

mxtra

1/2017
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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

An Island tribute **- a passing parade for Princey**



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MX-5 Club
of Victoria

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Inside:

MX-pedition across the outback
Preparing for top-down summer driving
Brakes & braids - what's stopping you?



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Cover image: *The Motor Sport crew paid tribute to their late mate, Peter Phillips, with a lap of the track at Phillip Island. (Photo: Lisa Burge, lisaburge@bigpond.com)*



Find us at:
MX-5 Club of Victoria

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Pete's Perspective ..

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

Happy New Year!

It seems like only yesterday that I was wishing members a Happy New Year for 2016, as I penned my first-ever Pete's Perspective for **mxtra**. One year has passed quickly and I am pleased to again wish all members and their families a Happy New Year.

This year is shaping up to be as big as last year for the Club and I look forward to joining members in a broad range of events throughout the year.

NatMeet XIII – 2018

The Mazda MX-5 Club of South Australia has been quick out of the blocks in organising the next NatMeet, to be held in the Barossa Valley in 2018.

After requesting expressions of interest to attend, they have been inundated with interest for the event, resulting in an oversubscription of participants for the event.

Hans Oldenhove, Chairman of NatMeet XIII, has penned a message to members of all of the MX-5 clubs and I have included an edited version of this message below:

Firstly, can I express my appreciation for your very strong support for NatMeet XIII.

Our planning committee optimistically estimated the attendance for the 2018 NatMeet would be around 180 participants, similar to the record attendance in Tasmania.

No-one was more astonished than us when applications rocketed to over 240 with many more requests still coming in, so far out from the planned event date.

Due to this additional demand the planning committee has reluctantly increased the registration numbers to a maximum of 200 participants. This has nothing to do with accommodation space but the maximum capacity for dining venues in the Barossa Valley and our ability to manage events.

I too am extremely disappointed that so many members will miss out and

I sincerely apologise for this dilemma that we now find ourselves in. It begs the question for the direction of future NatMeets to handle such large numbers.

I am more than happy to respond to any questions from anyone regarding this situation."

If you have any questions regarding NatMeet XIII, please feel free to drop me a note and I will pass it on to Hans.

The Italian Job

Since the release of the Abarth 124 Spider last year, it has been interesting to read press articles that compare it to the MX-5, in some type of misguided comparison to determine which car is the better of the two. We all know the answer to that question, but it appears that not everyone would agree with our sentiment.

In November last year, *Cars Guide* in the Herald Sun proclaimed:

"A case of original is not always the best. The Mazda is a great car but the Abarth ups the ante with a sportier bent."

Myself, I prefer the assessment from *Car & Driver* magazine (September 2016):

"A turbocharger and an Italian suit don't make a better Miata ... what isn't available at the FCA (Fiat Chrysler Automobiles) store for any price is the purity of the Mazda's driving behaviour — that unabashed playfulness we expect in a small roadster. We're sure plenty of people could be happy with this car (Abarth 124 Spider); we're just not sure they wouldn't be happier in a Miata."

Or *Autoblog* (Nov 2015):

"... unless the Fiat is drastically different (and better), we have to stand by the theory of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.'"

OK, I am preaching to the converted, but if badge engineering is needed to keep alive the roadster we love, then we will have to suffer these inane comparisons from time to time.

For your diary ...

See the online calendar for details

January

- 21 Mazda MX-5 Fan Fest, Sandown
- 22 Club The Day After Fan Fest run
- 26 WV Australia Day run
- 28 STas Twilight fish 'n' chip run

February

- 5 NEV Tastes of the North-East
- 5 EV Fish 'n' chip run
- 12 CEN Euroa run
- 19 STas Derwent Bridge lunch run
- 19 NTas On the Beach @ 41° South
- 25 CEN Twilight run

March

- 4 STas Twilight gold run
- 5 NTas Chasing the Worm
- 10-13 Club Grampians Discovery (joint Vic-Tas/SA event)
- 11-12 NEV Snowy Mountains w'end
- 19 STas Dover run
- 19 NTas Heading for a Hot Finish
- 26 CEN Navigation run
- 26 NTas Devonport Motor Show
- 28 NEV Taking it Easy on Tuesday - Wallace Hut



Mazda MX-5 Fan Fest

As you read this edition of **mxtra**, the **Mazda MX-5 Fan Fest**, hosted by Mazda Australia at Sandown Raceway, will be upon us.

It will be the biggest MX-5 event ever held in Australia, so if you have an invitation, I look forward to seeing you there.

In next month's **mxtra**, we will have a full story and pictures from the event.

If you attend the **Fan Fest** and take some pictures, feel free to send a selection of photos to Murray (editor@mx5vic.org.au) and they could be used in **mxtra** or uploaded to the Club's online photo gallery (<http://mx5vic.smugmug.com>).

Catch you next month ...

Remember ... leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.

Pete



Scene about ...



■ Photos: Marg Gillick, Clark Menze, Geoff & Bronwyn Roche, Bruce Harvey, Jill Steer, Karen Bradshaw, Elaine Marshall, Rob Tanner





Randy's Rant ...

■ Randy Stagno Navarra – Club Captain - Motor Sport captain@mx5vic.org.au

I hope you've all had a great Christmas and I wish you all the best for 2017.

Last year was a huge year for Motor Sport and I'm hoping 2017 will be just as entertaining.

Naturally we are starting the year off with a big bang with our MX-5 Fan Fest at Sandown. This will be a great experience both for the Motor Sport crew and for all our social members. I'm sure Mazda Australia will be very impressed with what the Club is doing for the day.

Our last round for 2016 was run at Phillip Island. It was a truly memorable day. Track conditions and the weather were perfect and quite a few new lap records and PBs were set on the day. Neil Choi of the AROCA (Alfa) club kindly allowed us to farewell *Princey* by having his car lead us out on a series of rather brisk parade laps. A fitting way for all of us to say farewell.

For the start of the 2017 season I'm very happy to welcome onboard our new sponsors, **Essendon Mazda**. Former Club Captain - Motor Sport, Daniel White, is running the show there and he has been heavily involved in sponsoring our Sprint series in the past.

Check out their advert on the back cover of **mxtra** and consider Essendon Mazda for your next new car or any of your Mazda requirements.

Remember to support the people that support us.

*Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship
~ Rd 1, Broadford, 15 January*

Our first round for 2017 will be held at the tight and twisty Broadford circuit. Entries have already come out so get in early as the numbers are capped for this event. This is the week before the Fan Fest so it's the perfect opportunity to get your eye in for the following week.

Driver Training Day ~ 4 February

Apologies to all the guys who have asked me for more information on this event.

I have no more info at this point in time. I do know that time is running out so as soon as I hear something I'll be in touch. This is a perfect chance for non-motor sport members to get to grips with their cars in the safe environment of a race track.

There will be experienced instructors beside you coaching you as you find out more about yourself and your car. There is also some classroom tuition which will then be applied out on the track. This is not a high-speed event, so if you have ever thought of trying out motor sport this would be an ideal starting point.

Dare I say it ... feel free to contact me for further information.

*Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship
~ Rd 2, Winton, 5 February*

This is just two weeks after the Fan Fest so we are all going to be busy with three events in the space of a month. Entries should come out in early January. Please note that the day before is the driver training day. So once I have more information I'll be asking for instructors for the day. Your reward will be plenty of smiles from your students and a session in the afternoon to set yourselves up for the following day.

I hope you're all looking forward to a great season.



"If you have everything under control, you're not moving fast enough!"

Randy

Trading Post

For Sale -

Used NB8B factory wheel (16x6.5)



Wanted -

- » NC 17-inch wheels
- » NA8 MX-5

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

Visit the Club merchandise online shop ...

... for a great range of Club- and Mazda-branded merchandise:
mx5vic.org.au/clubroom/merchandise





Membership

Current membership count:

662

and growing!

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

G'day again ...

A bit of a slow down this month, as we might expect over the festive season, but still a very big welcome to 13 new members:

Central Chapter

Stephen Brecely	1991 White NA
David Glagovs	2004 Velocity Red NB SE
John & Lorna Read	2008 True Red NC
Ken Speedy	2006 Galaxy Grey NC
Robert & June Williams	2015 Soul Red ND

Eastern Victoria Chapter

Denise & David Tucker	2006 Black NC
-----------------------	---------------

North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Jim and Marita Eddy	2008 Green NB
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Southern Tasmania Chapter

Sean Whelan	2003 Blue NB
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Western Victoria Chapter

Wayne Casey	2008 Green NB
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On another matter, and one that's close to the hearts of many MX-5 drivers, the Great Ocean Road is about to get a much-needed upgrade.

Those of you who have participated in Club events on this iconic road will realise that it is none too soon!

The poor condition of the road was exacerbated in 2016 when over 100 landslides caused by flash flooding resulted in significant damage to the surface. It was this damage that led to our 2016 annual dawn run to Apollo Bay being cancelled.

The good news is that a total of just on \$105 million has recently been allocated by the State and Federal Governments for a five-year repair and maintenance program.

This is well short of the \$1 billion that tourism leaders claim is required to do the job properly, but beggars can't be choosers!

Work is scheduled to start early in 2017 and will include urgent repairs, new rock fall netting and retaining walls. Traffic management technology involving electronic signage and information boards, as well as real-time traffic information, will also be installed.

Living in Torquay, I love getting out on the GOR and, whilst the repair program will be a nuisance, it really is pleasing that something is being done.

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

Will

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Going Topless!

With the warm weather upon us, we thought it appropriate to re-run Will Campbell's timely reminder for we lovers of top-down driving ...



Two or so years ago, I had a rather nasty melanoma removed from my face. Not exactly a pleasant way to start an article but I think the context is important.

Everything went well with the surgery but one outcome is that I need to visit the specialist involved on a six-monthly basis. He knows of my interest in MX-5s and he asked if I am adequately protected from the sun when the roof is down.

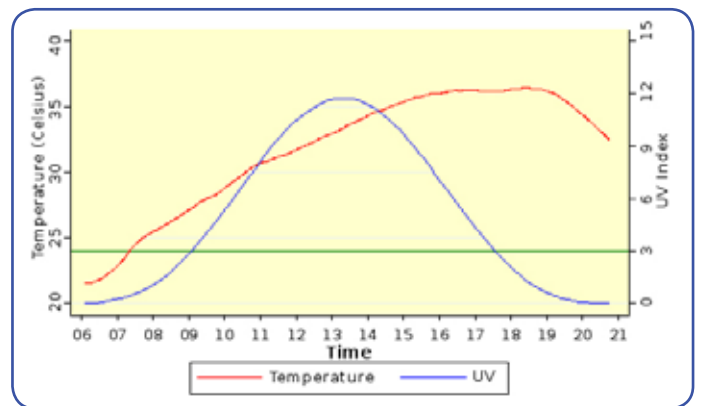
I thought I had the perfect answer when I told him that the roof stays up when it's hot – for me, that's any temperature above about 25°C.

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

Check out the Waxit range and order online at www.waxit.com.au. Our Club coupon code is **mx5club**.

Please add your Club membership number to the "comments" section of your order.

Taking care in the sun



■ Words: Will Campbell, Club Life Member

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

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 forecasts contain 'Sun protection times' in line with the Cancer Council Victoria's (www.cancervic.org.au) recommendation. For example:

"Sun protection recommended from 9.10am to 5.50pm. UV Index predicted to reach 14 [Extreme]"



(<http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts/melbourne.shtml>)

The "Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency" also provides valuable information on UV levels:



(<http://www.arpana.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/index.cfm>)



And, of course, official SunSmart apps for both Android and iPhones are available. These provide the same information as outlined above, but give you the option of selecting your region of Australia.

You will all be familiar with the advice to **slip** on clothing, **slop** on sunscreen, **slap** on a hat, and **slide** on sunglasses!

(www.sunsmart.com.au)

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

Now, with the roof down, the order of the day for my apparel is:

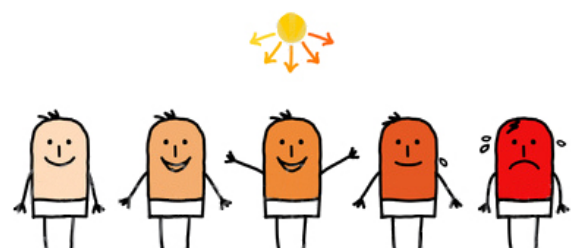
- long trousers or slacks with a long-sleeved shirt
- a decent brimmed hat – caps provide only limited protection for your ears and neck.

You should also **try to wear items that are tightly woven and are not form-fitting**. Layering also helps, as does choosing darker-coloured clothes which absorb more UV radiation.

A good-quality SPF 30+ or higher sunscreen is crucial, and should be applied every two hours. For the average-sized person, Cancer Council 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, Cancer Council Victoria 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! ■



Brakes & braids: what's stopping you?

■ Words & photos: Peter Lawson-Gillies

On the 2015 “3 Peaks Run”, coming down Mt Buffalo, I started to find the brakes on my NC a bit wanting. It’s an auto, so the brakes get a fair hammering.

I studied what was available locally and overseas and after many hours of playing on the net, came up with what seemed like a very good deal.

I purchased four drilled rotors and ceramic pads from the USA, at approximately \$280.00 landed (ie, including transport!).

Are they any good?

When cold, they are a little heavier than normal on the first one or two stops – not *super* heavy, but I can notice it.

Once warmed up though, they just get better and better! I’m VERY impressed!

Fitting was a breeze – it probably took 45 minutes to an hour for the entire car.

If you are thinking of a brake upgrade for your MX-5, have a look at their website (*PDF readers can click on the addresses to go to the relevant pages*):

For the 1989 to 1993 model:

<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/FRONT-REAR-DRILLED-SLOTTED-BRAKE-ROTOR-CERAMIC-PADS-1989-1993-Miata-Miata-/401204970712?hash=item5d69ae04d8>

These cost US\$131.36 plus US\$79.44 postage – that’s about \$295.00 Australian at current exchange rates – not bad!

For the 1994 to 2005 models:

<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/FRONT-REAR-DRILLED-SLOTTED-BRAKE-ROTOR-AND-8-CERAMIC-PADS-1994-2002-Mazda-MX5-/391543174210?hash=item5b29cab442>

Cost is US\$127.37 plus US\$79.32 postage (about A\$289.00).

For the 2006 to 2013 model:

<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/FRONT-REAR-DRILLED-SLOTTED-BRAKE-ROTOR-AND-8-CERAMIC-PADS-2006-2013-Mazda-MX5-/401204967877?hash=item5d69adf9c5>

These cost US\$138.17 plus US\$74.02 postage (about A\$296.00).

They have a very comprehensive website so it’s worth a look for other goodies, including lots of other Mazda models.

No doubt the ND is also in there somewhere.

So, what’s stopping you? ■

On the 2016 “3 Peaks Run”, I had a chance to really work the brakes and see how they perform. They were superb!

I cannot fault them and they created a lot of interest from many other attendees – I suspect further orders will be placed in the coming weeks.

I was also asked to chase up some **braided brake hoses** to be able to be fitted as well – once you improve the brakes, you might as well make a job of it and get the firmest pedal possible!



Above and below: the slotted and drilled rotors. Note that they are plated on the non-braking surface ... no nasty rusty hub!



Postscript:

Go to the following site: <http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/Techna-Fit-Stainless-Steel-Braided-Brake-Lines-2006-2015-Mazda-Miata-MX5-/361733531649?hash=item5438ffa801:g:pzwwAAOSwLnBX3Vo2>

These are specifically for an NC and are approximately A\$154.00 landed. No doubt they also have lines for other model MX-5s – drop them a line to enquire. ■

Chapter chatter ...

4.12.16 | Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Paul Sertori ■ Photos & organiser: Peter Ferguson



This was the final Eastern Victoria Chapter run for 2016.

Enthusiastically all departed Maccas on time with Alan Laine as lead and 'Tail End Trish' holding up the rear.

The convoy first headed out through Churchill to Thorpdale, then Childers soon flashed by. The famed McDonalds Track resonated to the *zoom, zoom* roar as all 12 MX-5s went by. Next up was Mirboo North which provided the first "prostrate stop" of the day.

After a brief stop it was on to Boolara South and then through Yinnar. Soon Jeeralang Junction loomed into sight, then a quick up and down on the Jeeralang West road ... a mini-hillclimb of sorts.

At a regroup stop it was decided to abandon lunch in the interests of finishing early – in consideration of the long-distance drivers getting a head start home. On the return run to Mirboo North (prostrate stop no. 2) a member of the public was drawn to the impressive collection of MX-5s and confessed to being an owner (and possibly a prospective new member).

From Mirboo North it was on to Trafalgar IGA car park where the run officially finished at 2pm. A quick debrief established that all participants gave the day a definite 'thumbs up' – warm weather, good roads and great company.

Here five cars had to leave for home while the remainder set off for Dave and Leeanne Evans' place for a festive EOY BBQ. Here Peter and David did an excellent reprise of their chef double

act and cooked marvellous things for an appreciative group. Eating and drinking was followed by drinking and eating – this cycle repeated for many an hour.

The 'long distance' accolade went to Peter Corkran who did the return trip in his ND from Geelong ... just to sample some of the fabled Gippsland roads.

Result: A good day was had by all! ●



Chapter chatter ...

10.12.16 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words: John Waldock ■ Photos: Rob Tanner, Elaine Marshall, John Waldock

So after another fine year we have our final run report.

The Christmas run is always a very social one, with less emphasis on driving and more on celebration.

We met at Rosny as usual, some cars luridly decorated with tinsel, others decorated with some imagination.

We headed out for one of our short, favourite drives, cruising along the infamous Grass Tree Hill Road (*no need for the 'ladybrake' this time as road works were underway*) then along the back roads of Tea Tree before looping around to arrive at the Richmond Arms perfectly on time, to the astonishment of some (*how dare they!*).

We had a lovely area in the pub with two large tables and we all settled in to order and chat. Lunch was of the normal counter meal type, but the meals arrived quickly at our tables and were very enjoyable. After lunch it was time for the much-anticipated Christmas prize draw, where close to every driver wins a small prize, kindly donated by the members. Afterwards, some settled in for dessert while the rest of us chatted and talked cars. A very relaxed end to the year.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who have attended the Chapter runs in 2016. You have all enriched the life of the Chapter; I look forward to seeing you all again in 2017 for more MX-5 fun and frivolity. ●



▲ Garry & Maureen Whittle's merrily-decorated NC



.....
■ Organiser: John Waldock



Perfect end to a great year ...



^ *Michael and Judy Collinson's NA*



Because it's there ...

***Back in April 1994,
Club Foundation member
Malcolm Brand and his
wife Silvia decided to
go for a drive.***

*Well, not so much a drive as an "MX-pedition"
... 10,000km in six weeks, from Melbourne to
Perth, via the outback!*

*Their report appeared in **mxtra** back in 1994,
and we thought it would make some good
new year's reading to reproduce it again here,
22 years on.*

*Thanks go to their son, Tim, for retyping the
original article (if there was an electronic file, it
didn't survive the decades). Tim was not even
born when his parents made this trip ... he's
about to turn 18, and has been doing his 120
hours' learner driver training in – you guessed
it – the very same NA.*

One plucky NA ... six weeks ... 10,000km!

April 1994 | Outback Odyssey ■ Words and photos: Malcolm Brand, Foundation (and still current) member

If you have never taken the opportunity to travel to Western Australia, by far the best way to cross the Nullarbor is ... by MX-5 with the roof down!

April 22, 1994, was departure day for this intrepid **MX-pedition**.

Starting in Melbourne on a dismal overcast day, little did we know this was to be the last rain we would see for five weeks.

We were heading towards Western Australia but weren't in a big hurry (we were on *holiday* after all) and we decided to start with a delicious brekkie at a café on Beaconsfield Parade, and then go for a run on the Great Ocean Road, just to blow the cobwebs away (the GREAT Ocean Road is just GREAT for MX-5 driving!).

The MX-5 was loaded with tent, food for a week (including several kilos of pasta because Silvia is a fair dinkum Italian and doesn't survive more than 24 hours without her "truckie portion" of spaghetti) sleeping bags, clothes for six weeks (underwear, hats and two each of socks, tee shirts and shorts!), five litres of emergency fuel, billies, two backpacks, maps ... and two adults. Properly packed, the MX-5 easily swallowed this load.

We spent the first night just on the Victorian side of the border at Princess Margaret Caves National Park on the banks of the Glenelg River – a wonderful and incredibly peaceful spot.

The next day saw us getting to Adelaide ... and who could resist a quick whiz around parts of the Grand Prix track?! The friend we were staying with was happy to lead us with his white Capri. It was Anzac Day weekend, the weather was excellent and we visited craft markets, the beautiful botanic gardens (the tropical glass house is not to be missed both from a biological and architectural point of view), some cosmopolitan restaurants (yes, we deserved some good meals before the endless "Days of Canned Soup") and then on Monday ... on the road again for the interminable 773km day, passing through Port Augusta (*last McDonald's – don't miss it*), crossing the Eyre Peninsula and finally getting to Ceduna (without having used the steering wheel too much!) just before dusk.

On the Eyre Highway, towns are few and far apart and water tanks beside the road provided the only navigable landmarks (in fact RACV didn't know what else to put in its strip maps). Ceduna is at the start of the Great Australian Bight, the temperatures were delightful and roof-down cruising was very enjoyable.

The plan for the next day was to cross the Nullarbor Plain and spend the night at Eucla, just a few kilometres after the SA/WA border. The real Nullarbor (the name of which is derived from the Latin and means "no trees") formally exists for only 18km on the coastal road. The best and longest way to experience it is to jump on the Indian Pacific and let it carry you across nearly 700km of *No Trees, Nothing and Nobody*, but we did not know it yet ...

There were always "time-outs" for views of the cliffs along the Great Australian Bight, a spectacular natural wonder. The MX-5 on this section of the journey consumed fuel at the rate of 7.82 litres/100km, or 38.8 miles/gallon, which was quite acceptable. We arrived at Eucla – where petrol was 94.9 cents per litre but the camp fee was only \$2 per site – and enjoyed a refreshing salty shower. It was a great place to break the journey as the old telegraph station and the white sand dunes at the Eucla National Park are quite fascinating.

We were already in Western Australia, but only just, and there were still many more kilometres ahead. Before reaching our next camp site at Balladonia, 519km away, we had the opportunity to drive the longest straight stretch of road in Australia – 90 miles – during which your eyes get crossed and you lose your perception of your right leg. But don't worry: other vehicles are extremely rare and the sign that informs you of the presence of camels, kangaroos and wombats is only there to be photographed (*we only saw rabbits, rabbits, rabbits and more rabbits*), so you can massage your leg, have a drink and slap your face back to life again.

From Balladonia back only briefly to "civilisation": Esperance (where we saw our first MX-5 since Adelaide and where we bought some fresh vegies) and then east to Cape Le Grande National Park – an enchanting range of geographic features on the coast. By this time, we needed to stretch our legs and went for an 8km walk along wonderful white beaches and heathlands.

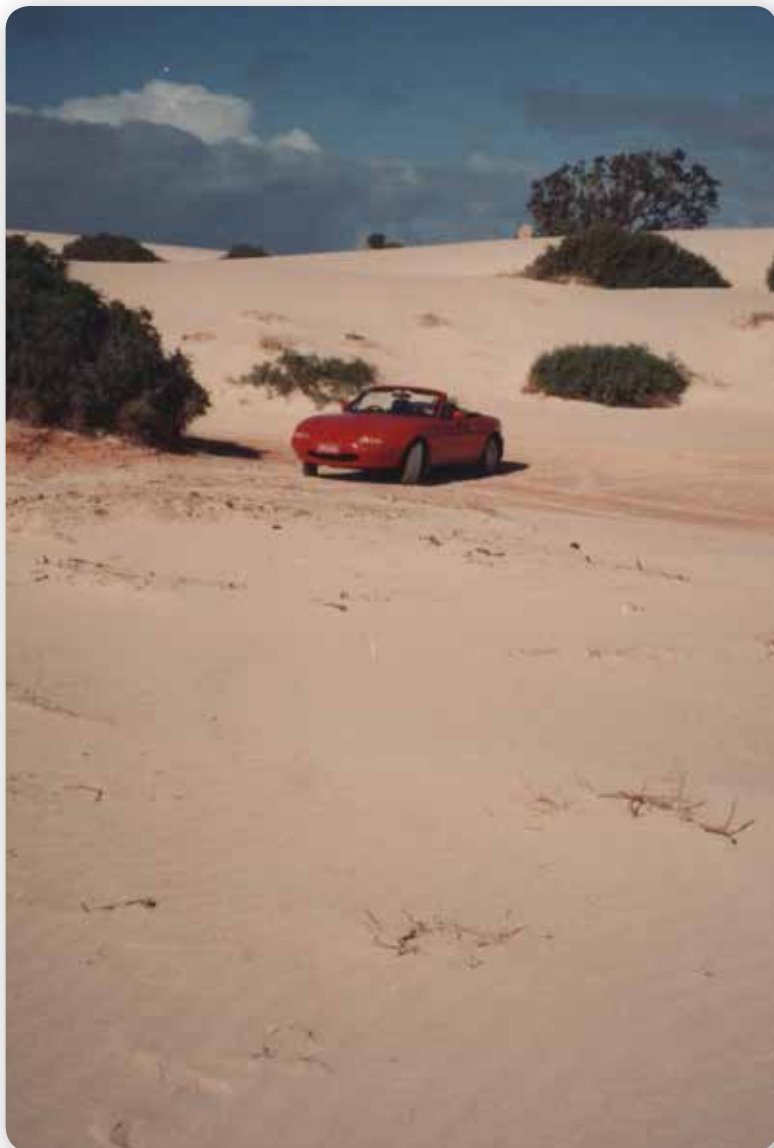
So far we had enjoyed superb bitumen roads but, knowing Silvia (she loves to reach the remotest corner ... she was the one who planned the whole itinerary), I already knew my beloved MX-5 was going get a fair amount of dust. It was her goal to reach Cape Arid National Park, a desolate place with magnificent hard sand beaches (which you travel by car, if it takes your fancy) 120km east of Esperance, 50 of which are on gravel road! But the sacrifice was worth it: the place was enchanting, a true paradise, the campground (we were the only guests) was on a hill and the view over the ocean was superb. We spent the evening watching the sunset over this beach, which seems to stretch to eternity. The Department of Conservation and Land management (CALM) provides free gas stoves, tables and seats underneath a pergola, peaceful and isolated campsites, a water tank for emergencies and the hypnotising view – *all for free!*

Leaving Cape Arid with a bit of sadness in our hearts, we headed north west towards Wave Rock at Hyden. This interesting formation has been sculptured and coloured by chemicals over 2700 million years to take on its wave-like character. Whilst in photos the wave seems enormous, in real life it was almost disappointing ("*is this IT?! is the typical outcry of the flabbergasted visitor who has travelled overnight to reach the popular site!*"). To put icing on the cake, the local council has installed a concrete wall along the top of the wave to collect water for the town and convey it to a reservoir: *well, what a great idea!* It not only looks ignominious but in fact stops the process of corrosion which has created the wave. We left the next day rejecting the idea the night before of pulling the wall down and putting up a bottle shop, mainly because we didn't have time!

We crossed the Stirling Ranges (where only last year they encountered snow, a meteorological happening one does not always associate with WA) and reached Albany right at the stage the MX-5 was due for its 45,000km service. The service department at Albany Mazda proudly displayed the MX-5 poster but it didn't take us long to realise that they were like us having a poster of Marilyn in the bedroom: *never seen one in the flesh and bones!* However, they were very keen to service a non-four-wheel-drive vehicle and the mechanics did a wonderful job and the MX was now ready for more exciting adventures.

.../continued

Outback Odyssey (continued)



With the car freshly serviced we were ready to venture where nobody had ever gone, and nobody ever will go, by MX-5!

We had travelled nearly 4,500km and still not reached Perth. From Albany we headed west through idyllic forests and came to an enchanting place: Warren River National Park. Our tent looked over this tranquil river surrounded by supreme Karri and Jarrah. We had a campfire with a German backpacker and a Londoner who was travelling through Oz in an ex-Australia Post Ford Transit. Again, CALM looked after us with great facilities and ready supply of firewood all for free. The local Ranger, "Draughty" (because he is as strong as a draught horse), provided us with a fascinating account of the forest and the river; he helped to create the National Park. Visitors come from all around the world and he welcomes them all. He will soon retire and spend over a year meeting the many standing invitations he has received from his international friends. For the fastidious MX-5 owner, the only disadvantage of this place was that it was only accessed by gravel roads. Our MX however was coping very well with dust and bumps, provided we took it carefully. We continued our tour via the Gloucester Tree, an awfully tall tree which has a spiral ladder around the trunk and a cabin at the top from which fire

spotters used to operate. When you are there everyone expects you to climb it ... but we didn't.

From here we travelled to Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse – the most south-westerly point of the Australian mainland, at the convergence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans – then we stayed a couple of days with relatives on a farm in Dunsborough, a beautiful seaside village, and – before dipping ourselves into the desert – a quick visit to Fremantle (I can't forget the delicious plate of grilled fish at *Restorante Luigi!*) and Perth.

We got up next morning and smiled to each other: we were truly electrified ... it was time to leave "civilisation" to head north. Silvia had planned to reach some remote regions. The journey, up through the middle of WA, traversed the wheat belt and visited some quite exceptional and unexpected towns such as New Norcia with its magnificent buildings constructed by the Dominican Monks, and Yalgoo, a thriving gold mining town in the 1800s, now with a population of about 200. We camped at the Shire of Yalgoo caravan park – which has four sites and is much smaller than the average back yard. There we were welcomed by another guest: an intrepid Frenchman who told us he was a gold prospector; he and his wife used to spend the day searching for gold with no success, but we had never met a gold prospector before so we were absolutely thrilled.

Our next destination was Meekatharra, but we wanted to visit a meteorite crater 116km (on gravel road) from Yalgoo. We left in the late morning after visiting the town and taking a look from the lookout (it is actually the location of the water tank and its height is no more than a couple of metres – but they don't have anything higher than that!).

On the first section of the journey the gravel road was in poor condition, the landscape was arid, we passed no vehicles ... just imagine being in the desert with its red sand and cliffs, its dry vegetation, and nobody around for kilometres and kilometres, then ... you see a guy walking down the road! We just could not believe it! His Holden Statesman had developed a flat battery in the

early morning; he had forgotten to turn his headlights off before going for a walk on the dunes! Now he was walking to the nearest station – 30km away ... so I gave him a lift, leaving Silvia behind (sometimes it would be good having a back seat!) without knowing whether I would find her again when I got back or if she would be kidnapped by a mysterious road train driver. After one and a half hours – it took that long to reach the station and get back – she was still there, hidden behind a bush, unable to identify who was ahead of the cloud of dust coming in her direction ... *would it be me, or the nefarious kidnapper?*

Eventually we reached the entrance to the meteorite crater area – signposted by an old windmill blade handwritten with the word "METEORITE". This is cattle country and there are gates everywhere – even along the roads (Silvia kept herself fit getting in and out of the car to open and close gates every 15-20 minutes) – and we detected that the local jackaroo had problems with a few visitors: the sign on the old gate read "SHUT THE BLOODY GATE!". Which we did.

The track to the crater was not really even suitable for a 4WD – let alone an MX-5 – but with patience, and a couple of diversions



into the bush, we covered the 16km to the crater in *just* 90 minutes! And to see what ... just a small hole in the ground! In fact, we walked around for a while looking for it before realising it was only a slight depression under our feet!

After lunch it was quickly on to Cue, where corrugated iron architecture is at its best (two-storey mansions built from tin!), then up to Meekatharra. We took the Gascoyne Junction Road to Mt Augustus National Park to see the world's largest monolith (*yes, we too thought it was Uluru – but no, it's not!*). The Gascoyne Junction Road is partly bitumen and gravel: *the first 500 metres is bitumen and the remaining 800km are gravel!* It took us nine hours to reach Mt Augustus (350 km), but this time it was worth the effort: it's a fantastic place. We climbed the summit the next day – a delightful six-hour walk, much needed after all that driving. The station manager (and not just him) seemed quite bemused by our MX-5. He surely had not seen many up there!!

It was along the Gascoyne Junction Road that we found the most expensive petrol at 99.9 cents/litre, but fortunately the excellent fuel economy of the MX-5 meant that we did not have to refuel yet.

The Upper Gascoyne Council oversees thousands of square kilometres and proudly boasts that it only has 500 metres of bitumen to maintain; people speak of roads in terms of when the grader last went through! The photo on page 14 gives some idea of the landscape, covered in small (and not so small) rocks for hundreds of kilometres. We eventually made it to Carnarvon – full of beautiful lush banana plantations – and to the bitumen road.

From here we travelled north, crossed the Tropic of Capricorn and arrived at Coral Bay, a small village which allows easy access to Ningaloo Reef just 2km away – and its beautiful coral (of beauty equal to that found on the Great Barrier Reef). We snorkelled and enjoyed the beach for a day before turning the MX south. Coral Bay was the northern-most point we reached, about level with Rockhampton on the east coast.



It was time we to start going back but we still had some interesting places to visit: Monkey Mia and its dolphins, Kalbarri National Park with its canyons cut through rock by the Murchison River, Geraldton and the Nambung National Park, home of the Pinnacles desert, a truly amazing place where thousands of limestone pillars rise out of a stark landscape of yellow sand.

When we reached Perth on a rainy afternoon, our trip was close to an end; the last experience we and the MX-5 were going to have was the trip back to Adelaide on the Indian Pacific – a three-day journey across the true Nullarbor (*more than 700km of ... nothing!*).

The car was loaded on to the train and we wished it “*bon voyage*”. It got pretty dusty along the way, however the railway authorities gave us a complementary special car detergent when we collected the MX in Adelaide, but the first wash it had was provided by heavy rain on the way back to Melbourne.

Raise the soft top, we're back! ■



^ The “Brand” brand, then and now: the NA amongst the scrub on the Nullarbor in 1994, and Malcolm's current ND in more leafy surroundings in Melbourne in 2016. The first-generation MX is being passed on to the next generation Brand ...

Chapter chatter ...

10.12.16 | North-Eastern Victoria

■ Words: Loz Thomas ■ Photos: Marg Gillick ■ Organisers: Ron & Marg Gillick

The Christmas run on Saturday, 10 December, was the North-Eastern Victoria Chapter's final run for the year and the best was saved for last ... the best weather and the best attendance.

Twelve cars met at Yackandandah on a brilliant clear sunny day. It was fantastic to meet several new members. Tony and Sheila from Jerilderie (long way to come to the meeting place but they commented that it was an easy drive ... so no excuses now!), John and Joslyn from Bright, Doug and Kay from Benalla, and David from Albury. It's always great to also see Greg Jordan and Kerry from Central Chapter, who have joined us several times this year – you have to move up here guys! Andrew and Marge joined us from Corowa and introduced us to their friends, Jim and Marita Eddy, who have recently purchased a MX-5 and are keen to join the Club.

In the spirit of Christmas this run was not just about getting together to enjoy each other's company, driving our fantastic cars on great roads and enjoying lunch in the beautiful Beechworth vineyard that is Amulet, but also to support those less fortunate than ourselves. Everyone generously donated presents for the *Uniting Care Christmas Gift Appeal* which Ron and Marg delivered to the ABC in Wodonga.

Also continuing with the Christmas spirit I handed out a 25-question Christmas quiz. Thanks to the Club Committee there were prizes for the winners.

We all left Yack with our tops down and had a leisurely drive (only one twisty section on the Happy Valley road) to Eldorado. Cock's Eldorado Dredge has remained in its final mooring place here at Eldorado since 1954. It was tied up here after operating for 18 years and dredging gold and tin concentrate from Reedy Creek. We took a look at the internal workings and followed the gangway to the first floor to view the Control Room and the lower floors. It remains a formidable sight and graphically illustrates the extent of the mining operation in and around the town.

Leaving Eldorado we headed to our lunch destination: Amulet winery in Beechworth. After a tasting of wines, cider and prosecco our lunch was served. Platters of ham, prosciutto, salami, cheeses, olives, figs, sun-dried tomatoes, salad, sourdough bread and condiments went very nicely with a cold beverage.

Meanwhile the answers to the Christmas quiz were revealed. First prize went to Ron and Marg (*no thanks to Ron "the Grinch" Gillick*) who won their lunch for two (valued at \$40). Second prize of a four-pack of Amulet Prosecco (valued at \$36) conveniently went to the team of four (Andrew and Marge Johns and Jim and Marita Eddy). Third-place winners of a box of chocolates were Tony and Sheila. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to the Committee of the Mazda MX-5 Club Victoria & Tasmania for your support and donations.

So, the only part of the run that I had to organise was the afternoon tea at *Highgrove berry farm* in Stanley. It was here that we were to pick cherries and berries, enjoy an ice cream and then bid our farewells.

Unfortunately I didn't phone to confirm and the farm was actually *closed* due to the fruit season being late this year. This meant that, after parking on the side of the road, we all went our separate ways home without any kind of conclusion to the day. *Sorry to everyone for the abrupt end to the day.*



^ In the ruins of the Eldorado Dredge



^ Arriving in Beechworth

< Always something to talk about ...

Thanks Ron and Marg for organising the run and also the donations to the Christmas gift appeal.

On behalf of the NE Vic Chapter, Shane and I hope everyone had a very merry Christmas, and wish you a safe, healthy and happy zooming new year. ●



Chapter chatter ...

11.12.16 | Central ■ Words: Dave Wilson (SMURFR) ■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Bob de Bont ■ Organiser: Bob de Bont

Once upon a time there were a group of Smurfs who liked nothing more than to drive their MX-5s around the countryside.

And on this particular occasion it was no different.

The group met under grey skies at a service centre at Donnybrook, 11 MX-5s ... and a Hyundai i30 wagon. Now this was no ordinary run. This was a **Christmas Toy Run** and every car presented a neatly-wrapped Christmas present which were in turn handed to *Challenge*, a not-for-profit organisation supporting kids with cancer. A worthy cause you would agree.

(Of course, this is why the tag-a-long Hyundai was there – to become the Club sleigh ... and to free up space in the MX-5s' boots.)

They huddled around to go over the usual run notes and general banter. Then just as they were about to leave the evil *Gargamel* came tearing through the car park yelling "get a real car" at the small group of Smurfs from his

4WD. Thankfully that was the last they saw of him that day!

It was time to leave so rooves were dropped and the run order was sorted as they left the carpark. A quick drive up the Hume Freeway saw the group turn off at Wallan. Now Wallan isn't the sleepy town it used to be and now has more traffic lights than Bourke Street. And so the group were broken up but, waiting around the corner after the turn to Lancefield, the cars re-grouped and continued on their way.

By the time they arrived at Lancefield the sun was shining and there was no sign of *Gargamel*. A break at Lancefield saw the Smurfs gather on the grass for drinks, mince pies and fruit cake as is the tradition at this time of year. Only 11 cars left Lancefield as one MX-5 decided to head straight for Lancefield Park (our final destination).

They left Lancefield and headed for Pyalong. They darted across the countryside navigating small towns as they went until a red NA pulled over on the side of the road with a mechanical issue. Now they didn't like leaving anyone behind so the whole group stopped. As they were only around the corner from West Pyalong, it was decided that the majority of the group would go and wait there for confirmation of the red NA's fate. A red ND who I believe is related to the red NA (good work for keeping it in the family) stayed behind to resolve the issue. The cars re-grouped and continued on their way.

They were down to nine cars, once again happily driving across the countryside. The roads travelled saw the Smurfs go over mountains, through valleys and along straight stretches until they were back in Lancefield. Entering Lancefield Park the group were happy to see *Black Pantha* had secured a lovely spot on the grass for lunch and the red NA and red ND had made it safely to the meeting point. Apparently the red NA experienced a fuel pump issue which was easily resolved. Two additional cars had met the group for lunch, which was great.

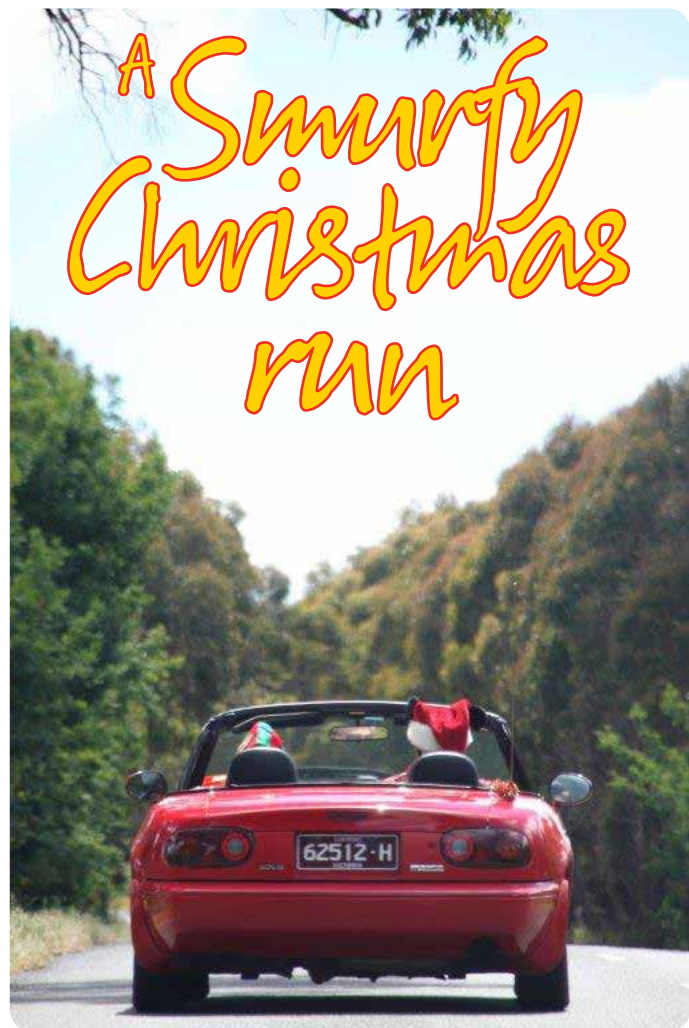
Now a Christmas gathering must include presents! And so awards were given for the best-dressed Smurf and best-dressed MX-5. The best-dressed couple went to Luke and Kirsten Reid who were driving the very lucky red NA and they looked a treat. The best-dressed MX-5 was a draw, going to both Tyrone Dark and Pam Bown and John and Katrina Palmer, who were very lucky their decorations held on for the duration of the drive. A special volunteer award went to the writer of this article for volunteering to write the run report. Thanks for the chocolates and car cloth (not a bib!).

Lunch was eaten and a merry time was had by all. Thanks to Bob Smurf for yet another great run.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy new year. ●



Bob Smurf delivers the drivers' briefing





Bob presents awards to "best-dressed MX-5" winners (above) John & Katrina and (below) Pam & Tyrone



Best-dressed couple: Luke & Kirsten Reid



Bob (in red) presents the Central Chapter's Christmas gifts to the staff at Challenge



SMURFER Dave (right) receives a special report-writing award

Chapter chatter ...

11.12.16 | Northern Tasmania ■ Words & organiser: Bruce Harvey ■ Photos: Bruce Harvey, Jill Steer, Alana McDougall

Sports cars, sunshine and smiles – an unbeatable combination made even more attractive by a picnic Christmas get-together in “MX-5 central” ... aka Northern Tasm^{mx}xnia.

Following the com(pulse)ory coffee with our good friends at the *Blueberry Barn Café*, around 15 cars played follow-the-leader.

For a change the emphasis today was not entirely about the roads and the drive – although having said that, a carefully-planned route did maximise the opportunities to enjoy the car where it excels ... namely any combination of corners connected by short sharp lines. Without a need to stop, the day’s destination was reached quite quickly and without fuss.

Hollybank forest reserve is home to the *Treetops Adventure Park* which, for those of you that do not suffer from acrophobia [noun: extreme or irrational fear of heights ~ Ed.] has 70-odd challenges at varying heights up to 20 metres from terra firma. Underneath the trees a number of areas have been cleared; these provide a mix of natural shade or sun for those working on an early summer tan. It was here that we spread ourselves out complete with MX-mas style picnic food hampers to enjoy the day.

An apology had arrived from the South Pole stating the big fella was too busy to accept our invitation to attend the day’s festivities, however in a display of “PC” authorisation was attached for “Santa Alana” and “elf helper” Cheryl to deputise. This was well received as the pictures will attest.



Following the distribution of the goodies, Trevor Simm – who had really pushed the boat out with his festive toenail polish – invited us to adjourn to his newly-opened bar – *Tandy’s Ale House* – for a drink to help him celebrate the opening the week before. ●



▲ L-R: Roger, Cheryl, Peter, Kochie, Elliot, Cherie, Glen, Julia, Tony, Trev, Rob, Glenda, Yvonne, Robert, Akemi, Josh, Graeme, Cheryl, Bruce, Scott and Belinda



Northern Tasmania Christmas

^ Elf Cheryl with (top row) Tony, Cheryl, Glen; (second row) Trevor, Julia, Roger; (third row) Belinda, Robert, Yvonne; (bottom row) Elliot, Akemi and "Kochie".

Chapter chatter ...

16.10.16 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Noellene Gleeson ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw ■ Organiser: Ian & Karen Bradshaw

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ...
to all our fellow members.*

It is a little cool this morning at 11am as we all arrive at the car park of the Buninyong Hotel, to begin the day of our Christmas run.

After a catch-up with members of each car arriving, and a check to see if everyone's sweets are on ice for the length of the run (because the weather man has said it is going to be a warm afternoon), we hear a roar and a black machine in the shape of a XR8 Ford Falcon arrives.

It's our Captain! Turns out his MX has a leak and is unable to attend today, so the *Mean Machine* has had to come out of the garage.

That makes 10 MX-5s, an Abarth 124 Spider, and the XR8 ready for a great day.

We are given the normal rundown of what is to take place for the day and then it's *Gentlemen/Ladies – start your engines.*

We all pull out following the black beast and turn to the right to the Geelong highway. Up over the hill and a turn now to the left and we are travelling up the mount. This road leads us under trees, around bends, as well as making a few more turns. Our destination for now is Lal Lal falls which, because of the later start, is today's lunch spot.

Bellies filled, a walk down to the viewing platform shows just a dribble coming over the falls, not like it was when we had received a battering of rain a short while ago. That's OK ... we have all enjoyed our chance for good banter and to check out the cars.

We are off again and head to Yendon, up through Morrissions and on to Meredith. Toilet stop!

We turn right towards Steiglitz where now there are some great sweepers and twists ... *SCREeeeeeech!* Guess what ... Johnny boy takes it a bit fast ... *****x#*** that was close! Thank Goodness we are in this little machine; it sticks like glue. Phew!

We continue on to Anakie and then to Ballan. We have a little time to kill before our arrival at Brian and Mary's place, so our leader decides that a visit to *St Anne's Winery* could be a good idea. Great idea for me ... I knocked a couple of Christmas presents on the head. Thank you, Ian!

OK, now we go towards Ballan again, turn to the right and head to our destination.

Now it's time for socialising. Brian, our host and chef, has the pizza oven ready and after everyone prepares their own pizza, Brian's talent kicks in. *Yum yum.* These would have to be the best pizzas ever.

We all enjoy our meal, company and conversations for the next couple of hours.

A few members take this time to express their thanks to our group for the special friendships that are always offered towards members, and also to Mary and Brian for allowing us to come to their home for a meal and wonderful end to our day and 2016 year.

Thank you to all members for the donated gifts for our Christmas charity.

Bring on 2017 ... Zoom Zoom! ●



^ Brian takes charge of the pizza cooking



^ Top: Jeff, Peter and John share a joke (as usual!); Centre: Brian, Dawn, Glenda and Brian;
Bottom: Christmas cheer ... (l-r) Virgie, Lawrie, David, Noellene, Marg, John, Ron, Alan, Pam, Jeff and Bob.

Chapter chatter ...

28.12.16 | Central ■ Words: Simon Acfield ■ Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Bob de Bont ■ Organiser: Bob de Bont

Exposure to the elements is one of the essential MX-5 experiences that make driving our cars so much fun. The sense of freedom, the noises and sometimes the smells.

The question of roof up or down was very much on my mind as we gathered at Chirmside Park Shopping Centre car park for the last Central Chapter run of the year, "The Unplanned Run" through the Yarra Ranges. Forecast: low 30s, 80% chance of rain and high winds. To top it off, a severe weather warning from BoM was issued just before we started.

Despite the weather concerns, 39 cars and more than 60 people turned out for the loop up to Dixons Creek. After Bob's briefing and Geoff's update on Central Chapter news, two groups were formed and we were on our way. I was in the majority with the hood up as we departed, expecting torrential rain and wind. Both windows down, rowing through the gears as we wound our way to Healesville.

Now, my NA is pretty standard and I usually enjoy the induction noise as I rev out to around 6,500 rpm. On this occasion, the roof up/windows down combination created a wonderful amphitheatre for the bark emanating from the aqua NB in front, as well as neatly catching any wind-swept debris in my general area. The NB was pulling away from me out of corners two up versus my solo effort, so the concept of buying and installing a cold flow intake and exhaust to improve performance seeded in my mind ... "How to Punish the Bank Account 101". Damn you, Aqua NB, with your beautiful-sounding exhaust note!

Humidity, wind gusts and road debris all added to the experience as we headed to our first stop in Healesville. The break was welcome and I found all of us NA drivers were discussing the various issues and merits of our cars. One discussion point was around how the NAs ran hot in the transmission tunnel on these runs ... which was ironic, as no sooner had Group One left the stop over and started carving through the corners, we had to pull over at a CFA station to wait for an overheating NA! I heard plenty of inter-model banter as we waited, mainly at the expense of the overheating NA.

It's worth mentioning that most went top-down for this second leg and what a stark difference this makes. Humidity becomes

less an issue and the true MX-5 experience comes to the fore. Such brilliant fun settling into a corner and pulling through and revving out from 3rd to 4th, changing back down to 3rd to repeat for the next corner. Barking exhausts and tuneful induction noises intermingled with blowing wind gusts rustling millions of leaves. *MX-5s immersed in the elements!*

Carving corners, enjoying the cut and thrust of the roads you always have an MX-5 in sight. Judging from the number of people stopping and staring by the side of the road, it must be quite a vision to have a swarm of angry sports cars drive past. For me, sitting behind the wheel of my 26-year-old Classic Red '89 NA in a run with 38 other cars, it renews my appreciation for the car and the Club.

A brief stopover at the Kinglake pub to re-group and take a look at the various NA, NB, NC and NDs. *I love them all.* If I had a garage big enough, I'd have one of each model. Such is the passion for these cars, I'm sure there are members who've actually achieved this lofty goal already.

From Kinglake it was a short blast on to Dixons Creek ... and this is where my story ends. For those who booked lunch at *Dixon's Creek Café Bar and Grill*, I'm sure they enjoyed a riotous lunch full of enthusiastic discussion about cars, the run and the year in review.

For "The Unplanned Run", it was fun. The weather conditions definitely gave it a unique feel. I didn't want it to end. For me, I just wanted to keep on driving another 100km of winding roads. I'd had a discussion with some members about the Club weekends away ... notably, the Eastern Victoria Chapter's legendary *3 Peaks Run* was mentioned.

I think if spots are still available, the Grampians trip in March with the SA Club would also be a highlight on the 2017 calendar, just to get more kilometres' enjoyment packed into a weekend.

Thanks to Bob and the team for organising "The Unplanned Run". Bring on 2017 and more twisty roads! ●



^ *The mid-run leg-stretch at Healesville*



The well-planned *Unplanned run* aka the annual Yarra Ranges run



⤴ Clockwise from top: lunch at the Dixon's Creek Café Bar and Grill; the boys check out the opposition; John Gleeson has it all under control; Club Captain - Social, Richard Acfield; Richard Mark sneaks up on Johannes Abandowitz-Lee's Club-plated NA; Peter Silva with Bruce (Club Secretary) and Jenny Gray.

Final round at the Island ..

■ Words: Mr Constantine Rodd ■ Photos: Lisa Burge (lisaburge@bigpond.com)

With the enthusiasm of (a lost and misspent?) youth, the MX-5 Motor Sport fraternity head to Philip Island for the last round of our 2016 season.

Sadly it was a journey that more than a few of us undertook only eight days earlier to attend our mate Princey's funeral at nearby San Remo.

The day dawned looking good, with high hopes of an absolute cracker season finale.

On the day there were a total of 30 MX-5s entered, albeit not all belonging to MX-5 Club members.

One of the much-anticipated highlights was the return of Team Kyalami and the new "124" (don't ask about its predecessor). Also, good to see living legend Sam Gumina back in the saddle. And talking of comebacks ... there is even a rumour that young Mike Kirby might reappear in the new year.

In the "We Hope The Scratches Will Buff Out" department, John Reid did a "Newman" and was seen to be attempting to admire the views of Bass Strait from the top of the inside bank on the exit from Siberia.

Allison Rafel also got to meet another motorist in Southern Loop while attempting to admire the views in 360-degree Panavision (a la a "Maxie"), though it did not stop her (after some excellent tuition plus duct tape and assistance from other Club members) from ultimately putting hubby Ibrahim into 2nd place in the Rafel Family Feud by the tiniest margin of 3/100ths of a second (0.03 sec) ... ie, 2:06.6349 vs 2:06.6686! O'to be around that dinner table for the following week!

Overall, 15 Club members set PBs on the day, which is a great (absolutely fantastic) compliment to everybody. That is an amazing figure!

The demon twins in NA "Red" Supercar (oops, NA Clubman)

class were at it as usual with this time Robert Downes coming out on top over Tim Emery (by a mere 0.28 of a second).

In the "we're are just here for the fun of it" NB Clubman class, the lack of Max Lloyd's high-fat, high-sugar content cakes for morning and afternoon tea was having effect with a much slimmer Noel Heritage just missing out on cracking the elusive two-minute barrier. There were rumours of a ND (no excuses re. the tyres please ...) getting in the way occasionally and nearly wearing an NB in the boot at MG a couple of times.

New lap records were set by:

Noel Heritage: NB Clubman @ 2:00.8186 (previously 2:01.5227),

Russell Garner: Super Modified @ 1:51.3896 (previously 1:52.0783), and

Randy Stagno Navarra also set a first-time ND Standard record (with standard Mazda OE road tyres) of 2:01.0745.

Despite all the good-natured sledging that goes on (never?), the highlight for all was a special parade lap send-off for Princey. All led by Pam Phillips and her son-in-law Dylan in Princey's much-flogged number 57 NB, albeit looking absolutely schmick thanks to a great effort by Stagno Navarra Car Detailing Services. It was a great send-off to a great guy with three pretty quick parade laps and an absolute bevy of MX-5s, all looking great.

With 2016 in the bag, done 'n' dusted (eat your heart out V8 Supercars), it's good to reflect on the great comradeship (not to mention said same small amount of good-natured

sledging) that makes it so much fun. Give it your best on the track, but if you have troubles or a misdemeanour, don't be surprised to see your #1 rival lending a hand to get you back on the track! And if you have scratched the pride and joy, we even have the Conrad/Vague/Heritage/Monik/Newman/Reid/Rafel Protocol where Nobody Goes Home Without Back Up.

We'll quit while I'm ahead and look forward to seeing everybody (and hopefully a few more new faces) for the 2017 season kick-off at Broadford on 15 January (when the fun begins again).

If you are interested, come for a run to Broadford or any of the 2017 events and have a look (and hopefully get the bug). ●



^ Pam and son-in-law Dylan Jacobs prepare for the Princey lap of honour

2016 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship | Round 9 ~ 11.12.16



Top: Russell Garner sets the pace - 190kmh at Turn 1 (Doohan Corner). Middle (clockwise from top left): Tim Edwards; Steve Williamsz (#29) follows Mark Manns (#27); Dave Moore leading Dean Monik; Tim Meaden (#555); Dean Watchorn (#46) and Dean Hasnatt (#79). Bottom: Princey's silver NB alongside Club Captain - Motor Sport Randy Stagno Navarra's ND.

Final round at the Island (continued)

One last time around for Princey



2016 City Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - Round 9 | Phillip Island - 11.12.16

	1st		2nd		3rd	
Open	Dave Moore	» 1:56.2872	---	---	---	---
Restricted Open	Tim Meaden	» 1:58.4905	---	---	---	---
Super Modified	Russell Garner	» 1:51.3896*	Dean Watchorn	» 1:55.2542	Robert Parr	» 1:55.7165
Modified	Dean Hasnat	» 1:56.3393	Gavin Newman	» 1:59.2487	Leon Bogers	» 2:03.5943
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	» 2:02.2604	Tim Emery	» 2:02.5321	---	---
NB Clubman	Noel Heritage	» 2:00.8186*	John Reid	» 2:03.6713	---	---
Standard ND	Randy Stagno Navarra	» 2:01.0745*	Tim Edwards	» 2:03.0731	---	---
Standard NB	Steve Williamsz	» 2:05.7390	---	---	---	---

* New Club lap record

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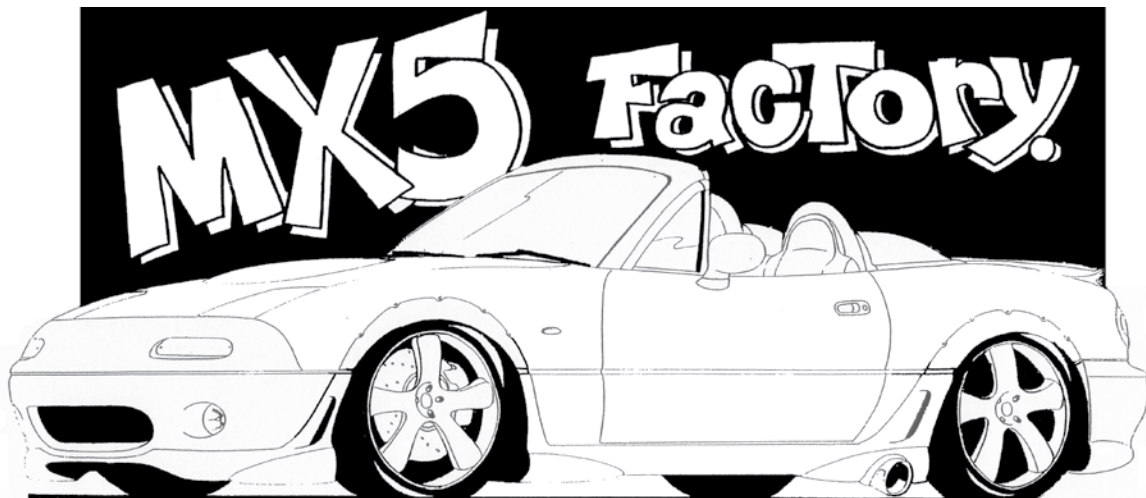
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