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

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Driver training: best school day EVA! A boys' weekend at the Bathurst 12 Hour **Chapter and motor sport round-up**

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Your Committee: 2016-2017

President

> Peter Dannock | 0408 522 093 (ah) e: president@mx5vic.org.au

Vice President / Treasurer > Dave Collins | (03) 9755 2167 (ah)

e:treasurer@mx5vic.org.au

Secretary / Merchandise > Bruce Gray | 0478 219 856 (ah) e: secretary@mx5vic.org.au

Club Captain – Motor Sport

> Randy Stagno Navarra | 0409 210 872 e: captain@mx5vic.org.au

Club Captain – Social > Richard Acfield | 0488 747 755 (ah) e: social@mx5vic.org.au

Assistant Club Captain – Motor Sport > Gavin Newman | 0403 809 515(ah) e: captain2@mx5vic.org.au

Assistant Club Captain – Social

> Alex Hailstone | 0414 155 383 e: social2@mx5vic.org.au

Membership

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

Points

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

Social Media

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

Assistant Merchandise

Cary Warren | 0418 368 246 (ah)
 e: cary warren 01@hotmail.com

Chapter Captain - Central

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

Chapter Captain - Eastern Victoria

> Peter Ferguson | 0419 108 128 e: eastern@mx5vic.org.au

Chapter Captain - North-Eastern Victoria

> Loz Thomas | 0409 639 718 e: north-eastern@mx5vic.org.au

Chapter Captain - Western Victoria

> lan Bradshaw | 0407 556 135 e: western@mx5vic.org.au

Chapter Captain - Northern Tasmania > Bruce Harvey | 0427 656 074 (ah)

e: northtas@mx5vic.org.au

Chapter Captain - Southern Tasmania > John Waldock | 0409 658 716 (ah) e: southtas@mx5vic.org.au

3/2017

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Find us at: MX-5 Club of Victoria

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> or post: mxtra, Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania, PO Box 8173, Croydon VIC 3136 Note: Images supplied for mxtra will also be uploaded to the Club's online gallery. Copyright will remain with the photographer, and the Club undertakes not to use them for any other purpose without express permission.

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

Support from CAMS

Back in August last year I mentioned the important role that the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) provides for the Club. Not only do they provide our motor sport competitors licencing for motor sport and insurance for Club activities, but they are also very active with the Club in prompting safe participation in motor sport and Club activities.

In early February, the Club received some CAMS funding to support a *Driver Training Day* for new motor sport participants. This event was held in conjunction with the Alfa Romeo Owners Club of Australia (AROCA) at Winton Raceway near Benalla. The day was a great opportunity for participants, who wanted to try motor sport for the first time, to do so in a safe environment, under instruction of experienced drivers.

Sam Gumina, a former Club Captain -Motor Sport and six-time Motor Sport Champion, provided a great session on the *grip circle* and the art of avoiding a spin on the first corner. On the track, each participant had an experienced instructor in their car to guide them through the correct apex on corners and the best spots for braking. It wasn't long before the newbies were improving their lap times.

In conjunction with this funding, CAMS also featured the Club in its monthly *Speed Read* magazine. It was a great opportunity to promote the Club and you can read it on page 23 of this *mxtra*.

In addition to all the volunteers from the Club who helped on the day, I would like to thank Pravin and Chantel from CAMS, who made the trip to Benalla to watch the driver training. I am sure they would have noticed the many smiles on those who participated on the track for the first time.

We look forward to CAMS' ongoing support for other events in the future.

Speaking of Volunteers ...

As many of you would have noticed in my previous reflections, the role of volunteers is one of the key factors in the Club's success. Without them, the Club would not function as well as it does.

So, it is with pleasure that I welcome John and Katrina Palmer to the volunteer ranks as Assistant Chapter Captains in the Central Chapter. Geoff Roche and Bob de Bont have been doing a great job in the Central Chapter and, as it is our biggest Chapter, it is terrific to see the workload being shared around. After three years at the helm, I have no doubt that Geoff and Bob are also doing some succession planning to their roles, ensuring that the Central Chapter can thrive in the future.

If you are on a run with the Central Chapter, make yourself known to John and Katrina and I am sure they would appreciate getting to know as many members as possible within the Chapter.

Where it all Started

It was great to see two of our Foundation Members, Murray Finlay and Malcolm Brand, being interviewed live whilst signing the one millionth MX-5 at the recent Mazda MX-5 Fan Fest in January. I enjoyed hearing about their experiences and enjoyment of owning MX-5s over the past 25-plus years and the great camaraderie that the Club has provided them.

As a member of just under 10 years, I have a great interest in knowing the early origins of the Club, the way it came about and the people that have been involved over that time. Recently, the Club's Founders, Michael and Margaret Cemm, presented the Club with some memorabilia and the hand-written Committee notes from the first four years of the Club. These notes provide some great insights into the early machinations of the Club and the people involved.

For your diary ... See the full calendar for details

March

10-1	13 Clu	b Grampians Discovery (joint Vic-Tas/SA event)					
11-1	L2 NEV	/ Snowy Mountains w'end					
19	EV	The new Gippy run					
19	STas	Dover run					
19	NTas	Heading for a Hot Finish					
26	CEN	Mini Navigation run					
26	NTas	Devonport Motor Show					
28	NEV	Taking it Easy on Tuesday - Wallace Hut					
Apı	ril						
9	NEV	10th Anniversary run					
9	WV	Chapter birthday run					
9	STas	Fun car rally & picnic					
22-23 NTas Tarkine Tiger Hunt							
23	EV	Baw Baw run					
30	CEN	Trentham run					

Established as a marketing exercise for the newly-released MX-5, Mike Quist and Sue Ransom from Mazda Australia facilitated the first gathering for the Club on 6 May 1990 at the Old Cheese Factory in Berwick, with some 130 MX-5 owners in attendance. The Club's first formal meeting occurred on 10 August 1990 and, with 167 inaugural members, the Club remains one of the largest inaugural memberships of any CAMS-affiliated car club in Australia's history.

The membership has been strong from the start and remains strong across two states, and growing. No doubt that this is in no small part due to a great car, but also some great people who have been members over the years.

I am looking forward to the autumn months ahead; they should be just fine for some country drives with the roof down. **Enjoy.**

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

> > Pete

Scene about ...



Photos: Daniel White, Marg Gillick, Peter Ferguson, June Teeuw, Bronwyn Roche, Bruce Harvey, Karen Bradshaw, John Waldock, Bob de Bont





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

It's been a crazy start to the year so far, with the major re-write of the rules, complete with category changes and new points allocation ... the organisation of Fan Fest, with the sprints, parade laps, speed comparison and show and shine ... driver training, including CAMS development funding ... plus two rounds of our Championship and it's still only the end of February! Hopefully things will finally return to normal in the motor sport scene.

Driver Training Day ~ Winton, 4 February

We have now run our driver training day with AROCA. Unfortunately I have to admit that the numbers were very poor, especially when I look back at all the people who expressed interest and were forwarded all the details. I would like to hear back, mainly from the social members who always bail me up and say that we should have more of these days, as to what we as a Club need to do so we can run a successful driver training day.

Obviously we can't have a driver training day for free. We will always incur some costs. *What do we need to do to get you there?* I am at a total loss, as we can comfortably get 25 Club members at a similar event in Tasmania but struggle to get seven members from all the different Chapters to make the trip to Winton. It is very disheartening organising these events only to see such a lack of support. So please message me (see p3 for the number) any ideas you might have.

For those who attended, it was a great day. The classroom instruction was very informative and there was a lot of track time for all the students. There were also two CAMS officials who were there to assess how the day was run and they had nothing but praise for both clubs involved. Gavin *"Gold Logie"* Newman was the star of a video that was also uploaded on to the CAMS website showing what happens at these drive days. It's also on our website – follow the "see more videos" link on the home page and check it out.

I would like to thank all the Club Motor Sport crew who gave up their Saturday to help out with the instruction, and also a thank you to all the students who made the trip to Winton.

Essendon Mazda Sprint Championship ~ Rd z, Winton, 5 February

After the good weather on Saturday, the Sunday was the polar opposite ... 21 hardy souls braved atrocious conditions to battle it out for Round Two of our Championship. I dare say a boat would have been a better option than an MX-5. Both short and long tracks were used for the day. The bad weather certainly helped the guys with more standard cars and that made for a very competitive round. The weather did finally break in the afternoon so at least the short track did provide some enjoyment for the crew. A full article on the day can be found on page 28 of this edition of *mxtra*.

Essendon Mazda Sprint Championship ~ Rd 3, Winton, 11 March

Our next round is the first of two double-headers this year. We are back again at Winton, this time with the WRX Club. Hopefully we do get some fine weather as I'm sure we will shock the WRX drivers as to how competitive we are. It's always nice to be at *a handling track* that negates the power advantage of other cars.

For those who are unaware, there has been talk about a trailer for the Motor Sport crew for quite a few years. Well, we are now the proud owners of such a trailer. I've been having discussions about trying to get some equipment for it, such as a jack, some stands and tools. *If anyone would like to volunteer any of this equipment please let me now.* We're also happy to store small items for any of you, such as brake pads, oil or any generic parts. A big thank you to our sponsors **Essendon Mazda** for allowing us to store the trailer at their premises. With any luck we will be able to get the trailer to all the events.

See you all at a track soon.

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

Randy

Chub event photos

Have you taken some good photos on a Club run?

Are you willing to share them with the rest of the club?

You can!

The Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania has a SmugMug Gallery at *mx5vic.smugmug.com*

Email them to your Chapter Captain, or centrally to smugmug@mx5vic.org.au (Bob de Bont), so they can be added to the event gallery.

Please remember to include your full name for credits.

Visit the Club merchandise online shop ...

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mx5vic.org.au/ clubroom/merchandise





Call: Meetings the Unity Network for interview of the accession, if your avoid with Data high Network on the field (Sector prointeger and Net particular bilinest Association).



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

Current membership count:



and growing!

Gʻday again ...

I would like to welcome the following new (and some returning) members:

lan Argall	2016 Soul Red ND				
Pie Bolton	1991 White NA				
Nick Burgin	1990 White NA				
Richard Houlton	2017 Machine Grey ND				
Paul Hutchins	2001 Black NB				
Jonathan Petroyannis	1991 Classic Red NA				
Lauren Richey and Adam MacNeill	1992 White NA				
Russell Shiells	2017 Soul Red ND				
Eastern Victoria Chapter					
Danny Riches	1992 White NA				

Western Victoria Chapter

Frank Gilders

2010 Silver NC

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



In the eye of the beholder?

M(onster)X-5?

Club member John Duke found this photo from a *Pelican Parts* (a parts supplier for Porsche, BMW, etc) meet in California recently ...

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Katrina & John Palmer



Central Chapter - Assistant Captains

Name? Katrina & John Palmer Age? K: 48 | J: Old enough for the kids to call me "Senior"! Born? K: Mitcham | J: Lilydale Current abode? Mooroolbark Profession? K: Reception/Admin | J: Engineer Partner? K: John | J: Katrina ...

Pets? No

Fave food? K: Garlic Prawns | J: Steak and Seafood

Can you cook? Yes

Favourite tipple? K: Chardonnay | J: Bourbon & Coke / Crownie

First drive? K: Kingswood | J: Mazda 1800

First car? K: Pajero | J: Mazda 1500

First fender bender? J: Mazda 1500 – fixed easily enough Everyday driver? K: Pajero | J: Named after a slow sport where the hardest part is driving!

How many MX-5s have you owned? One

Current MX-5? ND

MX-5 improvements? Not at the moment

MX-5 dislikes? None

Why an MX-5? K: Fun! | J: Mid-life crisis

Fluffy dice? K: Not in my lifetime | J: No way

Passions besides the MX-5? *K*: camping, cycling, reading, card making, movies, 4WD driving and going out | J: camping, cycling, 4WD driving

Favourite TV show / movie / book? *K*: Too many to write | J: Big Bang Theory / Bourne Series

Dream wheels (money no object)? J: F250 4x4 tricked up



Would you drive a Daewoo or SsangYong? K: Not on your life! | J: No Favourite other Mazda? K: Nothing better than an MX-5 | J: RX7 How long in the Club? 14 months How many MX-5 Club runs or track events? Most Club trips Favourite Club run/track? All Have you been to NatMeet? K: No - always booked out | J: Not yet Ford vs Holden? K: Don't care | J: Ford What's playing in your MX-5? K: Music | J: Nova Favourite holiday destination? Kimberleys Footy team (AFL / NRL / A-League)? Collingwood Final comments? K: Having a ball! | J: Great Club and great people. You get out what you put in and enjoying it so far.





5.2.17 | North-eastern Victoria Words, photos & organiser: Marg Gillick

This run has been called Marg's Shopping Trip, but someone did notice there were <u>no</u> dress shops!

Chiltern Bakery catered for our initial need for coffee, breakfast or morning tea. We welcomed Bruce and Jenny, Daryl and Judy and Greg and Kerry from Central Chapter and headed to Yackandandah with nine cars. We stopped at Schmidt's Strawberry Winery, too late in the season for fresh strawberries, but we tasted and purchased strawberry wine and liqueur with Dee giving plenty of ideas for exotic desserts.

The "drivers" part of the day came next as we zoomed our way up to Stanley where Gerald and Bruce both climbed out with huge smiles saying "that was fun". Apples, juice, berries and walnuts were purchased at Snowline Orchards then we charged back down the mountain (just in case the twists and turns on the way up were not enough) towards the lunch stop.

The usual beautiful North-East weather was not so beautiful and there was a quick stop to put the tops up as the rain became too much. Peter was very thankful to Roger for helping get the roof up on his NA. We were nearly drowned at Myrtleford when we last visited and it was raining again! There was plenty of chat over lunch at *Lupo's Kiln Café* where authentic Italian style meals were enjoyed by everyone. We farewelled three cars after lunch as they had long drives home.

The rain had cleared but had not even settled the dust so we crawled up a dirt track to Eaglerange Estate Winery which prides itself on its natural wine production. Bruce liked it so much he paid \$400 for two bottles ... he noticed the extra zero just as he

pushed the "Enter" button (there was a slight delay as a refund was organised by a very apologetic proprietor).

The Australian Pumpkin Seed Company is worth a visit. We had driven past many times and wondered what was there, so – being my "shopping trip" – we stopped. Jay, the boss, gave the girls and Bill (all the other blokes stayed outside!) an interesting talk about the benefits of plant oils ... encouraging us to try all the others besides olive oil.

We ended the day at one of our favourite places, the Bright Berry Farm, all of us enjoying ice-cream, berries or pies ... yummy.

We would like to thank the following businesses; they would all appreciate your patronage:

- 27 Conness St, Chiltern (03)5726 1000
- Schmidt's Strawberry Winery 932 Osbornes Flat Rd, Allans Flat (02) 6027 1454
- Snowline Fruits 507 Myrtleford Stanley Rd, Stanley (03) 5728 6584
- Lupo's Kiln Café

 134 Great Alpine Rd, Myrtleford (03) 5752 2310
 Eaglerange Estate Wines
- 228 Happy Valley Rd, Ovens (03) 5752 2518
- Australian Pumpkin Seed Company
 5061 Great Alpine Rd, Ovens (03) 5752 1199
- Bright Berry Farms 6300 Great Alpine Rd, Eurobin (03)5756 2523



See more photos at mx5vic.smuqmuq.com

5.2.17 Eastern Victoria Words: Helene McAlpine Photos: Helene McAlpine, June Teeuw, Peter Ferguson Organiser:

.

The sun was shining as 18 MX-5s lined up ready for a new adventure.

We all met at the Holden Museum in Trafalgar; some familiar faces and quite a few new faces. After the usual speeches about the do's and don'ts, we headed to the cars. The rooves came down and we headed for the hills ...

... a few minutes later we had our first regroup as not everyone made it through the lights.

Up into the hills we headed, along the Mirboo North-Trafalgar Road, with new speed limits (100km/h now down to 80). Up the road a bit further we hit gravel (the site of an earthquake a few years ago) and it was down to 40k's. These new signs are a pain!

The it was left on to Narracan Rd, a road built with MX-5s in mind. A fantastic road with lots of narrow, tight, twisties, lots of fun.

Right on to MacDonald's Track, more twisties and turns. Left on to Morwell-Thorpdale Road ... the sun was hiding behind the clouds, but it was still very muggy. More twists and turns – the faster cars well in front, the slower ones nowhere to be seen. With another regroup just out of Yinnar, everyone came together again. Grey clouds were starting to form. I hoped it wouldn't rain.

After a quick coffee break and chat at Mirboo North we headed back out towards Fish Creek for lunch. Along Grand Ridge Road, more new speed limits: 60 then 80, 60 then 80, back up to 100 (at least that's what we decided).

Arriving in Fish Creek, decisions needed to be made – lunch at the Roadhouse or the Pub. Most chose the roadhouse for lunch and a chat. The heavens finally opened up while we were having lunch, but by the time lunch was done and dusted the rain was gone.

After lunch we headed back towards Mirboo North along more twisty windy roads. Once back at Mirboo North we said our goodbyes and headed for home.

Thank you James; a fantastic day was had by all. 🔴





James Lang



















12.2.17 | Central Words: Bob de Bont Photos: Bronwyn Roche, Bob de Bont, Karen Bradshaw, June and Keith Teeuw

.

The definitive Grand Tour of the Strathbogie Ranges - some of the best MX-5 roads north of Melbourne.

We started from the Chirnside Park shopping centre with John welcoming the new members, committee members and thanking the rest of us for coming along on a damp and dreary morning.

With the weather threatening, only a few chanced going topless as a total of 15 MX-5s headed off towards Yarra Glen for our first rest stop. Then it was back on the highway and on towards Yea for morning tea, where we collected our 16th traveller. It appears Katrina and Bronwyn are in competition to see who can tempt the rest of the members with some very tasty cakes and cookies on offer.

Heading west from Yea, we turned towards the Highlands and climbed the range on Gin Gin Road before continuing on to Highlands Road, a fantastic piece of road with numerous sweeping bends as it follows the ridge towards Terip Terip. Adding to the spectacle was the continual disturbance of leaf litter as each of our cars passed by. We then descended the range on Creightons Creek Road with more sweeping bends and some undulations to challenge driver judgement and nerve.

We enjoyed a picnic lunch at the Seven Creeks park in Euroa, with everyone joining in on the discussion about the great roads and all things MX-5. A couple of the crew with more pressing commitments headed home from Euroa.

For the rest, John led us east, then north then east again on more fun MX-5 roads and, with the weather ever improving, more tops were lowered. We passed by Kelvin View (no time to look for the drivers), Strathbogie, Kithbrook and a passing shower before descending into Boho and on towards the Midland Highway for our afternoon stop at the picturesque Lake Nillahcootie. The sun had made its appearance again, but the wind had picked up so we were quickly back on the road heading back to Yea ... or so we thought!

A right turn on to Gobur Road and on to Yarck Road had us climbing into the Strathbogie Ranges again, where we found our way back to Terip Terip and on towards Gin Gin. With the change of direction and the improvement in the weather the road took on a different perspective with the final decent into Yea on Gin Gin Road. We stopped again in Yea to bid farewell to our intrepid explorers before we all headed home.

Thanks to John (right) and Katrina for organising and running a great trip, Bruce and Jenny for rounding up the stragglers and a huge thanks to everyone who came along to make it an enjoyable Sunday drive.



AIU 300



Organisers: John & Katrina Palmer













18.2.17 | Western Victoria Words: Pam Stoffels Photos: Karen Bradshaw Organiser: Ian & Karen Bradshaw



Seven cars left from Phoenix College at 2.45pm on a fine but cool Saturday afternoon, following Lawrie and Virgie in their pretty little Abarth for afternoon tea at the Wallinduc fire station.

Unfortunately all roads south had road works so our pristine little cars soon got dusty.

Afternoon tea was the usual meet-and-greet, with members coming from the whole district.

Eleven cars left the fire station at 4pm with the clouds getting darker, down newly-tarred roads on our twilight run. Brian was the first to put his roof up ... he must have known what was ahead. Fifteen minutes later we all stopped to put our rooves up – it's raining. Through Alvie, Simpson and Timboon where we finally got our rooves down: sun's out again.

I never get tired of the sounds and smells you get with the tops down: cockies screeching, dogs barking, diesel ute fumes and dairy farms ... I love the aromas.

Simpson speedway was on that night, with others enjoying their passion for cars. On we went, past the corn fields and on to Curdievale for tea. Fortunately, the rain held off so the picnic rugs and camp chairs came out and we all enjoyed the park on Curdies River. With the good company, the laughter flowed as fast as the river.

It was time for the group photo before we hit the road again to Port Campbell, past the Twelve Apostles and on to the Great Ocean Road. There



was the usual slow traffic but at least we

could enjoy the scenery. We had beautiful coast line, wind in our hair, sea mist on our windscreens ... but then it was raining again; a quick stop was needed to put the rooves up again. We regrouped at Lavers Hill where we said our goodbyes, some heading home via Colac, others via Apollo Bay and the rest off along the Great Ocean Road.

Another great day in our great cars; lots of laughs with good friends and a great twilight run.

Thank you to Ian and Karen. Zoom Zoom 🔴













19.2.17 | Southern Tasmania Words: Duncan Pyper Photos: John Waldock, Duncan Pyper Organiser: Don Nicoll

A new meeting point before the start ...

A few weeks prior, Don Nicoll, Rob Tanner and yours truly decided to have a recce run to view the route and sample the food and drink of course. We decided that Granton would be a better choice to meet prior to the run to save the members on the Hobart side of the river backtracking to and from our normal meeting point. Little did we know at the time that a fun run was happening on the eastern shore which would cause us great inconvenience. Why anyone would have a fun run over the Tasman Bridge beggars belief ... a motor car is far preferable and more convenient.

We met at the Granton Train Park, which actually doesn't have a train. Eight cars arrived with fifteen people aboard. Our fearless run leader Don Nicoll was solo as Linda stayed home to babysit the dog. John Waldock arrived in Alan Pryer's NA (Alan was in France holidaying), without Michelle who figured that a 300km run wasn't her cup of tea, but John's sister Vicki came along for the ride, and it was good to see our newest members Mitchell and Chris Rowe come along for their second run.

Roofs (or Rooves, depending which university you graduated from) were dropped and we headed off in mild but sunny conditions. Then again, this is Tasmania ... so if you don't like the weather come back in five minutes, just be prepared for four seasons in one day.

With Don up front, and John Hadrill ably assisted by Lawrence at the back of the pack, we headed off towards the "valley of love" – New Norfolk and the Derwent Valley – along the A10 Lyell Hwy. The highway winds along the northern edge of the Derwent River via Rosegarland and Gretna for our first obligatory pit stop at Glen Clyde House in Hamilton, a beautiful Georgian sandstone house built circa 1840 which is now a café and art gallery. Large quantities of scones, jam and cream, tea and coffee were consumed prior to setting off in the next stage of Don's dash.

John! Get your sister out of the gallery!

Hamilton to Tarraleah is a great drive through farming land, forestry (sustainable of course) and wilderness. The only real issue is the number of caravans and motorhomes in the area. This is when CB radios, used correctly, are of tremendous value. Our fearless leader Don up front gave the call when the road was clear and we all followed when we could and relayed the message down the line. This particular section of the highway passes power stations and dams that were constructed by the Hydro Electric Commission of Tasmania in the earlyto mid-20th Century, so if you travel this way some day they are worth taking the time for a visit.

Tarraleah village was our next stop for a quick look



Don's Denvent





16 mxtra









around and loo break. The village was constructed in the 1930s for the workers building the power stations.

It's now privately owned and operated, but it's for sale and for a lazy \$12 million it could be yours. Would be a great place for the Vic/Tas MX-5 Club holiday retreat. Accommodation, café, restaurant, bar, golf course, plus Highland hairy coos (sic) in abundance ... but don't get too close as they are aggressive buggers. John's sister Vicki found another gallery (John, this is a car run).

During our brief stop a young American fellow approached and asked if he could take photos of our cars. Glen (his name) advised that he was a member of the North American Miata Association and owned a blue NA. Glen and his mates had just ridden motor bikes from the Northern Territory.

Tarraleah to Derwent Bridge is a series of tight switchbacks and open sweepers through the wilderness and past several great trout fishing lakes. Parts of the road are used for Targa Tasmania, and put a very big smile on your face. More caravans and motorhomes [at one stage over the radio we overheard a conversation between two travellers: person one: *"What sort of cars are they?"*. Person two: *"That's the Porsche club!"*. That gave us all a chuckle ... little did we realise that we were driving transformers!].

On the approach to Derwent Bridge there is a gallery named *The Wall*, not to be confused with Pink Floyd's *Wall*, but a magnificent building which houses a wooden sculpture nearly 100m in length, handcarved by a self-taught craftsman. If you ever get the chance stop and enjoy, it's probably the best \$13 you can spend. There is a whisky bar inside if you wish to have a tipple (non-drivers only) and sit in front of a magnificent fireplace. The weather within the Cradle Mountain/Lake Sinclair national park in the central highlands (where we now were) can change rapidly: we arrived at the pub for lunch in bright sunshine, and left in the pouring rain with snow settling above the 1000m mark.

The Derwent Bridge Hotel probably has the biggest fireplace in Christendom, two of them in fact backto-back. We mortal souls who have a fireplace in our homes use logs less than 500mm in length; this place uses tree trunks about 2m long! We timed our arrival perfectly, as a bus load of tourists arrived about 15 minutes later (it is a very busy place). The car park had approximately 20 motorhomes and caravans setup for an overnight stay.

After lunch and a quick dash to our cars in the rain, we headed for home. By the time we arrived back at Tarraleah the rain had stopped and it was sunnies and sunscreen again. I told you the weather was different down here.

Thanks to Don Nicoll for organising the run and leading the pack and to all who assisted. A very enjoyable day was had by all. •

See more photos at *mx5vic.smugmug.com*



19.2.17 | Northern Tasmania Words & organiser: Bruce Harvey Photos: Bruce Harvey, Alana McDougall

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The myth that there is no such thing as a free lunch (TINSTAAFL) was definitively debunked when our local dealer, **Launceston Mazda**, provided a packed picnic lunch for everyone attending this run.

We also had a special guest of honour in the form of the **MX-5 RF** along for the day demonstrating its origami-like roof-folding skills regularly during the day. I would like to acknowledge Launceston Mazda's GM Steve Bence, Claire from marketing and Adam from sales for making the day possible and the success that it was.

That success created a couple of concerns on the day which I had not foreseen ... the start point was not totally suitable for the 27 cars and their passengers. The cars were parked down both sides of the road, effectively reducing the road to a single lane but, thanks to Trevor Simms' polite marshalling skills, this was kept clear for public use. The other concern was assembling everyone for the briefing when they were spread along the 650 or so metres the cars took up. Once again Trev and his 6 foot 2 plus height was able to attract the attention of everyone. Introductions, thanks and briefing complete, and a check to ensure everyone had picked up a lunch, we were ready to go. Two groups (based on which side of the street you had parked) set off with Ken Beaton leading one group and me in charge of the other.

The route for today was a balance of arriving at the beach at lunch time and including at least a few of the best available roads. Can I now say that even the best plans and research are not foolproof as a U-turn was needed when a "bridge" (lost during the June 2016 floods) was still a gaping hole in the road despite a check on all relevant websites in the week prior to the run. U-turn made, detour sorted and phone call to group two made, we were soon back on track and on time.

The 41st parallel, or the circle of latitude 41° South, passes through Tasmania and most of New Zealand. In February the sun shines for over 13 hours a day, so Hawley beach on the north-west coast near Devonport was the ideal location to enjoy some of this free vitamin D.

A grassed area, with conveniences close and the beach accessible with a 10-second walk, was where we gathered. The line of cars was far too big for most camera lenses and even when a local resident was approached and happily agreed to take some pictures from her upstairs deck the panorama would not fit in one frame.

I would like to thank the Northern Tas*mx*nia Chapter members for making the day the success it was, and also the team Launceston Mazda for debunking *TINSTAAFL*.











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25.2.17 | Central Words: Eric Field Photos: June & Keith Teeuw, Michael Williams, Geoff & Bronwyn Roche Organiser:

What a great day!

For our run we were to meet at a car park in The Basin. However unbeknownst to the organisers at the time of printing the flyer, the car park was used up by the crowd at a concert. Alternative arrangements at The Basin Primary School were settled. *All OK*.

More than 30 cars of varying models attended, and these were divided into two groups (we were in the second group).

The trip was progressing well until a group of MX-5s came quite quickly from the opposite direction. It appears they were part of the first group going the wrong way as we did not come to any roundabout that was expected.

The roads were excellent and lived up to expectations, particularly at the speed of the group.

The setting sun and the appearance of the first star were great visions.

However, apparently there were problems with the course for some and in the end the "Tail-end Charlie" of the second group beat home the "Tail end Charlie" of the 1st group.

Bad luck! 🔴





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Dave Collins





26.2.17 | Eastern Victoria Words, photos & organiser: Peter Ferguson



A sunny and warm day but very windy greeted us at Bryant Park in Gippsland for our first Khanacross of 2017.

The event was well run as usual by Gippsland Car Club (GCC) who own the Bryant Park hillclimb track – if you have not been there, you need to! *It is superb*.

There was a total of 36 entries with 14 of them MX-5mounted. MX-5 drivers were (in order of their finishing positions) – Steve Banks, Andrew Tate, Peter Bolton, David Salter, Peter Ferguson, Rob Krygsman, Nick Burgin, Emma Solberg, Ron Diprose, Glen Burgin, Janine Boyce, Mick Graham and Peter Sansom.

As well as our competitors, Arthur and Lyn Smith called in to watch for a while, as did John Moore – thanks for the support, guys.

David Salter's son, Matt, in his WRX, took out first overall, with MX-5-mounted Steve Banks (second outright) giving him strong competition on many of the runs. Andrew Tate in his superb and nicely-modified NC1 was also very competitive and not far behind the leaders; he took out fourth overall on the day.

First-timer Peter Bolton had a good day with ninth outright, even though he got one WD [wrong direction]. On one run he beat both the WRX and Steve Banks – one to watch in the future [... and the past – Peter is a former Club Motor Sport Champion from way back in the '90s ~ Ed].

A notable car (NOT an MX-5, but a real crowd pleaser) was a Hyundai Excel. It still had its plastic hubcaps on, but as soon as it took off, it was spinning the rear wheels! It turns out that it has been built up with a Nissan turbo two-litre engine, gearbox and independent rear end plus the spine of a Nissan floor pan welded into the Hyundai body. It is a very well-engineered conversion and, when it's fully sorted, will be an absolute shell! The entire car owes the owner/ builder just \$2,500! A beautiful little jigger, an interesting one to watch for future events AND a real crowd pleaser - the rear wheels may just as well be smoke generators. In this regard, the red Falcon V8 ute was there as always and (a) it is sideways pretty much everywhere and (b) you can scarcely hear the motor over the tyre shredding. It's another great crowd pleaser, particularly in the two car park events where it all happens in close proximity to the "audience".

We are joining with GCC to attend four Khanacrosses (this one plus 4 June, 10 September, 12 November) this year plus a hillclimb (13 Aug 13) – come along and have a go – at \$20 entry it's the best value day out you'll get and you will have a LOT of fun!

If you get REALLY keen, there are some others being run this year that we have not included in our calendar, but you'd still be welcome to attend. Note also that kids over 12 years of age are allowed to compete as juniors with Dad (or Mum!) travelling with them as instructors.



CLUB PROFILE: MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Speed Read recently caught up with Gavin Newman and Peter Dannock from the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania, and talked about their Sporting car club affiliated with CAMS.

How long has your club been established for, and how did it all begin?

The Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania was formed in May 1990, as part of a marketing initiative by Mazda Australia to promote the newly released roadster, with a plan to establish a Mazda MX-5 club in every state in Australia.

Following the popularity of the new roadster, the inaugural meeting of the Victorian club in May 1990

* attracted 120 Mazda MX-5s and 250 people. The initial membership of 167 members makes it the largest inaugural membership of any CAMS affiliated car club in Australia.

Today our club continues to grow and now boasts over 700 members across Victoria and Tasmania.

What type of events does your club participate in/run?

The Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania has a broad range of social and motor sport activities for members to participate in, with six regional chapters across two states and a strong motor sport team, participating in a range of activities.

On the social side, the clubs have numerous events each month, which are organised at a local level for members.

Every two years, all of the MX-5 Clubs across Australia come together for a national event (NatMeet), which has proved very popular with over 120 cars attending the last one hosted by our club in Northern Tasmania.

The motor sport team is very active in conducting a sprint championship of approximately 10 rounds held at major motor sport tracks, including Winton, Phillip Island and Sandown.

What makes your club unique?

Our club represents a single marque and model of car, being the Mazda MX-5. Combined with other Mazda MX-5 clubs across the world, they form the biggest collection of car clubs for a single marque and model of any car worldwide.

We also enjoy a very diverse membership in terms of age, technical ability and the willingness of members to modify their car.

One common thread is that we have a very welcoming and supportive culture within the club, which is evident with our continuing growth in membership and the strong support of social and motor sport programs throughout the year.

What does it mean for you club to be affiliated with CAMS?

With such a strong motor sport program, it is crucial that our club is affiliated with CAMS and that delivers benefit to us in areas such as access to expertise, CAMS licenced officials and insurance – even our social events are run under CAMS permits.

Recently the MX-5 Club secured funding from the CAMS Club Development Fund to assist in running a circuit training day aimed at club members wanting to get their road cars on track, and this type of financial assistance was greatly appreciated by the club.

How can someone become a member of your club?

There is a wealth of information on our website at mx5vic.org.au and specific requests for information can be sent to our Membership Officer at the following email address: membership@mx5vic.org.au

Some food for thought

Words & photos: Garry Whittle, Southern Tasmania-

Southern Tasmanian Chapter member Garry Whittle recently came across an accident on one of the side roads here in Southern Tasmania. Garry is a retired police officer and thought the accident interesting as it showed what even a relatively low-speed impact can do to an MX-5.

On Tuesday, 27 December, Maureen and I decided to take a leisurely drive along Mud Walls Road. The road winds nicely between Richmond, through Campania, Colebrook to Jericho where it meets the Midland Highway.

Shortly after passing through the township of Colebrook, at a distance I could see a small group of vehicles stationary just after the railway line crossing. After crossing the train line, I started to negotiate a slight rise followed by a tight right-hand bend, and then saw that two vehicles had collided in the oncoming lane.

A mid-sized vehicle had failed to straighten up after rounding the bend, had travelled on to the incorrect side of the roadway, and collided head-on with a (non-Club) Mazda MX-5 NC. The MX-5 was positioned on the edge of the gravel verge, and appeared to have steered away from the oncoming vehicle.

Both front airbags in the MX-5 had deployed. The lady who had been driving had sustained minor chest injuries from the impact. When I spoke with her, she indicated that she was by nature a hesitant driver and was descending towards the bend at approximately 45kmh. She had observed the driver of the other vehicle looking towards the floor, and recalled that her speedo, prior to braking, showed she had been travelling at 40km/h. In my opinion, the MX-5's speed at the point of impact would have been between 30 and 40km/h.

The MX-5 driver provided these images of her vehicle and gave permission to use them for education of Club members. I think it is of interest to note the damage sustained to the MX-5 from a relatively low-speed impact. Both vehicles failed to leave any traceable skid marks at the scene.

It's chilling to think what may have happened if the MX-5 driver had been driving more quickly or been less observant.



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It's crumpled, but that's how it's designed: the body absorbs the energy and protects the occupants

The decision was made not long after watching the action-packed finish of last year's LiquiMoly Bathurst 12 Hour.

I made a call to my MX-5 racer mate Dean Watchorn, to see if he was interested in making the 10-hour road trip to watch the 2017 12-hour endurance sports car race on that iconic mountain circuit. A nanosecond is a long time in the motor sport world but that's how long it took for us to decide in the affirmative!

For we old blokes, a year doesn't take long to wiz by, so before we knew it we were packing Dean's Transit for the trip. The sun hadn't risen when we left on the Thursday morning. A couple of fuel and bakery stops later (and long driving stints in between), Bathurst city and the Mountain were in view.

For the uninitiated, this event is for production-based sports cars racing in the GT3, GT3 Cup, GT4, and Invitational classes. As the name suggests, the Invitational class is for cars that are not necessarily production-based. Some of the interesting cars running in this class included bespoke hand-built "Ford Focus" and "Mazda 3" sedans. These cars utilise a space frame chassis, trans-axel sequential transmission and – get this – a 5L Ford Coyote V8, with a *factory-looking* body shell. Basically, a lightweight V8 Supercar detuned for endurance racing.

The Outright Honours class has wonderful automotive names such as Bentley, Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, BMW, Mercedes Benz, Audi, Aston Martin, Porsche ... and what's Bathurst without a Nissan GTR or three?!

Though production-based (unlike V8 Supercars), GT3 sportscars are blindingly fast, lapping Mt Panorama much faster than the heavy, under-tyred V8s. Because of their production roots, some of the teams chose to utilise the factory air conditioning, the drivers being very appreciative as the weather on that weekend was extremely hot.

Not only do you get to see a variety of different makes, but the symphony of sound from those exotic engines is truly colossal. V12, V8, V8 turbo, V6 turbo, flat 6 ... it's a motorhead's aural delight!

To fit into free-to-air TV times, the race starts at 5.45am and finishes at 5.45pm, just in time for the evening news.

The pre-dawn race start is the best motor sport spectacle I've ever seen: red-hot exhausts, brake rotors glowing, and sparks bursting out of the backs of the cars as they howl past.

Our viewing position for most of the day was at McPhillamy Park on to Skyline. The cars look like they drop off a cliff as they disappear on their descent of the mountain. I would recommend to anyone attending any motor race at Bathurst to take a walk down to Forrest's Elbow, stopping along the way at the Dipper; it's really the only way you appreciate the amazing elevation change from top to bottom.

By the end of 12 gruelling hours, the Ferrari 488 of Lowndes, Whincup and Vilander were victorious ... the second win for the Prancing Horse in this event.

Mazda had four outright victories on the trot in the 12 hour (1992-1995), the most for any manufacturer in this event (though one was at Eastern Creek in 1995 when it couldn't be held at Bathurst). No, MX-5s weren't the weapon of choice back then but the fabulous RX-7 – one of which is in the Mazda Australia Heritage collection.

So are you going to put the 2018 Bathurst 12 Hour on your to-do list? *I think I will!*

Bathurst 12 Hour

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3-4.2.17 Words & photos: John Poletti, Eastern Victoria Chapter



It's a hard job, but ... the boys wondering what the poor people are doing



Elevation change at Forrest's Elbow



∧ The "Transit-abaygo" on our "glamp" site



🔨 Dawn breaking over Mt Panorama



Circuit Driver Training, Winton

4.2.17 Words: Murray Finlay Photos: Chantel, CAMS Club Development Officer Organisers: Randy Stagno Navarra &



How cool is school?

... especially when the school in question is the Club's "home" circuit at Winton, the classroom is your own car and the teachers are some of our wonderful MX-5 Club Motor Sport Team members.

I certainly have no plans to take my MX-5 to the track, but I was definitely interested in improving my driving skills and learning more about what my car and I can – and can't – do.

So I was very pleased when the Club, in conjunction with the Alfa Club of Victoria (AROCA) announced that there would be a driver training day at Winton on 4 February. It had been several years since the last one and, in my opinion, was well overdue.

With the prospect of a three-

hour drive each way and a long and mentally-demanding day ahead, I really didn't think that a 4.30am departure from home on the day of the event was a good idea. So I snuck out of work a little early on the Friday and headed up the Hume to Benalla for my overnight stop.

The Winton gates opened at 7.30am on the Saturday, ahead of scrutineering at 7.45am, so it was good to have only a 15-minute drive to get there.

I thought I was ready, but scrutineering showed otherwise:

- my fire extinguisher was out of date (thanks to Peter Dannock for the loan of his),
- my tyres were a bit overinflated for the track (they were going to get hot),

- I'd forgotten to replace the metal valve caps I'd lost when I recently had new tyres fitted (thanks again to Peter for finding me some spares), and
- » I hadn't emptied everything (including the bolted-in spare wheel and jack) out of the boot.
- I already knew that I didn't have a helmet, but I was able to borrow one of the two Club-owned spares that Peter and Gavin Newman brought to the track, and
- I was able to buy a blue triangle sticker I needed to indicate my car's battery position on the day.

This is why we have scrutineering. Motor sport is serious!

So, ready to go? Well, *now*, yes!

The day started with a briefing, outlining what we students could expect from the day, and what was expected of us ... attitude, requirement to follow instructions, awareness of our surroundings and other vehicles on the track, position of hands on the steering wheel and seat position etc ...

Then six-time Club Motor Sport Champion (and Life Member) Sam Gumina took us through the theory of why a car gets out of shape on the road and what we could do to prevent that.

Central to this was a discussion of the "grip circle", which gave us a good understanding of the forces that act on a vehicle while driving – acceleration, braking and corning – and how they add up to the amount of grip

Murray with instructor George Vellis







available at any point. As I understand it ... you can, for example, apply 100% of your grip when you're braking in a straight line – but if you try turning when 100% of your grip is already being used for braking you're going to exceed the 100% of available grip ... and you're going to slide. Or, if the vehicle is at the limit of its grip while turning, and then you try to brake or accelerate, you're going to slide.

Or, as Sam so eloquently expressed it, "your back wheels are going to overtake your front wheels ... and that's not a good thing!"

Then there's the cornering ... understanding the dynamics of the vehicle as it corners, and picking the braking points as



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well as the entry, apex and exit points of each corner (helpfully marked with witches' hats today!) to get the right line into, through and out of the corner with maximum efficiency.

So, the trick is to find the right amount of braking before and acceleration through and out of corners varying from hairpins to esses to sweepers, to get around as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Got it? Um ... I think so.

Now it was time to summon up my new knowledge (and for the instructor to summon up his courage) and apply it on the track!

My two instructors for the day – George Vellis and current Club Motor Sport

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co-Champion Dean Hasnat – were both fantastic: cool and calm in the passenger seat, giving clear, patient instructions and constructive feedback as I tried to put it all together. I eventually nailed *(well, in my opinion)* each of the corners at the Winton short track as I went through the day, but I didn't manage a single lap where I got them all right.

And that was at rookie pace with plenty of space between the cars on the track; it only increased my admiration for the Motor Sport Team who get it right lap after lap at full tilt and in heavy traffic. And it gave me new appreciation of Sam's sign-off for his *mxtra* column when he was Club Captain - Motor Sport: *"Keep it on the black stuff"*!

I can only recommend that, next time a Club driver training day comes up, you snap up the opportunity to learn from the experts! While the skills don't directly apply to the road, they will help make you a better driver.

Special thanks to the Club's Motor Sport Captain and Assistant Captain, Randy Stagno Navarra and Gavin Newman, for working with AROCA and CAMS to organise the event, and to the instructors – Sam Gumina, Dean Hasnat, George Vellis, Peter Dannock and Tim Edwards – who gave up their Saturday to impart some of their knowledge to we newbies.



Car care products - member discounts

Waxit Car Care in Tullamarine is

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

Check out the Waxit range and order online at www.waxit.com.au. Our Club coupon code is mx5club. Please add your Club membership number to the "comments" section of your order.



Round 2 at Winton



2017 Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship | Round 2 ~ 5.2.17



5.2.17 Words: Alan Conrad (with apologies to Paul Simon) Photos: Daniel White, Gavin Newman, Alan Conrad

The weather forecast for the day at Winton showed a probability of rain all day.

With high probability in the morning decreasing as the day wore on, the rain started just as we finished drivers' briefing. Large wet spots on the dry surface progressively turned into a deep covering of wet on the tarmac, starting as the first cars began their practice run and continuing well into the morning.

Despite the weather forecast, it was great to see a mix of newbies, veterans and everyone in between! With the Broadford event and the fantastic **Fan Fest** in January, MX-5 entries were down a bit but that gave the intrepid more track time!

Amongst the Club notables were John Balazo back to motor sport and putting in blazing times, the Rafels engaging in friendly competition, Jarrah Pitt getting faster all the time ... and Black Betty's back! Simeon Ouzas showed you can't keep a good man away from the track.

A wet track makes for interesting driving as the tyres' grip reduces to about half of what you get in the dry. Cornering speeds reward smooth driving with carefully chosen cornering lines and steady application of power lest the rear of the car break and leave you spinning off the track. Fortunately, the slower speeds involved mean the consequences are usually not too dire. "Slippery when wet" took on a new meaning in the early stages of the main straight with Winton throwing up an extra challenge with goo left on the track from the previous week's drifting just near the start of the main straight. Innocuous in the dry, it became treacherous in the wet with even small amounts of acceleration causing the rear to break and require an immediate correction.

The main challenge in the wet is to leave enough distance for braking at the end of the straights. It's easy to build up speed to dry-track levels and leave insufficient distance to slow for the upcoming corner. Fortunately, most of us negotiated the challenge uneventfully and stayed on the black stuff.

As the day wore on, the rain stopped and the track dried up, allowing fast times in the afternoon. Thus, times were all over the place (see page 30 for the times and overall standings).

The long track configuration was used in the morning and short track in the afternoon, with heats of the Alfa circuit racing providing a spectacular and hard-fought interlude to the sprints.

Out of the weather: George, Robert, Leon and John find some dry.











2017 Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - Round 2 | Winton ~ 5.2.17

Short Track	:	1st		2nd	3rd		
Open		»	1:09.620				
	Alan Conrad		1:10.686*				
NA/NB Modified	Daniel White	»	1:13.130*	Leon Bogers » 1:14.644			
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	»	1:12.372	George Vellis » 1:20.677			
Standard ND	Tim Edwards	»	1:16.453				
Standard NB	Simeon Ouzas	»	1:15.028	Steve Williamsz » 1:15.268	Ibrahim Rafel » 1:15.821		

* New Club lap record

Long Track		1st		2nd	3rd			
Open	Dave Moore	»	1:49.856					
NC/ND Modified	Alan Conrad	»	1:49.949*					
NA/NB Modified	Leon Bogers	»	1:53.505*	Gavin Newman » 2:09.216	Daniel White » 2:13.741			
NB Clubman	Peter Dannock	»	2:05.249					
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	»	1:49.235	George Vellis » 2:18.227				
Standard ND	Tim Edwards	»	1:53.736					
Standard NB	Ibrahim Rafel	»	1:54.366	Steve Williamsz » 2:04.044	Gareth Pedley » 2:06.044			

* New Club lap record

2017 Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship - after Round 2 | Winton ~ 5.2.17

(corrected points)	1st			2nd			3rd		
Overall Champion	Alan Conrad	»	200	= Dave Moore / Robert Downe	s	»	195		
Open	Dave Moore	»	200						
Restricted Open	Tim Meaden	»	100						
NC/ND Modified	Alan Conrad	»	200						
NA/NB Modified	Leon Bogers	»	100	Daniel White	»	75	Gavin Newman	»	60
NB Clubman	= Noel Heritage / Peter Dannoo	ck	»	100			Murray Seymour	»	75
NA Clubman	Robert Downes	»	200	George Vellis	»	75			
Standard ND	Tim Edwards	»	100						
Standard NB	Ibrahim Rafel	»	200	Steve Williamsz	»	150	Simeon Ouzas	»	90

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