, the pistons are on the way out but Eddie is going to have a 2.5L motor from a Mazda3 SP25 fitted, which will make for a very interesting car we all think.

We headed across to Sandfly, and then back to Hobart via Margate. We arrived to find the mighty *Red Beetle* (the Chapter's unofficial support vehicle) there already, with my wife Michelle getting the BBQ ready. We all found a place to sit, and while many lies were told, food was prepared and, after eating, a few prizes were drawn.

Thanks to all in the Southern Tasmania Chapter for another successful year. The membership is slowly increasing, and our run numbers have been very strong.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in the new year. ●



Vale Cliff Hutton

On a much sadder note, former Chapter member Cliff Hutton passed away on Christmas Day.

Cliff was one of the early members of the Southern Tasmania Chapter, quiet and unassuming. He was always happy when a bonnet was raised, giving thoughtful and understated advice.

Cliff was one of nature's gentlemen and will be sadly missed by us all. ■





30.12.15 | **Central** ■ Words: Dianne Lindner ■ Photos: Bob de Bont, Bronwyn Roche ■ Organiser: Murray Finlay

Heading down at 9am to our meeting point at Chirnside Park I only expected to see a dozen or so cars for Murray's run, as it was mid-week and also that quiet time between Christmas and New Year.

How wrong was I?

With perfect weather forecast and an already cloudless sky, the MX-5s just kept turning up ... in fact, 44 of them! What a fantastic display of cars, and a good few NDs joining the run.

Leading the run today were Murray and Alyssa; we were also in the company of Don (our former Club President) and Peter (our new President), some new and returning members as well as a lot of other people who are becoming more familiar to me with each Club run.

After the briefing we headed east in two groups along Maroondah Hwy, passing through Lilydale and then turning on to the Warburton Hwy. A pretty little drive passing through Wandin with its many fruit orchards, strawberry fields and wineries, then into Seville with even more wineries, Wild Cattle Creek on the left and Whispering Hills and Payne's Rise on the right. The traffic was light as we headed up hill toward Woori Yallock with stunning views of the fields and pastures in the Don Valley and the mountains of the Warburton Ranges rising all around us.

We turned left off the Warburton Hwy, opposite the pub in Launching Place, into Don Road then into Dalry Road, a quiet little road with the odd bend to zip around. I know this was a scenic run and not a speedy one, but when the car wants to pick up a little speed on the bends, who are we to stop that! 😊

Murray's Unplanned Run

I believe we lost a few cars at the turning point into Don Road who carried on straight ahead after being somewhat engrossed in a car in front of them. However, thankfully it didn't take long before they were all back on track.

At 10.30 the first group arrived at Healesville, closely followed by the second group. A chance to stretch the legs and grab a coffee from the many cafés and bakeries which lined the main street. Not being a coffee drinker myself I settled on a delicious oversized lemon slice and a fresh orange juice. These social stops along the way are a great opportunity to reconnect with people you've met from previous runs and meet and talk with new people.

Cakes, pies, coffees and slice all happily consumed we headed out of Healesville and on to Myers Creek Rd, a fab little bendy road winding its way through the Toolangi state forest. Toolangi is an aboriginal word meaning *Tall Trees*, and there certainly were a few of them mixed with ferns and other beautiful flora on both sides of the road with only the occasional glimpse of farmland into the valleys on our right.

Past Toolangi we headed north on the Melba Hwy through the



^ Myers Creek Road – a Club favourite [photo: Ella Nicoll]

Chapter Chatter ...

30.12.15 | Central - the Unplanned run (continued)

lovely twisty section before leaving the highway for our drive around the *mildly* curved roads towards King Lake.

A brief stop in front of the Kinglake Pub at around 12 noon gave a chance for the group to reform, refresh and enjoy a little banter before heading back towards Dixons Creek.

The weatherman was right today and the mercury was steadily rising and must have already been sitting around the 30° mark when we left Kinglake. No problem there though, with the top down, windows down, hats, sunnies and sunblock on, we couldn't have asked for more suitable conditions. Just another reason we all love our MX-5s!

The drive down to Dixons Creek provided us with yet more stunning views of the forests either side of us before we re-entered the Melba Hwy one last time for the short little run to the Dixons Creek Café.

Inside the café, undercover with the overhead fans cooling us, we settled down for some ice cold drinks and plenty of talk about what a great little run we'd just had. Minutes after sitting the second group rolled in; such a fab sight seeing the little Mazdas in convoy. Soon there was 60-odd of us drowning out the background music with our conversations and laughter. I hope no one was there for a quiet intimate lunch!

For a little café that held a LOT of people, the staff were quick to get our orders in, fill our glasses and serve all the meals, which might I add were very delish.

Thanks Murray for this very well-planned Unplanned Run. I can't wait to be a part of more great events in 2016! ●



^ Turning right on to the Melba Hwy



^ Nothing to do between Christmas and New Year ... except join 60+ of your closest friends on an MX-5 Club run!

Want some more passenger legroom

Words & photos: Bob de Bont, Assistant Chapter Captain, Central Chapter

One thing I noticed about the NC was the lack of foot room on the passenger side.

Not that I have large feet or long legs, I just can't find a comfortable place to put them under the dash.

I also noticed there appeared to be a lot less room on the passenger side compared to the driver's side. My significant other has a habit of snoozing when I drive and without being able to recline the seatback she does end up with a sore neck.

Whilst trolling through *Miata.net*, I came across a thread which listed a number of cheap mods to fix various issues with the NC and included a reference to "Another free mod and only beneficial for your co pilot is removing that annoying big plastic foot rest under the carpet on passenger side." This struck a chord and I investigated the mod further.



Various discussions on the usefulness of the wedge/footrest from both the US and UK have established it is used to mount the Advanced Keyless Entry (AKE) module (if fitted), and as a mount for the iPod controller. It's designed to create a more comfortable position for your feet, achieve the perfect 50/50 ratio by move the passenger further back or to provide some shock absorption for the passenger's feet in the case of a head-on accident. I'm thinking it would make an ideal position for an aftermarket Engine Control Unit (*what was Mazda thinking?*).

With the correct tools this mod takes about 15-30 minutes and is nearly totally reversible (see point 8). Removing the wedge is applicable for all NCs.

1. Remove the door sill by working your fingers under the side near the rear and pull upwards.



2. Pull away the rubber door seal up to the dash vent.



3. Remove the plastic rivet under the internal fuse box cover/kick panel.



in your NC? Here's how ...



4. Using an appropriate lever, ease out the white clip and remove the fuse box cover/kick panel.



7. **The wedge is located on two studs;** just pull the wedge away from the floor. The studs are not used for anything – to my knowledge – other than locating the plastic wedge and they need to be trimmed flush with the sound deadening (they will still locate the wedge if you chose to refit it). How you remove the excess material is up to you ... pliers, side cutters, hacksaw, Dremel, grinder or bolt cutters (my choice) are but a few options.



5. Remove the trim fastener holding the carpet in place.



8. From some angles you can see some exposed sound deadening. I trimmed and fitted a small piece of black carpet behind the OEM carpet near the fuse box cover/kick panel and heater box.

9. Put everything back in the reverse order – excluding the wedge.



6. Pull back the carpet to expose the plastic wedge.



Initially the carpet will look a bit saggy, but it will conform to the “new” shape and you won't see it. Your passengers will certainly feel the difference. ■



■ Please note: All “Tech Talk” information is provided as a guide only. All work is carried out at the owner's risk.

Tyre age – and the effect on performance and safety

Words & photos: Bob de Bont, Assistant Chapter Captain, Central Chapter

There are a number of great articles on our MX-5 Club website about tyres including the one by former Club member Rob Spargo¹ explaining tyre size and markings.

There's also an article about tyres and rims² by former Club Captain - Motor Sport, Robert Downes, and a further article on the pitfalls of cheap tyres³ by Colin Jevons.

A car's tyres are the one and only thing that keep your car in contact with the road. It doesn't matter how high-tech the vehicle is or how expensive its components are, if the tyres are not up to standard then the vehicle's safety is immediately compromised.

One aspect of tyre ownership not covered by the above articles is the effect of age and how tyre performance degrades over time.

The main reason is due to the oxidation process. As rubber is exposed to oxygen, it dries out and starts to crack. As the tyres become hard their ability to grip the road decreases, irrespective of the amount of tread the tyre has. In extreme situations the tyre can develop internal cracks and from there the possibility of a blowout.

Generally tyres last about six years before they start to lose performance. Any tyre more than 10 years old should be replaced. The first place you would notice a loss of grip is on a wet or slippery surface!

How do we tell how old the tyre is? From the early '90s, tyre manufacturers started moulding dates into the sidewall of tyres. Due to operator safety, dates are only moulded into one side of the tyre. This mould date consists of four digits; the first pair indicates the week and the second pair is the year of manufacture. If the tyre has only three digits, it was manufactured before 2000 and should definitely be replaced. ■

¹ www.miata.net/garage/KnowYourCar/S5_Tire.html

² http://mx5vic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/tyres_and_rims.pdf

³ <http://mx5vic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Cheap-tyres.pdf>

The mould date on this tyre is week 16 of year 2004.



This tyre was manufactured on week 40 of year 1998.



Tyre replacement for the NC

Words: Bob de Bont

An astute buyer can purchase some very good tyres for the NC if they do a little thinking outside the, er, circle.

Research indicates the price listed for tyres is not linked to the physical size of the tyre. The price is dictated by the number of cars fitted with that size tyre and the volume sold.

Mazda has fitted some unique size tyres to various MX-5s over the years, none more so than the **205/45xR17** fitted to the NC.

For comparison purpose, the current 2015 price from a well-known tyre retailer for the *Bridgestone RE003* is \$259 each and for the *Michelin Pilot Sport 3* is \$249 each. A full set would cost about \$1000.

An alternative tyre size which has

become popular for those in the know is the **215/45xR17** which is fractionally larger, fits well on the stock rim and is substantially cheaper. Current 2015 price from the same well-known tyre retailer for the *RE003* is \$177 each and for the *Pilot Sport 3* is \$159 each, about \$700 for a set and a saving of approximately \$300!

The performance difference is negligible; however the cheaper price allows a better quality tyre to be purchased for the same hard-earned dollar.

One thing to note is the car's speedo does become a little more accurate.

Legal aspects regarding changing tyre

size is covered by Vehicle Standards Bulletin 14¹, and Rule 4.2.4 states the replacement tyre must not be more than 15mm larger or 26mm smaller in diameter than that of any tyre designated by the vehicle manufacturer for that model.

The **205/45xR17** has an outside diameter of 616mm and the **215/45xR17** an outside diameter of 626mm. The difference is 10mm or approximately 1.2%, well within the legal requirement. ■

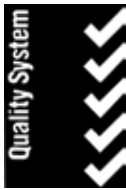
¹ https://infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/pdf/NCOP11_Section_LS_Tyres_Suspension_Steering_V2_1Jan_2011%20v3.pdf

■ **Please note:** All "Tech Talk" information is provided as a guide only. All work is carried out at the owner's risk.

A new option for the MX-5 owner

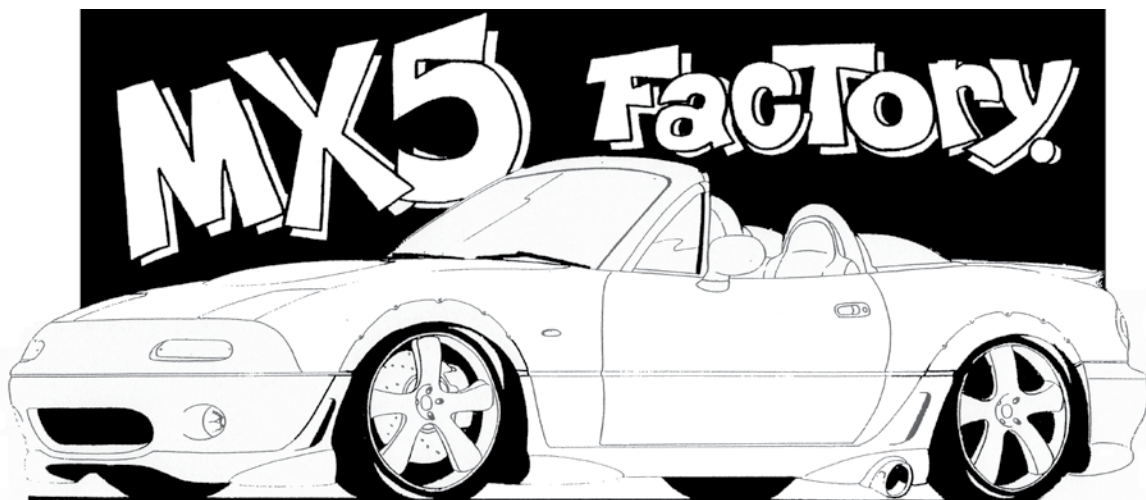
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