

mxtra

8/2016
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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

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8/2016

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Cover image: *Two very impressive machines! A '60s military chopper and the World Car of the Year at the Vietnam Veterans' Commemorative Walk in Seymour.* (Photo: Randy Stagno Navarra)



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

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Pete's Perspective...

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

CAMS who?

In my last report I mentioned how the Club operates under the rules of incorporation and how these rules form the basis of how the Club is run by the Committee. Just as important as this is the Club's affiliation with **CAMS**, the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport.

This affiliation has a number of key benefits for the Club:

- » It allows members to apply for competition licences, so they can compete in motor sport activities.
- » CAMS provides a comprehensive insurance policy for affiliated clubs through its permit system. This insurance covers all events of the Club, including our motor sport (for members with a CAMS licence) and any social and non-competitive activity (for all members).

You may have wondered what the CAMS Permit shown on the Club calendar is (sample: CAMS permit #316/0708/05). This is the permit issued by CAMS and the Club is required to apply for a new permit for each event we run. You will also see this permit number on the event sign-in sheet when you participate in a social run.

So if you thought that the Club's CAMS affiliation was only important for those members who participated in motor sport, then think again, as this affiliation affords all members a benefit, regardless of the event type you are partaking in.

Plenty of Club Activity

When reading through the magazine, you will see that there is still plenty of Club activity, even though the weather has been a bit cool (perhaps a bit of an understatement). We have seen some great destinations in recent months – Wilsons Promontory, Echuca, Macedon Ranges and Tassie Targa runs, just to name a few. With beanies and scarves on and car heaters going full bore, you can still enjoy the open-top feel of the

MX-5, provided there is not *too* much precipitation.

The great thing is that we have now turned the corner on the colder weather and the months (and runs) ahead should be getting warmer.

At the time of writing my report, the **Club's Annual Awards function** is just around the corner (Sunday, 14 August 2016). This is where we recognise the achievements in the Club over the past year, including our Club and Chapter Champions. It's also the time we celebrate our new members and those who have been with the Club over many years, with our years of membership recognition. Mazda Australia will provide the venue with their new head office facilities in Mulgrave. They will also be displaying cars from their heritage collection. If you can't attend, keep an eye out for the report in next month's *mxtra*.

Get Well Cary

For the past few years Cary Warren has been the Social Captain for the Club, assisting the Chapters to organise runs and other events and he has been the key driver in the Committee for all things social. Cary will be taking a short break from the Committee and his role as Social Captain whilst he recovers from some recent illness, so we wish Cary all the best in his recovery.

Whilst Cary is recovering, other members of the Committee and our Chapter Captains can assist you with any enquiries relating to our social activities.

It's been a Whopping Membership Year

I can't finish this month without highlighting the fantastic membership year we have just had. We finished the year with 730 members, a new record for the Club (**note**: the membership year in the Club runs from July to June).

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

August

- 10 Club 26th anniversary / AGM
- 14 Club Awards function
- 21 WV Macedon run
- 21 NTas Mystery Tour Part III
- 27-28 Tas President Pete's Tassie visit
- 30 NEV Mansfield run (Tuesday)

September

- 4 EV Khanacross, Bryant Park
- 11 EV Dargo run
- 18 CEN Mini navigation run
- 25 NEV Mt Buffalo run

October

- 2 EV Licola run
- 9 CEN President's run to Yarragon
- 15 NEV Tumarumba Festival
- 21-14 EV 3 Peaks run
- 23 STas Strathgordon run
- 25 NEV Stanley-Beechworth run

To quote Will Campbell from the last *mxtra*, "that's a whopping 16% more than last year".

It has been a big membership year for the roadster we love, with the release of the *All-New Mazda MX-5* being a huge highlight, not to mention the *World Car of the Year* title. Already we have had half of the membership renew again for this membership year.

So, I welcome all members who have joined us in the past 12 months and thank all members for their continued support of the Club over the years. We look forward to another strong year ahead.

Remember ...

leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.

Pete



Scene about

■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, David Sallter, Peter Ferguson, Karen Bradshaw, Ron Gillick, Jill Steer, Rob Tanner





Track Torque



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

City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - Round 6, Phillip Island

The Motor Sport Team were back at Phillip Island for the first time since Round 1 in January and, considering it was mid-winter, it was great to see over 20 MX-5s entered for the event.

Despite the Wintery outlook we ended up with fantastic weather and, although cold, it was blue skies and a dry track ... perfect track day conditions. With what seems to be the 'norm' at recent events, a number of lap records were broken ... and when a say a number, I mean five!

NA Clubman, NB Clubman, Super Modified, Restricted Open and Open all saw new lap records set and with our two 'fastest' classes now in the 1:40s at Phillip Island once again it proves that an MX-5 is truly a serious motor sport car.

This is your Captain, signing off ...

After three years on the Club Committee, one as Assistant and two years as Motor Sport Captain, it is time for me to take a step back and, as part of the Motor Sport Team's succession plan, hand over to Randy Stagno Navarra who will take on the Motor Sport Captain role at the Club's AGM.

Randy will be backed up by the new Assistant Motor Sport Captain, Gavin Newman, who in his short time as part of the Motor Sport Team has contributed a great deal in the background and – most importantly – embraced the Team's inclusive culture. As Randy and Gavin take on these roles it is worthy of reminder that all of these Committee roles, and in our case the motor sport leadership roles, come with a healthy workload, and all as a volunteer. The management of the Sprint Championship calendar, sponsorship, rules and compliance issues, looking after new-comers at their first events and more, all take up a great deal of time ...

... so they should be thanked, often!

I have been very proud of the initiatives, events and activities that have taken place during my time as Motor Sport Captain:

- Gaining sponsorship for our Sprint Championship;
- a full review of the Championship rules;
- creating a stand-alone Motor Sport Team awards night to encourage more social activities 'away from the track';
- changing the motor sport calendar away from the long-standing financial year to an easier-to-manage calendar year;
- conducting driver training events for Tasmanian Chapters;
- having our three 2015 Winton 6 Hour teams achieve a Top 10 result and being awarded the 'Best Presented Team';
- running the two days of 2016 NatMeet motor sport events

... all of these activities could not have happened without the support of the wider Motor Sport Team and the Committee. *So, thank you.*



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Although I am stepping down from the Motor Sport Captain role, I am not stepping down from motor sport. I am looking forward to still running a few rounds of the Sprint Championship while also having a crack at some other motor sport events, maybe even (gasp!) 'non-MX-5'!

Finally, I would like to thank Randy for his support over the past two years as Assistant Captain, as well as Daniel White and Robert Downes who both encouraged and supported me when taking on the role as Assistant almost three years ago. Although no longer in 'official' roles, these guys still add an immense amount of support in the background.

A final thanks to Peter Dannock, past president Don Nicoll and the Committee for their continued support of the Motor Sport Team.

See you at the track, and remember:
"The older you get, the better you were!"





Membership

Current membership count:

495

and growing!

■ Dave Collins – Acting Membership Officer membership@mx5vic.org.au

Hi everyone!

Will is taking a 'well earned' break with Coral, so I am looking after things for the next couple of months.

The renewals continue to roll in – 99 this month.

Those who have not renewed will cease to receive email and printed copies of *mxtra* after this edition. If you are aware of a friend who has not renewed yet, please remind them.

Welcome to our new members. We are sure you will enjoy the opportunities to get out and about in your wonderful Mazda MX-5 and experience the many hidden gems of roads and townships ... not to mention the chance to meet folk with similar interests.

Central Chapter

Craig Ayres	1989 Black NA
Andrew Dilley	1990 Classic Red NA

Eastern Victoria Chapter

John Miller	1993 Classic Red NA
-------------	---------------------

North-Eastern Victoria

Darryl Johnston	1992 White NA
Ian Watt & Jenny Palmer	1989 Red NA

Southern Tasmania Chapter

Raymond Driver and Diana Kanschat	2011 Aluminium NC
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That's it for another month.

Enjoy, have fun, and be safe

Dave



Club merchandise

■ Bruce Gray, Merchandise merchandise@mx5vic.org.au

now available!

New Club number plate frames and protectors

The Club now has a new batch of number plate frames, for the first time with "Tasmania" in the title.

There are two types - plain plastic frames, and frames with clear protectors. Both have the Club name and web address printed on them so that you can help promote our great Club!

The frames and protectors are available in either slim line or standard sizes – and you can mix and match to whatever your requirements are. **But numbers are limited, so jump to it!**

Frames are priced at \$3 each, and protectors at \$12 each. Postage is additional.

Limited supplies may be available at some Club runs and at Club Committee meetings each month.

Orders can be placed and paid for here: <http://goo.gl/forms/4zfXmDAQY498r1Cn1>

Please send any queries to: Bruce Gray <merchandise@mx5org.vic.au> ■



^ Plate protectors

^ Plain frames

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“Go West – NotMeet”: who’s interested?

■ Words: Peter Silva

Ever dreamt about touring WA in your MX-5? I had never seriously considered the idea ...until I read the article by WA Club President Barrie Parker in last month's *mxtra*. The 32-page brochure* put together by the WA Club was an intriguing read and is a superb recipe for creating a really great road trip.

Unsurprisingly though, it threw up some pretty big unanswered questions:

- » **When would be the best time to go?** A conversation with Barrie narrowed that down to Spring for reasonable weather and WA's famous wildflowers whereas Winter can be quite wet, Summer quite hot and by Autumn everything is looking very brown.
- » **How long would you go for?** Two weeks over in the West would probably let you cover Perth and Margaret River comfortably. Add another week or two to cover the South Coast and the Goldfields. The Northern Exposure leg covers huge distances and would probably need another couple of weeks at least.
- » **How would you get there?** The drive from Melbourne to Perth is almost 3,500 km...a long way by yourself but travelling in a group of MX-5s has a certain appeal to it. Of course driving is not the only option. You can always

send your car by road or rail transport and then fly over...a useful option if your holiday time is limited.

Apart from those questions, the really big one was “What next?” An e-mail or two to our Secretary and Barrie soon had that pinned down. As a first step the WA Club are, quite understandably, asking each of the eastern clubs to gauge their members' interest...and someone with an interest in the trip needed to volunteer to do that for the Vic/Tas club. Although 2019 is still a long way off I felt it was better to act now before any initial enthusiasm waned... hence this article.

So did last month's article rouse your curiosity? If you haven't read it already, have a look through the brochure put together by the WA Club*.

If the idea of touring WA in your MX-5 interests you please let me know. Don't be put off by the lack of detail at this very early stage...the itinerary will be moulded around the interests of those taking

part. As a starting point, please give thought to the following and let me know:

1. Your preferred time of year to go
2. Which of the six regions shown on the map (above - refer WA Club brochure) you would like to visit
3. Would you be interested in driving over and/or back in a group?

By preference, please e-mail me at peter@silva-family.net or, if that doesn't suit, call me on 0405 559 012.

* You can download the WA Club's brochure (4.9MB) from the “NatMeet” page in the “Social” section of the Vic/Tas Club website, <mx5vic.org.au/social/events/natmeet-overview>



Gavin Newman

Central Chapter | Motor Sport Team

The MX-5 Club Grill



Name? Gavin Newman

Age? Desperately late 40s

Born? Whangarei, New Zealand

Current abode? Highett

Profession? IT Manager

Partner? Suzanne, a very understanding wife who 'gets' motor sport – I am so lucky!

Pets? A cat called Tama that thinks he runs our house

Fave food? Suzanne's Moroccan lamb and couscous salad

Can you cook? Yeah, I can actually; don't do it often enough though

Favourite tippie? A good beer when it's warm (the weather, not the beer!) and a nice red wine when it's cooler

First drive? My dad's Toyota Corona

First car? A Hillman Hunter

First fender bender? Slight altercation at a roundabout

in France while driving a VW Combi

Everyday driver? SS Commodore

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

Current MX-5? 1998 NB8A

MX-5 improvements? Although still road registered (just), there are quite a few modifications as this is primarily a track car: coil overs, induction kit, larger exhaust, NB8B engine and six-speed gearbox, LSD, de-powered steering, wheels and R-Spec Tyres, race seat, harness and roll over protection.

MX-5 dislikes? The thoroughly undeserved reputation as a hair dresser's car!

Why an MX-5? Great way to get into motor sport at relatively low cost.

I love the way cars with twice the power and three times the cost pass you on the straight and then you push them all the way through the corners!

Fluffy dice? Definitely not!

Passions besides the MX-5?

As well as driving I also work as an official at motor sport. Everything from the Grand Prix down to state level events. Depending on the event you will normally find me around pit lane, on the start grid, or in the starter's box doing race starts/finishes

Favourite TV show / movie / book? Currently watching the TV series 'Silicon Valley', which appeals to the inner nerd in me

Dream wheels (money no object)? Anything recent from Aston Martin would be fine thanks. Or a BMW M3 ...

Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? If the alternative was walking, then sure – why not?

Favourite other Mazda? Many years ago I had a 13B RX3 Coupe which I loved. Wish I still had it actually. Suzanne's SP25 is also a nice drive

If not a Mazda (gasp!), then what? VF HSV Commodore. I think these cars are actually very under-rated in terms of bang-for-buck compared to cars that are much more expensive to buy and maintain

How long in the Club? Two and a half years

How many MX-5 Club runs or track events? One social run, 21 track events. About 640 competitive laps, if anyone is counting

Favourite Club run/track? Each track has aspects that make it enjoyable, but Phillip

Island would have to be the best for me. It is the fastest one we visit, smooth, flowing, very picturesque and one of, if not the, best motor sport venues in Australia.

Funniest thing seen at a Club event? We have a lot of laughs at our Club sprint events. A memorable one was in Sydney last year, seeing one of the drivers turning up for breakfast already in his driving suit. You've got to love that level of enthusiasm.

Have you been to NatMeet? Unfortunately no. I was away for this year's one and it would have been great to get to Tassie for the event, especially to add two more tracks to my list.

Ford vs Holden? Hmmm, I think I might have shown my hand on that one already.

What's playing in your MX-5? Pretty hard to hear any music in mine, but I am a big fan of Pandora (music streaming service). Right now it is a Motown themed playlist.

Favourite holiday destination? Somewhere with warm temps, a nice beach, and a cold beer.

Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)? Can I stretch this and say the All Blacks? Collingwood if I have to name something local (yes ... I know!)

Final comments? I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far in the Club, albeit confined mainly to the motor sport activities. From my very first contact I have found people to be friendly, supportive, knowledgeable and fun. There are also some pretty good steerers in the group. As is often said in *mxtra*, I would encourage anyone wanting to tick off a bucket list item, and push the limits of their car, to give a track day a go. There are classes for standard cars, that require only basic safety additions and you will find people are willing to show you the way. ■

15



Top: preparing to compete at Winton
Above: as flaggie at the rear of the grid at this year's V8 Supercar race at Phillip Island

Chapter chatter ...

10.7.16 | **Central** ■ Words: Theo Gidis ■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Randy Stagno Navarra ■ Organiser: Bob de Bont

The mid-winter run through the Victorian Highlands was my first foray into some spirited, yet safe, driving with like-minded people in an iconic small sports car.

As a new Mazda MX-5 Club member I was looking forward to my first drive with the Club, in a convoy of MX-5s travelling through some 'tasty twisties'.

On my way to the initial meeting place, the Bunker Hill Coles Express, I found myself behind a green MX-5 on the Greensborough bypass. "Wonder if it's going where I'm going," I thought. Well, *yes it was*. It was being driven by Craig, who I met after rolling in to one of the parking spots, "obviously" reserved for the MX-5 Club. There I spotted another five fellow ND drivers but all four of the N-ABCD models were represented amongst the total of 21 cars (one more joined us later via Lilydale, to make it a total of 22 for the day). I also found that I was one of a few members on their first Club run, including Ross and David who I met later on.

Soon it was time for a pre-run 'pep-talk' from Bob which included convoy rules and a reminder that, even though we would adhere to speed limits and road rules, we are a sports car club so: "... don't doddle!"

With clouds threatening, we set trip meters to zero and off we went!

For the first part of our trek, we headed towards our first stop at Yea. Beanies covered the heads of those who braved the elements and ventured with roof down. We arrived and parked near the Yea Civic Centre for our coffee break. After a short while, the discussions and socialising ended with a blast from a car horn.

Oh, it's Bob's way of 'rallying the troops' for our next and final leg: the run to Seymour. Here we took in some fast sweeping bends, as well as smaller sharper ones, on some narrow roads requiring good concentration for maximum enjoyment.

The cold, occasionally damp and sometimes drizzly conditions failed to dent our enthusiasm, as we arrived in Seymour for lunch and our final stop at the Vietnam Veterans' Commemorative Walk. The car park was a good spot to swap notes about each other's prized possessions, while the rotunda was another nice spot to sit, eat and chat.

The arrival of the rain and even colder conditions signalled to most that it was time to go. Finally, only four remained, as Bob gave David, Clarke and me a few pointers regarding motorkhana and other similar drive days. Hmmm, might just get involved in those as well!

Thanks Bob (and any others) for organising a successful outing, even if you didn't manage to "book in" Saturday's perfect winter's day weather for us all!

Maybe next time. ☺ ●





Victorian
Highlands run ...



^ Reflecting on the four generations ...

Chapter chatter ...

12.7.16 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words: David Salter ■ Photos: David Salter, Peter Ferguson ■ Organisers: David & Leanne Evans

It was a great turnout, particularly for a mid-week run!

There were eight hardy souls from Melbourne and 12 Gippsland locals, most meeting at Trafalgar for a start at the civilised time of 10.30am. *It's as if it was arranged by some of the retired members?*

As my wife and I aren't yet retired we thought it was time to take some time off after a busy End of Financial Year and see what all the fuss was about with these mid-week lunch runs.

It was a sunny start to the day despite the miserable weather forecast as we drove into the hills behind Trafalgar. The locals tell us it's always nice weather in Gippsland. *Hmm, it could be one of those Queensland stories? [You know: beautiful one day ...]*

There were some great MX-5 roads along the way with some glorious views across the odd valley but the focus of today's gathering was lunch at Port Albert.

David and Leanne had arranged to have the Customs House Inn opened for us for lunch ... and possibly a few tall stories. Being in a fishing village it seemed like a good idea to try one of the fish options from the menu and we weren't disappointed.

Before we knew it though, lunch was over and it was time to head back. I think some of the retirees had grand kids to collect from school or something.

All in all it was a great day out – if you are in the area I definitely recommend a trip to the Customs House Inn. The food was great, the service friendly and I thought the prices were very reasonable ... just check when they're open.

Thanks to David, Leanne and the others who organised the day. I can certainly recommend going to one of these relaxed mid-week lunches if you happen to be free. ●





24.7.16 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words, photos & organiser: Peter Ferguson

After several days of rain bucketing down and heavy rain still forecast for Melbourne as far East as Pakenham, the weather at the track was DRY.

We try to have “designer weather” in Gippsland with rain only falling at times when it is convenient. So the day started sunny and calm and – best of all – dry. Unfortunately we stuffed up a bit with the wind – it became freezing around lunch time!

Due to the previous days’ poor weather there were only a total of about 25 cars with eight MX-5 drivers sharing six cars (one of which was put to us as an MX-2, but was really an MR2!).

As a result we got a total of six runs in, all of them on the track, but none in the car park as has been usual – until the new timing box is built, Shane from Gippsland Car Club is getting a bit nervous about losing the old box to an errant vehicle. The result was more longer runs on the track, utilising the bottom loop as well ... no one complained!

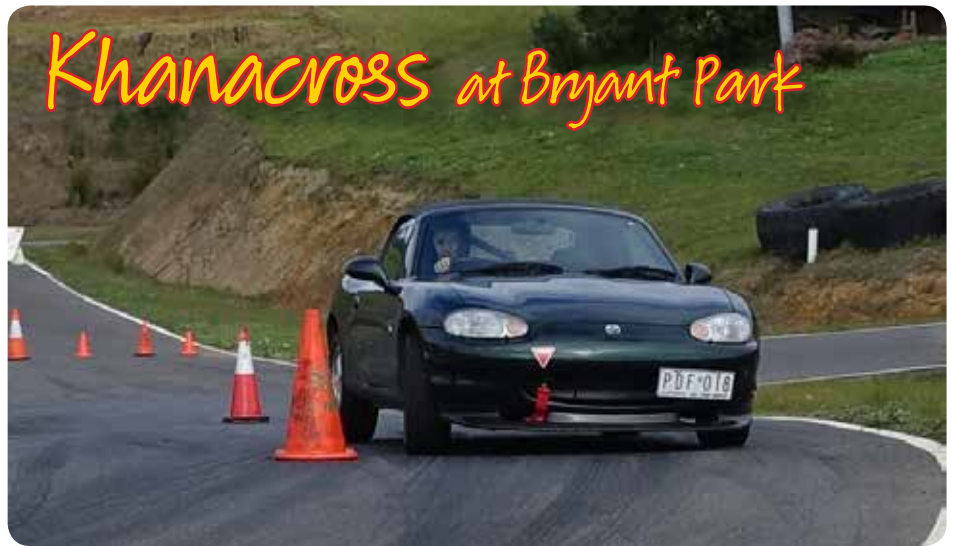
With the small entry list, the day moved fairly quickly with not too much waiting between runs.

The extreme cold and the track conditions meant grip was low, and everyone struggled with keeping on the black stuff. Peter Ferguson, with almost bald rear tyres, had a spin and a couple of big sideways, Bill Roder had tyres squealing everywhere and even Alan Laine’s new Michelins were fairly “loose”. Janine Boyce continued to improve, and did her best to scare husband Andrew, riding shotgun – Andrew reciprocated by scaring her even more when he drove!

New attendees Jarrah and Geoff Pitt made the three-hour trip from Bonnie Doon and had a great day, vowing to be back for the next one. Rob Krygsman had a steady day while suffering from Man Flu – *we narrowly avoided having to call an ambulance for a such a serious complaint!*

Another great day at Bryant Park, albeit a very cold one – but at least it didn’t rain!

Don’t miss the next Khanacross on 4 September. ●



▲ Top: Jarrah Pitt in the NB shared with dad Geoff. Middle: Rob Krygsman in his NA 1.8. Above: Janine Boyce with husband Andrew in the NB, about to give the cone a bit of a smooch.

Chapter chatter ...

17.7.16 | Northern Tasmxnia ■ Words: Bruce Harvey ■ Photos: Jill Steer, Cheryl Murray ■ Organiser: Bruce Harvey

The Perfect Road trip

As every Tasmanian knows, rain – or water condensed from vapour in the atmosphere and falling in drops from clouds – comes from South Australia before tracking through Victoria and Tasmania.

In the weeks leading up to this Chapter run the amount of condensed vapour broke all known records, shifted houses from their foundations, relocated bridges over kilometres, and sadly cost a couple of lives.

Given these conditions and literally pages and pages of road weather reports on the police website, a decision was made to conduct a “dry” run a couple of days before to ensure both access and safety on the day. The decision proved worthwhile, as a few minor tweaks in the route and some notes on dangerous spots were needed, such as where half the road had slipped down the side of a hill or a stream was crossing the road heading for the bottom of the gully. Fortunately the couple of days following the reconnaissance were both dry and windy so by Sunday conditions had improved considerably.

Sunday morning dawned pleasant, providing care was taken to avoid exposed areas where the wind conspired to reduce the

apparent temperature, but it was still a surprise to find 25 eager and rugged-up people ready to go. The morning’s briefing was longer than usual given the branches, gravel, water and other unexpected obstacles that may be encountered en route.

Briefing complete – to the joy of those assembled – we set off. The first 40 minutes were a glorious drive from Devonport down the Bass Highway to just before Burnie where we turned away from the sea for the start of the run proper.

As you all know – or will soon realise – I am passionate about Tasmxnia and the roads we travelled for the next couple of hours through northwest Tasmxnia were roads that many had not been on ever, and others not for a considerable time ... especially in the order and direction we took. Of the hazards that were discussed during the briefing, dogs and goats did not rate a mention, but both “popped up” more than once. After a comfort stop at Pioneer Park, a 35-minute loop brought us



^ L-R (including obscured!): Sandra, Scott, life member Ken, Alana, Belinda, Gerry, Cherie, Glen, Julia, Michael, Tony, Elliot, Roger, Peter, Robert, Cheryl, Ruth, Bruce, Keith, Veronica and Roland ...



out five minutes up the road from the break point. From here we turned southeast towards Gunns Plains where in one section, as we descended to the valley floor, half the road had already beaten us down!

I love it when a plan comes together and the plan today was to arrive at the *Blue Wren* in Ulverstone for lunch by 12.30pm. I had a half-hour leeway on the ETA but the best result for the venue was the earlier arrival. In an outstanding display of driving in a convoy, there was not one corner missed or one car misplaced, so everyone from the front to Ken and Ruth Beaton as *TEC* can congratulate themselves on a job well done ... we arrived bang on 12.30pm.

Over lunch we discussed the scenery and the roads at length, and words like *terrific, great, best yet* and *fantastic* were mentioned as the day was re-lived. It is a real privilege to be a member of this Club along with the people who enjoy driving the best-value sports car in the world. ●



FOOTNOTE

Michael Lindsay – Kochie to his friends – may have been overdoing the vitamin tablets. He has burnt the midnight oil trawling the interweb and the result was for all to see was ... a beautifully-pimped ride. The attention to detail is amazing and, as I write, is still not complete. No part – internal, external or mechanical – has escaped his attention and so far the result is nothing short of sensational. A full story will be on the way.

Chapter chatter ...

17.7.16 | Southern Tasmania

We expect so little of winter in Tassie, but it can by chance throw up some gloriously clear days like the one enjoyed by all who attended this run to Orford and the Darlington Vineyard.

The Chapter met at Rosny as usual, a large group with plenty of smiles as this looked to be the start of a pleasant day. We welcomed new members Chris and Elaine Marshall.

After the customary drivers' briefing, when numerous attempts are usually made to distract the Captain, we all set off towards Richmond, tops down and the sun out. It's a pleasant drive along the Richmond road with vineyards and overhanging trees a feature. We continued towards Fingerpost Rd and then on to

the Tasman Hwy and the first stop at Buckland for a short break, featuring breakfast for some!

It's always pleasing to chat and catch up ... as much as I love driving it's the comradeship of fellow members that makes these days special for me. I had a chance to talk to our new members and stir up a few friends who still have that smug ND glow about them!

After the rest stop (*second breakfast*), we set off again towards Orford at a nice cruising pace as we had plenty of time in hand. We had a

pretty good run through – it's not unusual to see a few caravans or motor homes on this stretch of road but thankfully they all must have been sleeping in.

On arrival we all parked our cars next to the Darlington vines and walked up to claim a spot at the picnic table before the first part of the group disappeared into the cellar for a wine tasting. After what seemed quite a while they returned and the second group made their way in. Darlington grows more varieties of white grape than

red, so we tasted a very nice sauvignon blanc and riesling before finishing with a vintage pinot.

We then proceeded to eat our fill, chatting and looking over the vineyard towards the ocean. With the sun out warming us all, I noticed a few droopy eyes and smiles as we took all this in, before it was time to head back to Hobart.

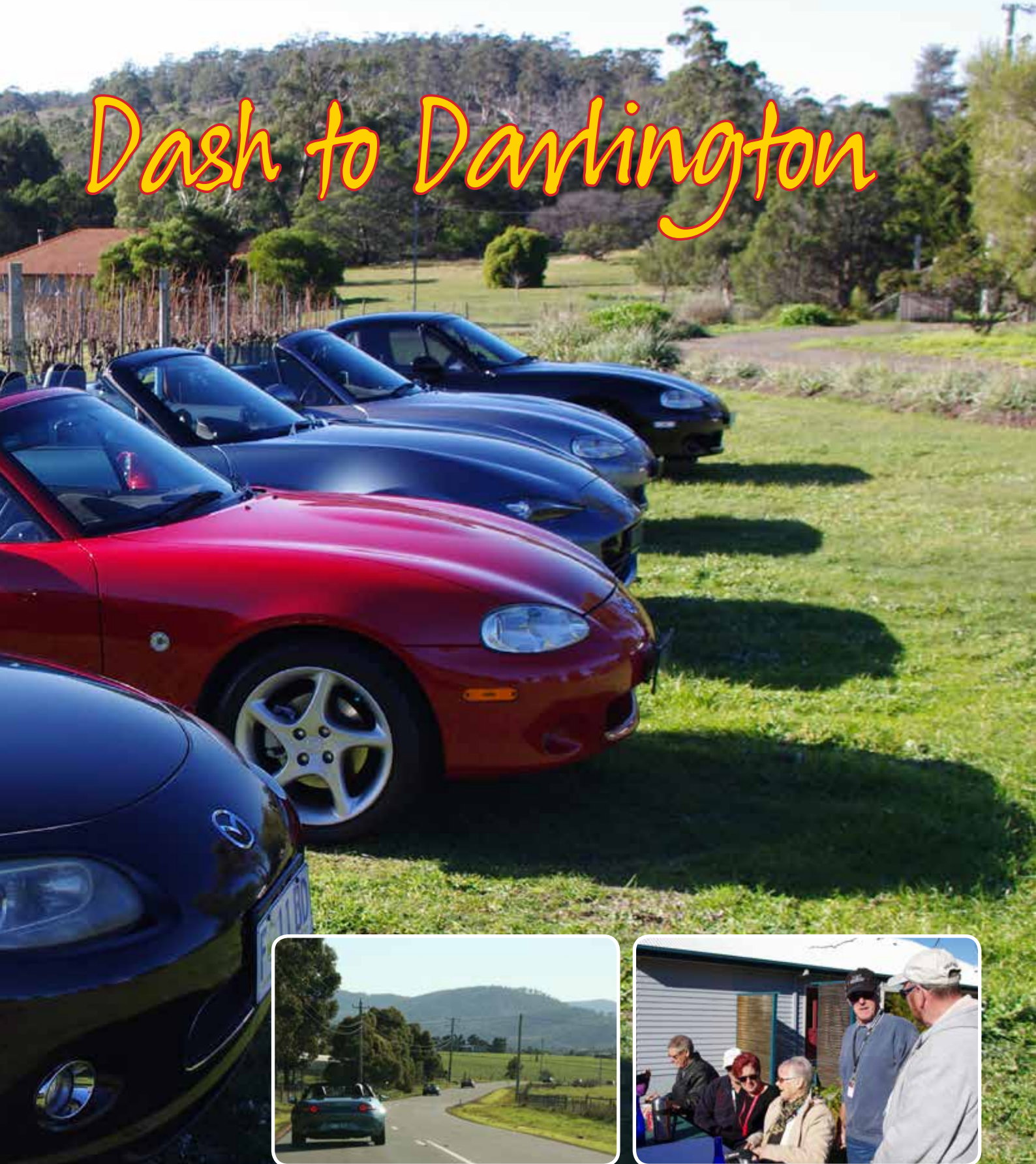
Many thanks to Darlington Vineyard for hosting us; certainly a destination worth revisiting. ●





.....
■ Words: Michelle Waldock ■ Photos: Rob Tanner, John Waldock ■ Organiser: John Waldock

Dash to Darlington



Chapter chatter ...

17.7.16 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Jan Janetski/Karen Bradshaw ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw, Ron Gillick ■ Organisers:



^ Inset: Dawn Everett, Greg "Slipper" Cox and Marg de Bont blow out their candles.
Above: Virgie Hocking, John Gleeson, Ayaka (visiting Japanese student with the Hockings), Graeme Wood, Noellene Gleeson, Lawrie Hocking, Dawn Everett, Parrice Van Velzen, Kathy Wood, Gwenda Parkinson and Marg de Bont.



Ian & Karen Bradshaw

After hot drinks and a friendly chat in the warm cafe at Wilsons in the Lucas Shopping complex, we ventured outside again where it was five degrees but felt like zero.

We met new members Jeff and Lynette and Ian and Sue, from Birregurra (not to be confused with Berringa, like I did). We drove along tree-lined roads in Ross Creek and Haddon, then on to a gravel road from Spratlings Rd in Haddon to Sobey's Rd, Cambrian Hill. It was a good firm road and there were scenic views of Mt Buninyong along the way.

The sun broke through the grey clouds at 11.15 and those who braved the chilly winds with their hoods down would have enjoyed the sun.

We all headed to Buninyong along Napoleons/Buninyong Rd on to Garibaldi. It was a pretty drive with views across the valley to Mt Mercer, with its wind turbines moving gracefully with blue skies in the background (except for the many turned off).

Wide sweeping plains followed. We then turned left into Geelong Road, Shelford, stopping at the recreation reserve by the bridge to stretch our legs and where Kevin came to the rescue with toilet paper, which was missing from the toilet block! We headed off again towards Inverleigh. The trees on the roadside looked pretty with their bare branches against the blue skies.

We arrived at the Inverleigh Hotel for our lunch at 12.30 but never made it inside until 1.00, after we had arranged the cars for a photo shoot. Lunch was lovely with a good selection of meat, chicken and seafood, which we had upstairs in a function room at the hotel.

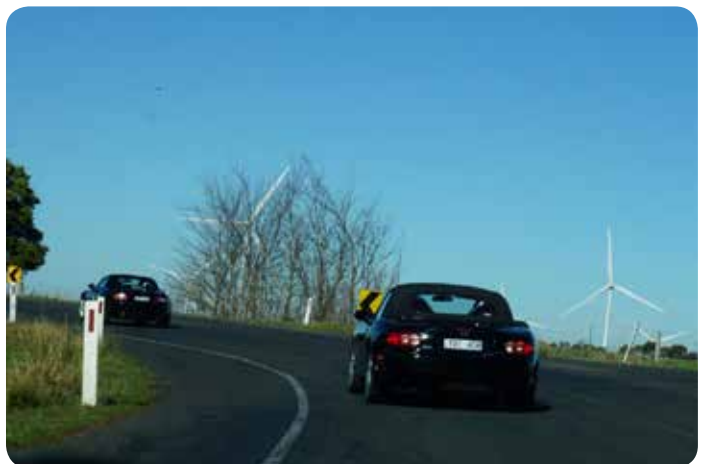
Our Captain presented a birthday cake to "Slipper" whose birthday it was and we sang Happy Birthday to "Slipper", Dawn Everett and Marg de Bont who both had had birthdays in the previous week.

On heading downstairs after that we came across Geelong footballer Tom Hawkins who was having a quiet drink and lunch with a couple of friends. A couple of members introduced themselves and our Captain suggested to Tommy that he needed new boots that kicked straight! Tommy, being a lovely bloke, was very obliging and agreed to have his photo taken in front of the MX-5s all lined up in a row with our Captain ...

After our enjoyable lunch with good company, and a quick shop at the Bakehouse, we headed back. Noelene and John had their roof down on the drive when some cockatoos decided to have a swoop.

The final stop, for some of us, was the Cape Clear Hotel for a quick drink and chat before the remaining Ballarat members headed home and the Everetts and Bradshaws headed home in the opposite direction.

Another enjoyable Club day. ●



Chapter chatter ...

17.7.16 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words: Leeanne Evans ■ Photos: Leeanne Evans, John & Katrina Palmer, David Salter, Peter

Sunday 17 July saw 10 cars assemble at Trafalgar Holden Museum in readiness to head off to Tarra Bulga National Park to enjoy a light lunch in the Lyrebird Café.

After coffee and a catch-up at the museum we headed off on a 125km cruise through Willow Grove, Erica, Rawson, Traralgon and through to Tarra Bulga.

We had two new red NDs join us – Nicole and Ali Lynch and John and Katrina Palmer. We said our farewells to Mark Edwards at our scheduled stop at Rawson, leaving nine cars.

Awesome roads as usual and everything went well until Jenna developed car sickness. Peter pulled over very quickly only to discover he was only a few minutes away from the car park at Tarra Bulga.

The weather was just perfect, so it was a top-off day for everyone. Bill and Margy Roder and David and Chris Salter bought their own lunch, but the rest of us went into the *Lyrebird Café*. All I can say was the service was a lot quicker than last time, with the only hiccup being the burgers - which were a bit rare!

After lunch we discovered that Bill and Margy had left us, so now there were eight! I must say we missed 'Tail End Trish' who is normally with Peter Ilisash, but was absent, so I took on the role for this run. There was a lot of banter on the radios while we drove through the wonderful Gippsland roads, especially with Mel, Jenna and myself trying to give me a name other than 'Tail End Charlie'! The result? I was dubbed 'Backend Bumble Bee'!

We passed Alan Laine's house on the way back through Traralgon South, Churchill, Yinnar, Morwell, Thorpdale before landing back at the Trafalgar Holden Museum. We all said our farewells to Jenna as Peter dropped her off at her boyfriend's house in Trafalgar. Peter Ilisash left us as he was off to Queensland the next day, and the rest of us went inside the museum for coffee and a chat.

I'm going to clock this run up to yet another awesome day for the Gippy Crew – especially Rob Krygsmann for organising this run and to Mel for getting another two-way radio so we could all hear her, as Rob led the way. ●





Ferguson ■ Organiser: Rob Krygsman

✓ Lunch in the Lyre Bird café



Chapter chatter ...

26.7.16 | North-Eastern Victoria ■ Words & photos: Marg Gillick ■ Organiser: Loz Thomas



^ Mobile again ... Gerald with chauffeur Leigh

It has been a very wet winter in the north-east. You could count the sunny days on one hand and still have four fingers left!

Our MX-5 has been parked temporarily in the shed and I was nervous in the days leading up to this run that we wouldn't even be able to get it out without getting bogged, or at the very least making a mess of the yard. I think a driveway to the shed is on the list of priorities of things to do! Anyway, as Shane had promised, it wasn't an issue and we set off on yet another cold, overcast day. However ... it wasn't raining!

We met at the Beechworth Bakery at morning tea time. It was great to see Gerald back, albeit as a passenger. Following a motorcycle accident back in mid-January in which he badly fractured his ankle, he has been laid up and still has external fixation, a moon boot and walking with crutches. A good mate, Leigh, acted as chauffeur. He loved driving Gerald's automatic NC and who knows ... he could be buying an MX-5 next! It was also great to meet Lori Mercieca from the Central Chapter who left Melbourne at 7am just to join us on the run. Roger, too, was also back on deck after being hurt in a motorcycle accident in early June.

Leaving Beechworth we headed to the Winton Wetlands via Milawa, Oxley, Moyhu and Glenrowan. It has to be said that we passed more wetlands on the way than what were actually at Winton. Creeks and rivers were raging and there was lots of local flooding. A result of all this rain, though, was the most amazingly beautiful green paddocks with lots of fat happy cows grazing. We all had our tops down and heaters going and, even though we did run into a few showers, we managed to stay dry and warm.

Arriving at the wetlands we met new members, Barrie and April Halliday from Shepparton. The café was closed but we had all brought a thermos and a picnic lunch which we had on the deck of the café overlooking the wetlands. This was once Lake Makoan, which was decommissioned a few years ago. Despite all the rain that the NE has had there wasn't actually much water to be seen – and not much in the way of wetland birdlife. Still, it was lovely and relaxing sitting out of the wind on the verandah, chatting and having a few good laughs.

Leaving Winton we took some back roads through the Warbys to Wangaratta and had afternoon tea at de Raileur café. With its warm and inviting atmosphere, this is definitely the best place for coffee in Wangaratta. It was here that our run finished and we said farewell to Ron and Lori.

Roger, Gerald and Leigh, and Shane and I headed back to Myrtleford/Bright but not before having to take a detour as the Great Alpine Road was cut due to flooding of the Ovens River. ●

■ Tuesday runs are all about relaxing and taking it easy. The next one is on 30 August – destination Mansfield, with lunch at Delatite winery. Hope to see you then.



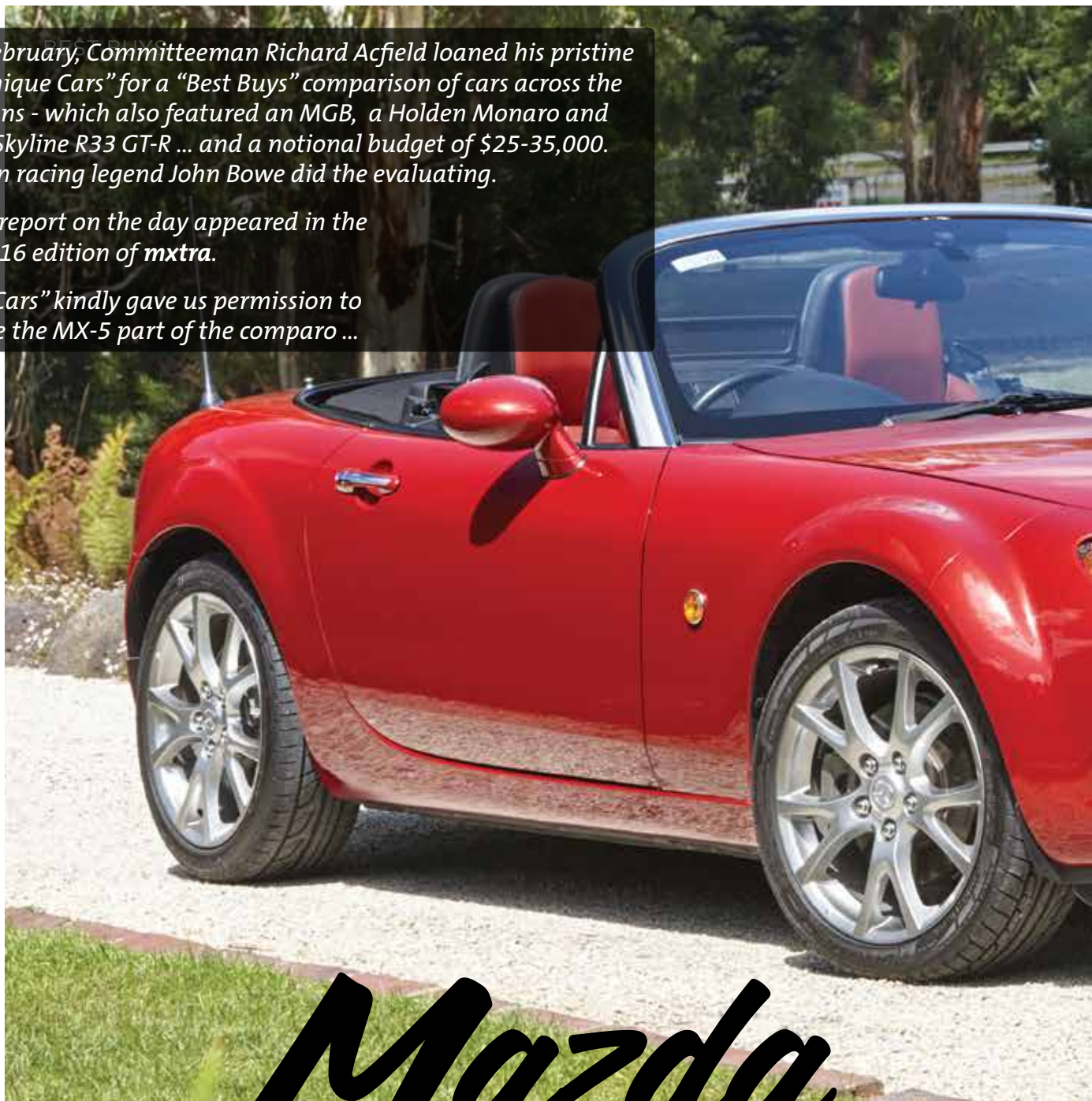


^ Lunch on the wetlands ... clockwise from left: Shane Thomas, Barrie & April Halliday, Roger Cowie, Lori Mercieca (Central chapter), Leigh Smith (chauffeur for Gerald), Gerald Gill (in the white coat) and Ron Gillick.

Back in February, Committeeman Richard Acfield loaned his pristine NC to "Unique Cars" for a "Best Buys" comparison of cars across the generations - which also featured an MGB, a Holden Monaro and a Nissan Skyline R33 GT-R ... and a notional budget of \$25-35,000. Australian racing legend John Bowe did the evaluating.

Richard's report on the day appeared in the March 2016 edition of *mxtra*.

"Unique Cars" kindly gave us permission to reproduce the MX-5 part of the comparo ...



Mazda

MX-5 NC

Now here's something. There have been four generations of Mazda MX-5. The original NA arrived in 1989 and the NB succeeded it in 1998. The NC we have here lobbed in 2005 and lasted a full decade until the all-new ND dropped last year. Four generations, three outright *Wheels Car of the Year* awards, with only the NB missing out in '98 to the Subaru Liberty Wagon. That's a pretty solid record of achievement that none of the other cars arrayed here can get close to. Likewise with sales. If you lined all the MX-5s built from nose to tail you'd probably get to about twenty before sacking it off as a bad job. By any account, the MX-5

is an absolutely exceptional thing.

Records are one thing but does this NC model MX-5 still feel sufficiently special in this company? It's undoubtedly the safe choice for your \$25k and the one we'd instantly recommend if you're averse to ending up standing on the shoulder waiting for a flatbed ride home, but can the Mazda shine here? In many regards the MX-5 is a grower. It's easy to get into the car and come to an instant conclusion that the engine wants for a bit of charisma or that it's a bit tight inside but spend time in an MX-5 – any MX-5 – and you can't escape the conclusion that this is a car for drivers.

It's been engineered to reward the committed driver



Racing line

MX-5 DRIVE



JOHN BOWE

"MY FAMILY had a Mazda dealership in Tasmania when the MX-5 came along in 1989. It was the first sports car roadster to come along in a long time - in fact since the MGB almost 10 years before - so it created a lot of interest. In fact, it's hard to believe the MX-5 is now more than 25 years old! This MX5 is a 2005 model so it's the third-gen car that has only been replaced by the new one. Anyhow, this is a two-litre with a six-speed and it's very refined and sophisticated. In fact, it's probably the best of the MX-5s for daily driving.

It's as easy as a Mazda3 to drive - it's easy to drive and all the controls are nice and light and this one has leather and lots of mod-cons. It's quite a muscular looking thing - it looks like it should have a V8 in it! I reckon a little alloy-block V8 would be nice! But on a winding road it has terrific grip and poise. For bang for your buck, something like this is hard to beat - but I gotta say, it doesn't have the same classic feel of the earlier cars.

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87



ABOVE Numbered plaque denotes this car's position in the Limited Edition production run.

without costing a fortune in consumables. The better you are, the more it delivers, which is the reason why many who can afford a Porsche 911 GT3 or similar also have an MX-5. It also acts as a handy barometer for judging who knows nothing about vehicle dynamics. Anyone dismissing it as a hairdresser's car probably couldn't buy themselves a clue.

"It's very civilised", noted John Bowe after getting out of the little Mazda, which smelled like damning it with faint praise. Of all the cars here, it's the only one you could use as a daily commuter. On a twisty downhill stretch of road, there wouldn't be a whole lot between this and the GT-R in terms of pace, but the Mazda driver would probably be wearing the bigger smile. For this NC model, the Hiroshima company ditched the four-wheel double wishbone suspension setup for a more sophisticated wishbone front and multilink rear end, with the addition of stability control giving the less confident a welcome safety net.

Bigger brakes, a lower centre of gravity,

a far stiffer chassis, better tyres, slicker gearchange, a superior soft top and more space in the cabin, this NC is certainly a serious improvement on the old NB. Some have a downer on the NC because it's the biggest, heaviest and softest of all the MX-5 generations, and it got a working over in the sales charts from the Toyota 86. It's notably bigger inside than the current ND car and that'll swing the decision for taller blokes. Arguments for each? The NA is the original, the NB is much the same with a little extra polish and represents a real bargain nowadays. I reckon the NC might just be the smartest used buy of the bunch and then there's the ridiculously talented but compact ND.

Perhaps it's the sheer ubiquity of the MX-5 that makes it easy to forget quite what an incredible car it is. It's easy to adopt an elitist point of view and reason that there can't be that many who have made such an informed decision, but while a good percentage of MX-5s are bought by those who just want a pretty and reliable soft top,



BELOW Bowe described the MX-5 as 'civilised'. The little Mazda's always been a slow burner.

BELOW Three spoke wheel, twin dial instrument pack, high-mounted radio: it's the MGB reimagined.



**“ANYONE DIMISSING IT AS A HAIRDRESSER’S CAR
PROBABLY COULDN’T BUY THEMSELVES A CLUE”**



MX-5 MARKET GUIDE

HOW CAN you possibly write something mean about the MX-5? This is one of the most complete and enduring sports car designs of any era, a car that even with a puny 85kW could challenge and enchant its driver. Some hint of collector appeal, even among the very early versions, is unfortunately elusive. 1989-92 NA models in outstanding condition seem stuck at \$10-12,000 and even a leather-trimmed Limited is worth only \$3000 more. MX-5s will typically cover 5000-8000km annually and NCs that have clocked 120,000 klicks or more will be plummeting into retained value oblivion. Those showing 50,000k can justify \$20,000-24,000.



VALUE RANGE

MAZDA MX-5 NC SERIES

FAIR
\$8000

GOOD
\$15,500

EXCELLENT
\$23,500



ABOVE MX-5 NC: beefy flares: good. Pixar smiley face front end: jury's out.



“MAZDA ALSO TOOK A LEAF FROM PORSCHE’S BOOK WITH THE CONSISTENCY OF CONTROL WEIGHTS”



that’s good news for those in the market for a used example.

Even this NC Special Edition, with its Bilstein sports suspension, special wheels, red and black leather, extra chrome on the windscreen surround, instrument bezels and door handles, the silver trim inside and the numbered plaque on the dash, would only run you around \$16,000 for a low mileage 2005 car. Running on a new chassis, the NC shares nothing bar a side indicator with its predecessor. Personally speaking, I’m not sure the silvery dash inserts are much of an improvement over the piano black of the normal NC, but otherwise the Special Edition upgrades are nicely judged. All of the touch points feel just right. You sit low, the

pedals are perfectly spaced and the wheel has a decent range of adjustment. Mazda also took a leaf from Porsche’s book with the consistency of control weights too, something that hasn’t been forgotten in the latest car.

It’s quicker than you’d give it credit for too. Sure, the 0-100km/h time of 7.8 seconds doesn’t seem any great shakes until you consider the fact that second gear runs out at 99km/h. It makes its peak torque of 188Nm at 5000rpm which gives the engine a decently muscular feel. By contrast a Toyota 86 will need 6400rpm on the clock for it to afford its peak torque, and this is going to mean more gearchanging on give and take roads. Ten year old NC MX-5 versus a box-fresh 86 on a snaky road in the high country? The

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MX-5

Download the QR Code Reader from the Apple App Store or Google Play



It's mine...

RICHARD ACFIELD
MELBOURNE,
VICTORIA



THIS IS an '05-plated car first registered here in 2006. I've owned it since November. I owned a Sunbeam Alpine in my youth which was good fun, but my son has recently purchased an MX-5 - an NA model. He took me for a couple of

spins then he took my wife for a drive down the Great Ocean Road. When she came back she said, "Richard, we've got to get one of these cars." So I started searching and I found this one, which is a Limited Edition. It's in mint condition so I didn't

look any further. This car actually came with a hard top which I didn't take because I don't believe in them, so I left that for the guy to sell separately. I've joined the MX-5 club and they go on regular runs. They've sussed out every twisty piece of road

in Victoria and so we get 10, 20, 30, 40 MX-5s whizzing round corners. It doesn't perform like the GT-R in a straight line but I'd be willing to bet it could corner just as quickly. I fit in it okay but getting in and out of it's another matter!



Mazda would have the Toyota covered every time.

Here at *Unique Cars*, we love the fact that the MX-5 is a retro car in the best tradition. It's no great secret that Mazda benchmarked the feel and appeal of the original Lotus Elan in the development of the NA MX-5, even aping some details such as the door handles and front grille, but it's not a slavish rehash. It would have been easy to create something

corny and twee but the MX-5 took the ingredients of what made the classic British sports car great and reinterpreted them for a more modern audience. That's what makes the MX-5 so right for this comparison. You could choose the MGB or the MX-5 and be equally satisfied with either, each employing different means to achieve the same ends. Even better than the real thing? That's about the size of it. 🚗

Vital Stats

MAZDA MX-5 NC

BODY Two-door roadster
WEIGHT 1105kg (manual)
ENGINE 1999cc inline four cylinder DOHC
TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual
SUSPENSION Strut (f) multilink (r)
BRAKES 290mm vented discs (f) 280mm discs (r)
POWER/TORQUE 118kW @ 6800rpm / 188Nm @ 5000rpm
PERFORMANCE 0-100km/h 7.8s



Championship standings after Round 6 | Phillip Island ~ 2.7.16

(corrected points)	1st		2nd		3rd	
Overall Champion	Dean Hasnat	» 57	Russell Garner	» 56	Noel Heritage	» 54
Open	Dave Moore	» 41	David Wilken	» 30	---	
Restricted Open	Paul Ledwith	» 30	Tim Meaden	» 23	Steve Schreck	» 7
Super Modified	Russell Garner	» 56	Dean Watchorn	» 33	Robert Parr	» 28
Modified	Dean Hasnat	» 57	Daniel Luong	» 32	Gavin Newman	» 27
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	» 57	Tim Emery	» 17	George Vellis	» 7
NB Clubman	Noel Heritage	» 60	Max Lloyd	» 41	Peter Dannock	» 31
Standard NC	Alan Conrad	» 50	Ian Vague	» 21	Daniel Sadique	» 17
Standard NB	Simeon Ouzas	» 47	Ben Mott	» 10	---	

Results: Round 6 | Phillip Island - 2.7.16

	1st		2nd		3rd	
Open	David Wilken	» 1:43.8729*	Dave Moore	» 1:53.4996	---	
Restricted Open	Paul Ledwith	» 1:49.9674*	---		---	
Super Modified	Russell Garner	» 1:52.0783*	Dean Watchorn	» 1:53.9391	Colin Denman-Jones	» 1:54.4348
Modified	Dean Hasnat	» 1:58.2279	Daniel Luong	» 1:59.4725	Leon Bogers	» 2:04.0443
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	» 2:02.1236*	Tim Emery	» 2:03.5762	---	
NB Clubman	Noel Heritage	» 2:01.5227*	Max Lloyd	» 2:02.3518	Peter Dannock	» 2:02.6564
Standard NC	Alan Conrad	» 1:59.6123	---		---	
Standard NB	---		---		---	* New Club lap record

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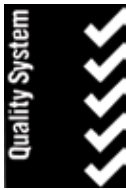
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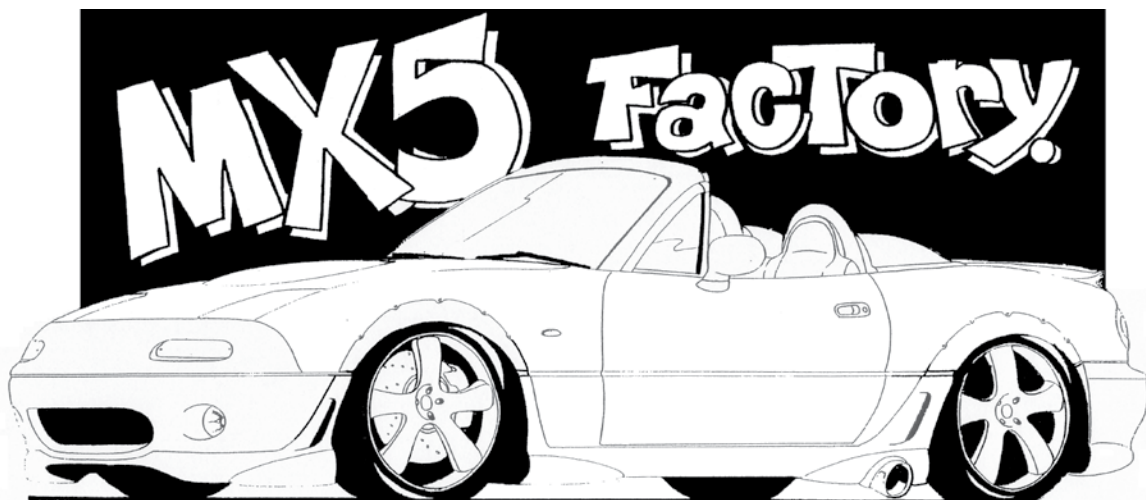
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