

mxtra

11/2017
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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF VICTORIA & TASMANIA

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MX-5 Club
of Victoria

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All the Chapter action
Weekends in Tassie and the high country



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Cover image: A fun day out, but a bugger to get to: The mighty Stelvio Pass in northern Italy.
Photo: Alyssa Finlay



Find us at:
MX-5 Club of Victoria

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Pete's Perspective ...

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

A Renaissance Spirit

There has been a renaissance spirit that has existed for the Mazda MX-5 in recent years, ever since the launch of the ND model in September 2015.

In 2006, Mazda sold nearly 1500 MX-5s in Australia. By 2013, that had slipped to 60 cars, less than 5% of the sales from seven years earlier. There were many reasons for this: the model was aging and by the time it was replaced it was 10 years old, albeit with some minor updates. The price had ballooned to \$50,000 and the available models trimmed back to a single hard-top model. Adding to Mazda's woes, Toyota released the 86 (and its Subaru cousin, the BRZ) in 2012 with a starting price of under \$30,000.

For Mazda and we enthusiasts, the release of the ND in 2015 couldn't come quickly enough. With two engine options, the return of the soft top and a starting price under \$32,000, the all-new Mazda MX-5 was the panacea for the dwindling sales. A weight reduction of 90kg ensured that the ND made a welcome return to the aspirations of the original MX-5.

Today, almost 10% of our Club members own an ND and I have no doubt that it has contributed to the growing member numbers now and will do so into the future.

Airbag Recall

Many of you would have heard about the recent Takata airbag recalls and, even though Mazda MX-5 models are not affected, you may own another Mazda model that is affected. If you do own an affected Mazda vehicle, please read the following information that Mazda Australia asked me to pass on.

The recall was launched as part of a global Takata air bag recall campaign involving multiple manufacturers, where the air bag inflator/s may have been

exposed to moisture absorption over time, causing degradation of the inflator propellant. In the event of a collision, the inflator may rupture and cause the air bag to deploy abnormally, increasing the risk of injury to the occupant.

Every vehicle made has a unique Vehicle Identification Number [VIN] that identifies that specific vehicle. Mazda Australia has an *online VIN lookup* where you simply enter your vehicle's VIN and check to see if yours is affected by a recall. Find it at: <https://www.mazda.com.au/recalls/>.

Customers can also contact Mazda Australia on 1800 034 411 between 9.30am and 5pm (EST) or visit the Product Safety Australia Website, <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/news/takata-airbag-recalls-affecting-australian-consumers>.

A Very Active Membership

When you thumb through this month's *mxtra*, you will see Will Campbell's report on membership and how the Club is on track for yet another record membership year. More pleasing than the growing number of members is the growing number of the members *who are actively attending Club events*.

On a single weekend during October, there were three weekend events held. Organised by the Eastern Victoria Chapter, the **3 Peaks run** was in its fifth year at Bright, with over 35 MX-5s and almost 70 members in attendance. Down in Tassie, the Northern and Southern Tasmania Chapters came together for a **weekend trip to Bicheno**, with 30 MX-5s and 60 members involved. To top the weekend off, we had three teams competing at the Alfa Romeo Club's **12 Hour** regularity relay event at Winton Raceway near Benalla. There we had 15

For your diary ...

See the full calendar for details

November

- 12 EV Khanacross, Bryant Park
- 12 STas Brookfields run
- 18 NEV Mt Buller run
- 18 NTas Breakfast at Tiffnnies
- 19 EV Shed to Shed run
- 19 WV Winery/Produce run
- 26 CEN Brisbane Ranges run
- 26 NTas Santa @ Sandra's

December

- 3 EV Christmas break-up
- 10 STas Christmas run
- 10 CEN Christmas run
- 17 NEV Christmas run
- 17 WV Christmas run

cars competing on the track and over 30 members driving or supporting the teams as volunteers over the weekend.

These numbers go to show how active the Club is, when we can get over 80 vehicles and more than 150 members actively involved in a weekend's Club activities. And if you think that wasn't enough, the Club backed this achievement up with two Great Ocean Road runs in late October with some 85 cars and almost 150 members in attendance.

Congratulations on a great effort from all involved. I look forward to meeting more members out on Club activities in the future.

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

Peter



Scene about ...



■ Photos: Peter Ferguson, John Waldoock, Jill Steer, Alana McDougall, Alan Bennett, June Teeuw, Vanessa Macaulay, Karen Bradshaw





Randy's Rant ...



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

AROCA 12 Hour ~ 14-15 October

The 2017 AROCA 12 Hour at Winton has been run and won ... see page 28 for a report and photos.



Essendon Mazda MX-5 Sprint Championship ~ Rd 9 / Interstate Challenge at Sydney Motorsport Park, 18 November

This is the last round of the championship and as always is a very popular event. So ensure you get your entries in early or you may risk missing out. Let us all finish off the season on a high note. Some of the classes are going down to the wire and it is exciting to see who will come out on top.

Motor Sport Awards and Luncheon ~ Sunday, 17 December

This will be held at the Kent Hotel in Carlton. I know it's close to Christmas but it would be great if we could all get together and end the season on a high note. I will need to know numbers so if you could get back to me ASAP so I can finish organising the day I would really appreciate it.

"Market research"!

I have some exciting personal news. Whiteline Suspension have given me a set of adjustable sway bars and lowered springs to test on my ND.

I'll soon be able to give a full review of the package both on the road and on track. I'll be working with Whiteline to get a discount for Club members on the various packages they offer.

So watch this space ...

2018 Motor Sport Calendar.

The calendar for next year is all sorted.

Yet again we will have 10 rounds but we will cover 11 tracks! Our *Tour de Tassie* will count as one round, even though we will be competing at two tracks. This has been done to not disadvantage competitors who decide to drop this round. All the track days have been nicely spaced out and yet again we will be supporting the AROCA and WRX Clubs.

The Interstate Challenge is set for April up at Winton.

Rd	Date	Day	Circuit	Event
1	20 January	Saturday	Phillip Island	
2	4 March	Sunday	Winton	
3	14 April	Saturday	Winton	Interstate Challenge
4	19 May	Saturday	Sandown	
5	9 June	Saturday	Winton	
6	30 June	Saturday	Phillip Island	
7	11 August	Saturday	Winton	
8	1 September	Saturday	Sandown	
---	13-14 October	Weekend	Winton	AROCA 12 Hour
9	3 November	Saturday	Baskerville	Tour de Tassie
	5 November	Monday	Symmons Plains	
10	10 December	Sunday	Phillip Island	

Stay safe, and I'll see you all at a track soon.

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

Randy



Membership

Current membership count:

695

and growing!

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

C'day again ...

Fifteen new members this month; I wish all a long and fruitful association with our Club.

Central Chapter

Simon Boeyen	2008 Blue NC
Andrew Clayton	1992 Classic Red NA
Michael Day	1993 Classic Red NA
Jake Dixon	1999 Brilliant Black NB
Bill Drinkwater	2000 Sunlight Silver NB
Matthew Hiddle	1989 Classic Red NA
Sam & Anna Panettieri	2011 Blue NC
Lachlan Stephens	2003 Cerion Silver NB

Northern Tasmania Chapter

Graham Ashley	1989 Classic Red NA
James McAnna & Karen Alexander	2015 Crystal White ND
Dale Sheppard & Lisa Plapp	1999 Blue NB

North-Eastern Victoria Chapter

Athol Bradley	2005 Black NC
---------------	---------------

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

Will



June Teeuw



Randy Stagno Navarra

Central's Great Ocean Road dawn run was on 29 October. See the report on page 26.

Club 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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Chapter chatter ...

8.10.17 | **Central** ■ Words: Sandra Elliott ■ Photos: Sandra Elliott, Peter Dannock ■ Organisers: Peter Dannock

The morning began at the meeting point, Officer BP on the Princess Highway ... or was it the Princess Freeway, as two MX-5s discovered on finding out the hard way!

Fifteen cars were parked and ready to go but waiting to decide what the weather gods would give us. It was cloudy and cool with a few drops of rain, but not enough to dampen the spirits of the “topless” drivers and their navigators.

There were a number of new members present. We welcomed Brendan George (Ceramic White ND), Kevin Moriarty (White NA), Michael and Anne Metherall (Grace Green NB), Trevor and George Reeves (Copper Red NC) and, for their second run with the Club, Graeme and Wendy Keating (Ceramic White ND).

We all stood around with our Maccas cups in hand as we

listened to both Club President Peter Dancock, our run organiser on the day, and John Palmer, our Chapter Captain. We were then introduced to Cary, our merchandise co-ordinator and Tail-end Charlie for the day, who had a very questionable jumper on but it was Sunday, a holy day, after all!

The sun began to show its face so most left with the top down and sunglasses on. We headed on to Yarra Junction through Gembrook, then on to Neerim Junction for our first stop. It was here that rumblings could be heard from two Tail-end Charlies about the over-use of window washers! Apparently, the spray

was causing issues for the rear driver who was concerned about the effect the cold water would have on his water-works! Obviously, safety comes before comfort when you are second-last ...

Next stop was Blue Rock Lake for morning tea after a great drive and good corner marking when necessary. We were all shown Katrina’s outstanding baking and hospitality skills (below), which were very much appreciated by everyone.

The final leg of our journey meandered through beautiful green countryside with rolling hills – first to Trafalgar and then to Thorpdale. Our new member, Anne Metherall, was very pleased to drive through the area that she grew up in and her family pioneered. Anne and Michael were even able to “toot” to family and friends along the way.

We continued the drive on roads made for the MX-5s showing their great handling and capabilities. Lunch was at Yarragon and by now the sun was out and very warm. Why is it that, in such a hot climate as we have, there is never enough shade! One couple took advantage of a huge shady tree and, if that wasn’t enough, out came a picnic blanket. There is a reason Captains are chosen ... resourceful!

Great day. Great roads. Great company. Bring on the next run! ●



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Chapter chatter ...

13-14.17 | Northern Tasmania ■ Words: Darren Agar ■ Photos: Jill Steer, Darren Agar, Alana McDougall, Bruce Harvey, Trevor Simm, Rosh Dhillon ■ Organiser: Bruce Harvey

With summer on the way and rooves well and truly folded, we made our way to the meeting point at the historic town of Longford, a few kilometers south of Launceston.

Longford is situated in the middle of the rich farming area of the Northern Midlands and once played host to a round of the Australian Grand Prix and the Tasman Series on one of the first street circuits in Australia.

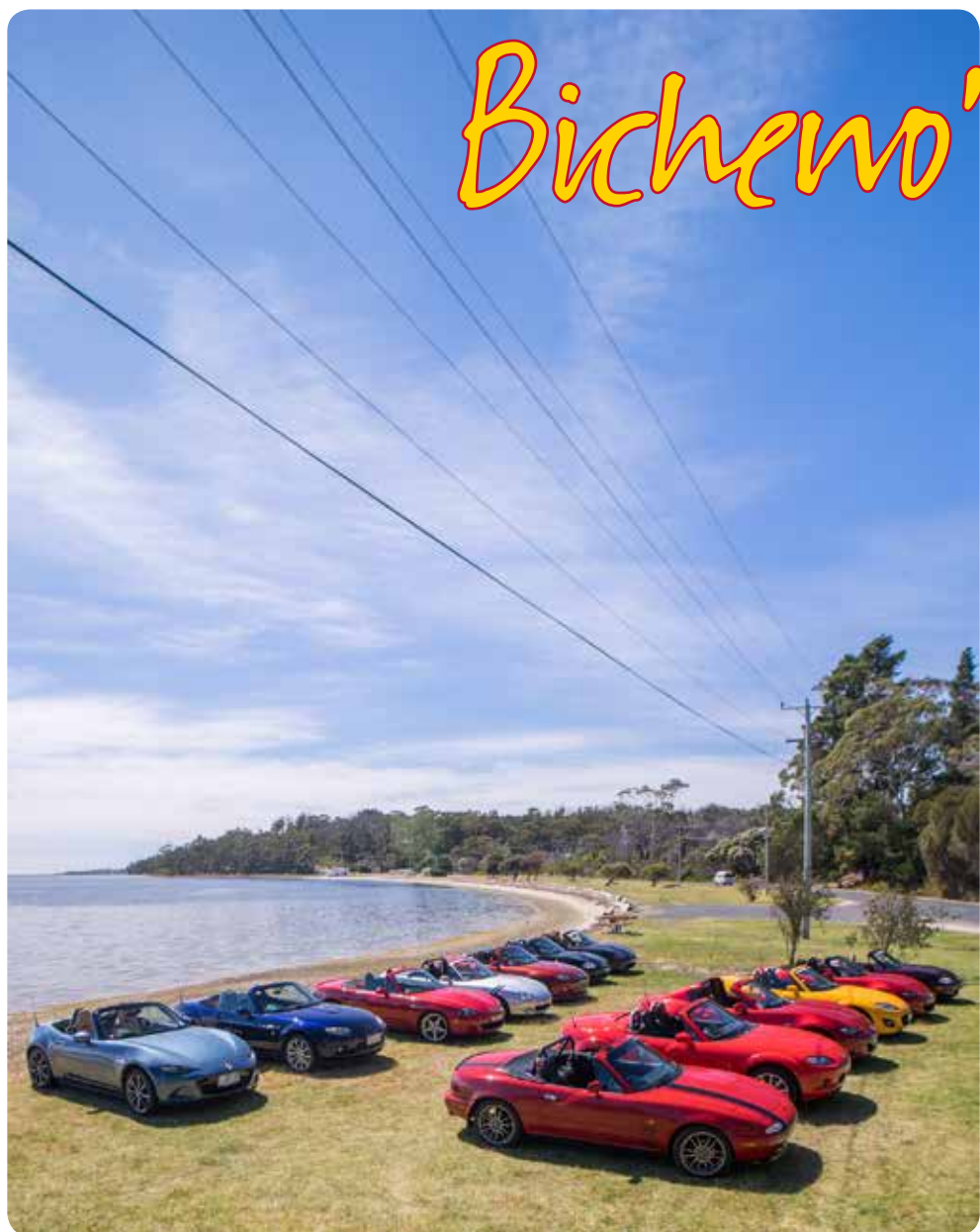
With members coming from all over northern Tassie, a later-than-normal start time of 10am was appreciated by all participants who were anticipating a fantastic day driving through some of the best roads Tasmania has to offer.

After coffee and catchup, the first stage of our drive took us through the township of Cressy and then up the mountain, passing the Hydro town of Poatina. It's a steep climb from Poatina to the Central Highlands with lots of hairpin bends and short straights to keep you on your toes. We were ably led by Richard along the Highland Lakes road towards our first stop at Bothwell.

Bothwell is the southern gateway to the highland lakes fishing area. We had planned a short break and Sammi Dhillon supplied a morning tea of delicious rum balls. Some of the locals were very interested in the range of MX-5s in the group and spent a reasonable time discussing the merits or otherwise of each model. The next stage of the run was from Bothwell down to Melton Mowbray and then on to Oatlands after a short squirt up the Midlands Highway.

We enjoyed lunch at the *TKO Café*. The café and attached hotel have an amazing wall-to-wall display of movie memorabilia, and hours could be lost viewing the collection.

One other important event in Oatlands was the arrival of Dave, a travelling companion for Trevor Simm (membership pending). With Dave securely strapped in we were off to Bicheno via Buckland and the Tasman Highway. The road from Oatlands to Buckland is a challenging drive with plenty of potholes to avoid.



.../continued page 12



13-14.17 | Southern Tasmania ■ Words: Don Nicoll ■ Photos: Rob Tanner & John Waldock
 ■ Organisers: Duncan Pyper & Don Nicoll

vernighter

When you are heading up the east coast of Tasmania you hope for great weather to enjoy the roads and the scenery.

This hope was probably reinforced by President Pete's August visit when we would have liked to turn on some less windy conditions. Nearly two months later we were blessed by the weather gods ... either that or Duncan had paid the BOM a heap. It was perfect for both days of the weekend.

Fifteen cars and 28 occupants met in Cambridge on Saturday morning with the sun already creating some spring warmth. Duncan did the preliminaries, concentrating on the fact that the plan was deliberately loose. In fact, the only commitment was the overnight accommodation and evening meal in Bicheno for the 12 cars and 24 occupants who were staying the night.

Formalities completed, Duncan set off in the direction off Richmond, the obligatory Fingerpost road zig zag to the Orford road for a regroup at the Levendale turnoff. It was along this stretch that we discovered that Tail-end Charlie (your scribe) with a 40-channel radio could not communicate with the 80-channel set in Duncan's car. The matter remained unresolved except for times when we were in direct line of sight. However, enough radios were in the convoy for messages to be relayed.

The Levendale road is narrow, twisty at times and follows a lovely valley. Unfortunately winter had left quite a few potholes to avoid. Fortunately the Northern Tasmania Chapter were tackling this section in reverse, but some two hours later than us, so we could dart around without too much concern for oncoming traffic.

First stop was a coffee (in cafés of our choice) in Oatlands, followed by lunch in Ross, also at locations of our own choice. A re-group after lunch saw the convoy underway on the Midland Highway ... not the best MX-5 road in this State. However it wasn't long before we reached Campbell Town and the turnoff to Lake Leake. A change at Ross had put Tail-end Charlie in the lead and we set about enjoying the curves and twists of this

.../continued page 13



Chapter chatter ...

Once past Buckland it was on to the Tasman Highway and north to Orford for another stop and photo opportunity. From Orford we made our way to Swansea then on to Bicheno for our overnight stay.

Once rooms and cars were sorted it was time for a quiet bit of refreshment. While we were sitting at the bar a whale was spotted in the bay ... *you gotta love Tassie!*

We all got together a bit later for a BBQ and a few more drinks and, later in the evening, the Southern Tasmania Chapter joined us. It was good to catch up with other Club members and share our passion for the "little roadster".

The plan for day two was to go to St Helens via the Elephant Pass and, after a coffee break at St Mary's, down St Marys Pass to St Helens for a BBQ lunch at Darren and Julie's. Potential new member Bill and his shiny red RF joined us for the drive to St Helens ... *hope to see you on future runs, Bill.*

Elephant Pass and St Marys pass are the sort of narrow twisty road the MX-5 was built for, and we all enjoyed the challenge.

After another friendly get together around the BBQ it was time to farewell the east coast and head home. Some elected to go home via St Marys and the Midland Highway, while the others couldn't resist the run north over the Weldbrough Pass. This drive would rate in the top five roads in Tasmania. From here they continued north to Scottsdale, The Sideling and home.

Thank you to everyone who had a hand in organising this run; it was one of the best I've been on so far. ●

Dave (membership pending)





.....

excellent piece of highway. Unfortunately there were a couple of (non MX-5) slow coaches on the route, but most had a good run.

A re-group at the Tasman highway farewelled the day trippers, and the overnights headed north to Bicheno. The day trippers passed the Northern Tasmania Chapter also heading to Bicheno, while the overnights caught up later in the day and evening. A meeting of the group on the terraces at the Bicheno motel, where we were staying, was lucky enough to see a whale and two calves playing in the water a couple of hundred metres away.

While the Northerners cooked their dinner at the caravan park, the Southerners toughed it out at the bistro. It was great to catch up with the Northern Chapter and share a few tales later in the evening.

Next morning was unscripted and the group spread itself amongst the Bicheno cafés for breakfast. At this point the loose arrangements came to the fore as some headed home for early afternoon commitments, while others headed to Triabunna to a local car show and some just picnicked by the river in Orford.

And the weather remained perfect! ●



Chapter chatter ...

24.10.17 | North-Eastern Victoria ■ Words: Loz Thomas ■ Photos: Marg Gillick ■ Organiser: Loz Thomas

The last Tuesday run for 2017 was held on October 24th, another beautiful spring day in the North-East.

Five cars and their seven occupants met at the *Beechworth Bakery* for a coffee and catch up. Ron and Marg were back after their five-month hiatus travelling in their caravan, and had lots of stories to tell. We also welcomed Ray and Lynne Harmer from Yarrowonga. Three weeks ago they bought their first MX-5 – a silver 2011 NC. A great Christmas Kris Kringle present from their son was a membership to the MX-5 Club!

We left Beechworth and drove through to Stanley and then down the twisty Mt Stanley road to Mudgegonga. From there it was across to Rosewhite via Carrolls Road and then along the Kiewa valley to Tawonga. The countryside is looking really green and lush and there was still snow on Mt Bogong. Stopping at the lookout at Tawonga there were smiles on everyone's faces ... except one. Poor Lynne on her first Club run was feeling slightly carsick. I have to admit that I was a bit concerned that we had still had to traverse Tawonga Gap to Bright, and then the even more twisty road to Mt Buffalo, but after Lynne assured us that she would be fine we headed off. We regrouped at the end of Tawonga Gap and it was no surprise when Lynne declared that they had to have a brief stop on the way down. Said Lynne: *"I haven't been car sick since I was pregnant with my son ... and he's 50!"*

Tuesday runs are all about taking it easy, and we had had our fun driving lots of twisty roads already. But time was marching on, and everyone was more than happy to finish the day in Bright. We had our lunch at one of the picnic tables in the park where Moses Creek runs into the Ovens River and opposite the waterpark ... *very picturesque.*

Ray wanted some advice on some twisty roads that he could drive on to become more familiar with the car, so we spent a bit of time highlighting roads on his map.

"This is a great road ... oh and if you turn here this is another great road ... and then if you go up there that's another great road ... but then there's always a curvy road somewhere!" ●



I've never been great at passes.

After many unsuccessful attempts with gems like "Hello darling, who do you barrack for?", and "Do you live round here often?" I finally gave up and in my mid-30s resigned myself to a life of bachelorhood.

Fortunately Alyssa came along and rescued me, allowing me to chase her until she caught me! In fairly short order, "Miss Right" became "Mrs Always Right" and we were able to put the whole sorry saga of my excuses for passes behind us ...



^ Murray gets some tips on his pick-up lines

... until, that is, our recent second-honeymoon trip to Norway, Scotland and northern Italy, when we experienced a whole new world of passes ...

As a teenager hiking in Tasmania someone told me, tongue-in-cheek, that the bloke who designed the rural roads was paid a shilling for every corner he could put in, and he retired a very rich man! We discovered that the Norwegians, Swiss and Italians (and probably many others) seem to have followed the same philosophy, putting switchback roads up almost-vertical walled valleys to passes where there's no right to be a road. In the process they created bucket lists of roads for driving enthusiasts the world over!

Our first experience was in Norway. After driving the famed Atlantic Ocean Road with its nutty bridges out of Kristensund, we headed south to the *Trollstigen* – the "Troll Ladder" or "Trolls' Footpath" – a mountain pass on Highway 63 south of Åndalsnes. Its 11 hairpin bends climb a 10 degree slope to the pass at 858m above sea level.



Descending the other side we were confronted by the small matter of Highway 63 being cut in half by the fairly imposing stretch of water known as Norddal Fjord; with typical Norwegian efficiency, after a few minutes we and the other waiting vehicles were called on to the Linge Ferry – itself part of Highway 63 – sailed across the fjord and continued our journey on the opposite shore without missing a beat. We experienced this many times in our few days of Norwegian driving – the impressive network of tunnels and ferries is just how you get around; it makes the fuss around our level crossings and Tulla widening seem pretty trivial!

Then it was up and over another range to another exciting set of 12 tight switchbacks down quite a skinny road, this time from the stunning *Ørnesvingen*-eagle lookout overlooking the Geirangerfjord down to the village of Geiranger, before we headed upwards again to yet another spectacular lookout, looking back the way we had just come, at the top of Dalsnibba mountain plateau (1,476m) [see over...].

Passes I have made...

Passing time on holiday ...



The next pass, the following day, was not very gnarly, but was equally dramatic for its stunning scenery. It was on Norway's Route 55, the **Sognefjellsvegen** (Sognefjell road), which took us through Norway's highest mountains and over the highest pass in northern Europe. While the pass is "only" 1430m at its highest point, the wild mountain and glacial scenery is a memory that will never leave us.



Sognefjellsvegen mountain pass

Like many northern countries, Norway appears to have two seasons: winter, and roadbuilding. We were there in mid-September early in their autumn, and enjoyed the benefit of many freshly-resurfaced roads. Unfortunately this high pass road was also undergoing roadworks, and at one point we had no choice but to take the workers' advice and "come back in an hour". Miles from anywhere, including anything that resembled a coffee shop, there was nothing for it but to sit by the side of the road and wait until the new bitumen could be driven on ... very slowly, behind an official convoy leader. Thank goodness someone (Alyssa) had the foresight to fill our thermos that morning.

That day was capped off by a run through the 24.5km-long **Lærdal tunnel** – the world's longest – which took about 30 minutes to traverse. Its length includes three stunningly-lit pull-over spots at 8km intervals, to allow for overtaking or driver fatigue ... or for those who just want to take a photo!

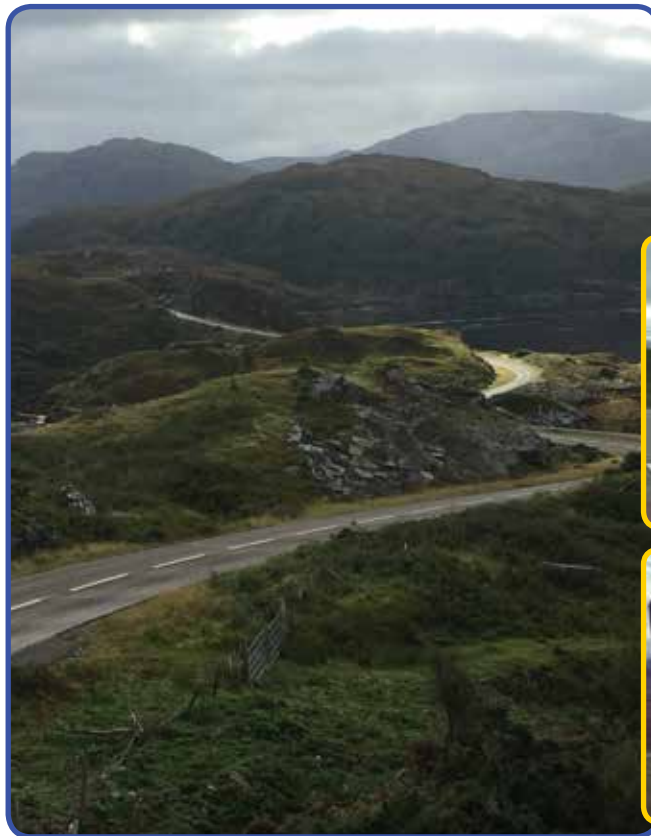


Lærdal tunnel

^ The view from the Dallsnibba plateau, looking all the way back to the switchback descent to Geirangerfjord ...

Our next leg was on to northern Scotland to drive the **North Coast 500**, the loop of road from Inverness up to John O'Groats, across the top, down the west coast and back to Inverness. We had explored the Scottish highlands between Edinburgh and Inverness two years earlier, had fallen in love with the stark scenery and were keen to return to drive this well-publicised route. Unfortunately the hype exceeded the reality of this road; the scenery was wonderful in many places but not as breathtaking as we had found in the highlands further south on our earlier trip, and for us it suffered by comparison – perhaps unfairly – with Norway's majestic scenery of the previous week. In many places the road (promoted as a tourist route) is single-lane only, making it pretty exciting when you meet an oncoming car (or motorhome, or truck) on a blind crest; there are many signed passing places, which means a fair bit of reversing if you are closer to one or if the other bloke is bigger than you!

So, then it was off to northern Italy. And if we thought Norway's passes were dramatic, *we'd ain't seen nothing yet ...*



◀ North Coast 500 road near Kylesku, western Scotland

✓ Give way to other vehicles, sheep and, er, Gingers on the NC 500



Unlike Trollstigen, which we could see snaking its way up the valley wall, the **Passo Dello Stelvio** (Stelvio Pass) near the Italy-Switzerland border crept up on us. A narrow road even at its base, the drive initially took us through farming and wooded land, with many blind turns around high rock-walled corners. Gradually the climb brought us above the tree line to tighter and tighter switchbacks which cut back above us so severely that Alyssa had to poke her head out of the passenger window and back over her shoulder to see what, if anything, was coming down.

What was coming down included a random succession of motor bikes, passenger cars, motor homes, trucks and even buses which flew down the hill as though they were driving a flat, straight road, steering with one hand as they talked nonchalantly on a mobile phone with the other! I'd dreamed of a bit of a fang, and I'd like to think it would have been different in my own MX-5 (and maybe with the road closed!) ... but we *crawled* around corners to assess each next section, juggling being on the wrong side of the car, on the wrong side of the (very skinny!) road, doing my damndest to keep as far right as I could (without scraping the walls) and repeatedly trying to change gear with the door handle. (*Who knew the gear shift in a left-hand drive car would still be in the centre?*)

.../continued

⤴ Coming up ... the eastern approach to Stelvio Pass ...



*Passo Dello Stelvio:
3km of winding road? No sh*t, Sherlock!*



I'm sure the views were spectacular, but I was focussed on keeping in my lane (when there was a lane!); Alyssa too was more interested in how close I was to the right-hand walls, with constant urgings of "more to the left!". I couldn't help thinking of past Club President David James who, a few years back, climbed this road on a bike!

But we got there, 24km and 48 switchbacks later ... even passing a very old-timer (not David!) on an even older push bike (no gears) as he tacked his way ever-so-slowly up the ascent, and the reward at the 2,758m pass – apart from the sensational view – was hot chocolate and croissants for the lady and the promise of "free beer tomorrow" for the bloke!

The road down the other side towards Bormio – once we had moved aside for the locals for whom the pea-soup cloud was no deterrent to speed – was a much more forgiving series of hairpins and sweeping corners that we could actually enjoy driving ... once the fingers had relaxed from their white-knuckle claw positions of the ascent!

.../continued



^ ... and the road down from Stelvio Pass, heading west towards Bormio



Splügen! **(Swiss for "nuts"?)**

Our final adventure happened by accident. After a night in the smallish town of Tirano just south of the Alps, we had planned to hop across to St Moritz in Switzerland – just so we could say we had been! The view from the winding road through the mountains would have been magnificent ... if we'd been able to see it. The higher we climbed the thicker the cloud became, and it was a challenge keeping sight of the tail lights of the car in front of us. Oddly, the paint marking the edges of the road was white, not yellow, which was difficult to see in the thick fog and would have been impossible in snow.

Over the top, we again dropped below the cloud, but rain fell solidly, encouraging us to choose another route back to Italy. This led us in a long loop north to Chur and then south towards the border again, where the road to Lake Como traversed the Splügen Pass (2,115m) – a “mini Stelvio” which, while tight in places, was a relatively easy climb that delivered us to the abandoned border post at the top.

The descent, however, was something else. As we began, navigator Alyssa looked out of the passenger window to get an idea of how the road made its way down the hill ... she said nothing but, had I looked, I would have seen the blood drain from her face! Fortunately, I couldn't see the route ... the drop was almost sheer, with 10 extremely tight switchbacks sitting so closely one atop the other that it was like viewing a bowl of spaghetti from above! Aside from it being several hours' driving to find an alternative, there was nowhere to turn around!

Down we plunged, in and out of short but unlit tunnels, around bends so tight that it was difficult for cars to pass each other without reversing (we know; we tried), and through tunnels that doubled as hairpins! Goodness (and Italians) only know how two trucks could pass on that road, but I'm sure the locals do it with their eyes closed (*which is how I think a lot of Italian driving is done!*).

- **Exhilarating? Absolutely!**
- **Awe-inspiring marvels of road building engineering? No question!**
- **Bucket list checked? Definitely ...**
- **Are we going back? Ummm ... the jury's out, but right now we're pretty much over the mountain pass thing!**

The next holiday is likely to be more sedate, on a towel on a beach! ●

◀ *The descent at Splügen Pass ... not our photos (we were too busy changing our underwear!)*

Chapter chatter ...

13-16.10.17 | Eastern Victoria ■ Words: Bill Roder ■ Photos: Peter Ferguson, Philip Menezes, June Teeuw, Karen Bradshaw, Mel Krygsman, David Salter ■ Organisers: Rob Krygsman & friends

Well, once again the Eastern Victoria Chapter's annual "3 Peaks" event has been staged. I'm quite sure that, like me, everybody would be reflecting and thinking what an absolute hoot of an event it has become.

Firstly it must be said that the success of this event is mainly due not only to the beautiful roads that are used but also to the hard work of the organising committee: Peter Ferguson (King Fern), Robby Krygsman, David and Leeanne Evans, Peter Ilijash, and Jenna Perks. A special mention goes to Leeanne, who unfortunately was too unwell to attend the event.

The Friday started for us with a fair amount of drizzle as we headed down to Traralgon for the start. Here I must say that we cut it a bit fine time-wise arriving with only a minute to spare, then was promptly delegated to volunteer to write this article. At least we managed to arrive at the correct Maccas, unlike ex-Eastern Victoria Chapter Captain Alan Laine, who eventually got suspicious when he noticed a distinct lack of MX-5s in the car park and made a mad dash to the correct one (good one Al).

We were divided into two groups which headed off to Bairnsdale 20 minutes apart, negotiating the never-ending roadworks along the way. Morning tea was in the car



3 Peaks run



park behind Maccas, where we were met by some local members of the far-far-East group who came along to say hello. Off to Omeo with excitement (for some) increasing with the first of the windy roads.

We made a quick stop at Omeo for lunch, then headed up to Hotham. There was a bit of a scare there when Peter Gillies' car overheated (again). Quite a few of us blokes volunteered to use our bra removing skills – that would be car bra removing skills of course – to rectify the overheating worries. Then, after the mandatory photo shoot, it was down to Bright. After pre-dinner drinkies, what seemed like a couple of hundred pizzas arrived.

On Saturday morning, after a lovely brekkie cooked by Peter, Lori, Phil and Keith, we were joined by Loz Thomas, Chapter Captain of North-Eastern Victoria Chapter, who volunteered to lead one of the groups for the drive to the Mitta Mitta pub for a counter meal, returning with a detour up the Falls Creek Road, which I consider to be one of the best roads for an MX-5 in Victoria.

On returning to Bright after a cracking day, local caterers arrived to serve a beautiful roast dinner on the lawns of the motel. After the meal King Ferg said a few words, then our president Peter Dannock made presentations to some members for their service to our Club. They were Alan Laine and John and Noellene Gleeson for their roles as past Chapter Captains, and Jenny Gray and Gail Collins for their efforts in organisation of the 2016 NatMeet.

.../continued



3 Peaks run ...



A raffle was held with prizes donated from the **RACV**, who once again came up with some fabulous support in the way of a donation for the event to help keep the costs down for we members. So please give RACV some consideration when you're next selecting your insurances. Proceeds of the raffle was donated to cancer research.

Lastly, a special award was made for the person who washed, polished and generally fussed over their car the most: the 'WANKER' (*Washing cars All the time is Not Kool as the Effort is Ridiculous*) award. Other considerations were 'TOSSER' (*Thorough Overuse of Special Shining to Exterior Regions*) award, and the 'LOSER' (*Linishing Of Soiled Exterior Repeatedly*) award. The winner of this award was ... Jolt Bijker.

On Sunday we were greeted with another beautiful sunny day as well as another spectacular brekkie cooked by the team again.

Three groups were once again the order of the day. As we made our way up Mt Buffalo, some stopped for a look at one of the waterfalls on the way. We regrouped at the café where the car park quickly filled with 33 MX-5s. After tea, coffee, scones and cream we all made our way back to Bright to enjoy a free afternoon. Word around town was that some of our crew got to know one of the local breweries rather well; for verification of this I believe Peter Ilijash can put more light on the matter.

We all visited the local pub for the evening meal for a night of good food and revelry. It was suggested to Jenna to send a photo of the specials board, which couldn't be seen from our seats, to our phones ... good idea, Katrina!

On Monday morning we all headed off at our leisure on another lovely sunny day for the trip home. It should be noted that the event drew the participation of the Club President Peter Dannock, our treasurer David Collins, club secretary Bruce Gray and all current Victorian Club Chapter Captains: Central – John and Katrina Palmer; Eastern – Peter Ferguson; Western – Karen and Ian Bradshaw and North Eastern – Loz Thomas. It was great to have them all along.

On a personal note I would like to thank my wife Margy who, after I pushed the envelope a bit much on the way down Mt Hotham (sorry darlin'), kept talking to me the rest of the weekend and has also said she wants to go again next year. This was decided after we/she had a little chat!

Once again, a big thanks to the organising committee. ●



Chapter chatter ...



27.10.17 | Western Victoria ■ Words: Virgie Hocking ■ Photos: Karen Bradshaw

■ Organiser: Lawrie Hocking

Twelve cars gathered together for a 9.30am start at Lucas Shopping Centre. We drove to Wallinduc to meet the Captain and the rest of the group who came from other areas.

With 18 cars altogether, we were joined by members from Bendigo, Geelong and Melbourne..

We had morning tea first at the Wallinduc Fire Shed before the drivers got fired up.

From Wallinduc we went through back roads where the grass was cut. *Oh boy! A hay fever attack!* Itchy eyes, runny nose and achoo! **Achoo! Gesundheit!**

We also went past this big farm machine that you could almost drive underneath ... *we thought we could do the limbo.* The cows kept looking at us, one looking like she was counting the cars.

Our first stop was in Port Campbell where we had our lunch, a quick window shop and an ice cream.

Of course the Captain and Gwenda had to dip their feet in the water checking if it was warm enough to swim. *No, too cold,* they said.

After lunch, we I we stopped at Loch Ard Gorge and then moved on to the 12 Apostles (not 12 anymore, but they're still called that). Everyone had a good look around, went for a walk and took pictures, while Noellene, Dawn and I sat lazily on a bench. We were the *tres Marias*: see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil.

There were many overseas tourists. I had thought that, being a Friday it wouldn't be that busy but it was *choc-a-block!* We struggled to park and group together, and the leader got left behind when we left the car park ... even the Tail-end Charlie left us behind!

We drove on along the Great Ocean Road to Lavers Hill where the drivers were hanging out for good fang. But, what a disappointment: road works, road works and road works! The worst part was the sign in Chinese which none of our group could understand. If it had been Filipino, I can have translated it.

There were some unhappy chaps – especially the leader who missed the leading. They might have had a little of a good run, but it wasn't enough.

We regrouped at Lavers Hill to empty our bladders. Jeff Woolf decided to head home early while the others continued on to Maits Rest forest walk near Cape Otway. Most took a good lap around the forest while four of us guarded the cars. Oh boy – didn't we make them work hard! They should be fit by now.

We continued to Apollo Bay for afternoon tea. Erika and Chris stayed behind while

the rest headed back along Skenes Creek-Forrest Road for another good fang, trying to make up for what they had missed out earlier.

From Forrest, everyone separated and went their own way back home; some continued through Moriac, six cars stopped at the Inverliegh pub for a meal while the others kept going. It was very long, exciting and enjoyable day.

We decided to have this run on a Friday to make sure Gwenda could join with us, as Friday is her day off. We were expecting small numbers but we are very impressed of the response. Thanks everyone for your participation.

Just getting in early for next year, the Western Victoria Chapter will have a *Christmas In July* run which will start at our (Lawrie and Virgie's) place and finish back there again for a traditional Christmas lunch, including some yummy Filipino food. The date and cost are yet to be finalised, but proceeds will go to a Compassion Child Development Centre in Philippines which caters for 350 children and is a project in the Philippines that Lawrie and I have been supporting for around 15 years. Please mark it on your 2018 calendar! ●

Gwenda's day-off run to the ... Great Ocean Road



^ Lunch break at Port Campbell ... not a bad turnout for a Friday run!

Chapter chatter ...

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

Dear Reader

Phew ~ I'm exhausted! ... only written a few words and so much to tell you about. Perhaps if I make myself a list nothing will be missed ... so here we go: our new members, the turnout, the "Alanas", the weather ... oh, and I must remember the roads!

22 hours of extra sun already!

Here in Northern Tasmxnia we have had a bumper month with three days of drives (see overnight trip to Bicheno report page 10) as well as this outing the following weekend.

We started at our favourite *Blueberry Barn Café* at Frankford deliberately later than usual in order to allow the spring sun to rise higher and become warmer. RSVPs had not been required and a smallish turnout was expected, given the previous weekend's overnight trip. Twenty cars and 30-odd people taught me that assumptions really do make an *ass of U and me* (assume!) and the sunny deck at the aforementioned café was standing room only!

Some quick behind-the-scenes discussions resulted in two groups of 10 cars, with Richard leading the first group and me leading the second. In the second group we had three new members out for their first Club run, as well as a couple of members on only their second run.

The weather ... have I told you yet that at 11am it was 18°C with not a cloud in the sky and not a breath of wind?

While I had everyone's attention I took the opportunity to introduce a new Chapter tradition. You have more than likely heard of the "Emmys" or the "Tonys" ... well, North Tas has the "Alanas". Assistant Chapter Captain Alana has built a solid relationship with the local Mazda dealership and has a boot full of goodies that she awards entirely at her discretion to deserving members. The presentation this morning was to Julie and Darren Agar, who have been travelling from St Helens on the east coast of Tasmania to attend our runs – a return trip of 400km, plus the run distance! Amazing effort guys, and well deserved. I will keep you up to date dear reader with future "Alanas".

Boasting about the accessibility and variety of challenging MX-5 roads in Tas is something that perhaps I may have done on many previous occasions, so suffice to

say a series of roads leading to the lunch stop at Deloraine was not difficult to plan. The two groups were only minutes apart and everyone was soon sprawled about on the riverbank enjoying a picnic lunch and finding things in common with some of the new friends.

There was some anticipation around the afternoon part of the day: a relatively short sprint up on to the Great Western Tiers to the lookout at the northern end of the Great Lake. From the lookout, the road is not sealed, however funding is approved and allocated for the unsealed section. After a few photos we were able to return down to finish our day at the *Lost in the '50s* diner in Deloraine.

So dear reader, I look forward to writing again and sharing the adventures from Northern Tasmxnia. Until then, please stay safe and healthy.

PS: We would love you to come and visit! ●



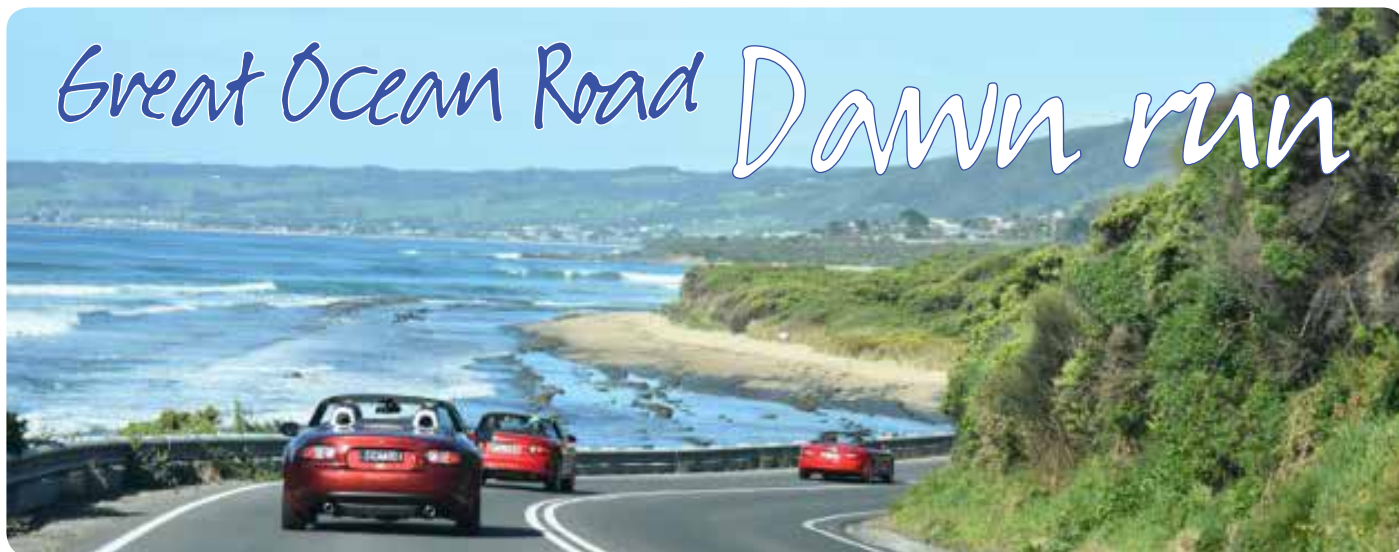


.....
Darren Agar, Bruce Harvey



Chapter chatter ...

29.10.17 | **Central** ■ Words: Simon Acfield ■ Photos: Bronwyn & Geoff Roche, Alan Bennett, Katrina Palmer, Brett Sweeting,





Janine Boyce, June Teeuw ■ Organisers: John & Katrina Palmer

Normally, an alarm to wake up before 5am is greeted by slapping the snooze button at least two or three times.

Not today!!



Today is my second GOR morning run and there is a spring to my step. My co-pilot today is my father and Committee member, Richard. He's volunteered his beautifully-maintained 15th Anniversary NC as our chariot for the day. That's us, above ...

- » Fluids topped up? Check!
- » Tyre pressures? Check!
- » Cool driving music? *That's a miss ...*

Living in the south-east of Melbourne, a trip to the GOR always involves a scoot through the tunnel and over the Westgate bridge. Alas, this time we encounter a common feature to the Melbourne motorist ... roadworks! *Wow, so early in our trip, I hope that isn't an omen ...*

Cruising down the highway to the BP at Little River for our meeting point, I expected to see more MX-5s on the road. I mean, the last time this run took place two years ago, it must have had 50+ cars. Arriving at the servo and rolling down to the car park at the back, I wasn't disappointed. A virtual MX-5 nirvana!

After briefings from our fearless leaders, the fleet departed on down the freeway, using the Geelong bypass to get to our destination before caravans, buses and four-wheel drives clog up the road. Departing near the back of the pack, we got to appreciate the different noises made by 1.5 to 2.0L engines, turbo or normally-aspirated performance or even standard versus free-flowing exhaust barks. Even the way people accelerate offers diverse acoustics ... no two MX-5s sound the same today.

We hit the GOR around 7am and, even at this early stage, the amount of traffic was quite surprising. I guess the beautiful weather had people out and about early!

The speed restrictions now in place, roadworks (I knew the Westgate closure was an omen) and the longer sweeping corners made this leg of the run seem like a brisk scenic drive rather than your typical corner-carving Club run. There are sections with tight corners and changes in elevation but it feels intermittent.

It's still a fantastic experience in an MX-5. At this slower pace you can hear the birds, the surf, smell the sea ... a genuine sports car that doubles as a convertible is such a brilliant combination.

We arrived in Lorne at the midway point and all of the 64 cars in attendance regrouped, took a toilet break and enjoyed the amazing morning sun. There was such a range of cars in attendance; a young guy holding court, talking to people about his beautifully-tuned NB SE; various groups huddled around NCs and NDs, obvious in their pride for their cars, and people like me who hunted out other NA owners because *we all know they are the BEST!* It's also very evident we love to immortalise our cars – I counted plenty of GoPros, observed selfies with cars ... and even a Mavic drone flying overhead at one point.

Departing Lorne and, given my portent for omens, I wondered if I should have told the young guy with the NB SE what happened to the modified SE on the last run two years ago? Ah well, too late; we were off again like a pack of corner-hunting MX-5s.

This second leg, although interrupted by more roadworks, had less traffic and more corners. Carving from corner to corner and working the gears between third and fourth, I had an absolute ball. I like to hear the intake roar so I tried to keep the NC

on the boil from corner to corner. Braking and setting up the corner to pull through the apex in third gear was brilliant fun. The NC sat flat through corners and boy did the Bridgestone RE003s grip! I have to admit to owning a new Mustang, and I can honestly say: all those Mustang owners out there are missing out!

Arriving at the Apollo Bay RSL was a unique exclamation point to cap off the run. Heaps of food was on offer but I couldn't pass up on the breakfast of champions ... a bacon and egg roll with sauce. The decor spanned half a century so it was interesting in itself, and the military history on the wall is quite moving.

Which takes me to the other amazing aspect of our Club: philanthropy. The Club had 111 people in attendance contributing to \$1,665 in breakfast revenue for the RSL. Consider the tidy profit from breakfast plus the \$375 dollars raised in Club donations and the raffle and I would suggest this was a successful fundraising event. These types of organisations can be the lifeblood of small towns and it's great to be part of a club which goes out of its way to contribute to the broader community.

Thanks to Geoff and Katrina for organising a fantastic run. It genuinely is one of the best runs in the year for the scenery, camaraderie and of course the breakfast!

A personal thanks goes to Bob for his run notes to head back to Melbourne through the Otways. Awesome roads! Although I left too early to go in convoy, seeing signs indicating 30+ kms of twisting roads was encouraging. *What followed was the proverbial cherry on top to finish the day.*

The GOR Morning Run. Great people, iconic roads, brilliant cars! ●

AROCA 12 Hour ~ 14-15.10.17, Winton Raceway

■ Words: Randy Stagno Navarra – Club Captain - Motor Sport ■ Photos: Vanessa Macaulay, www.redbookphotography.com.au



▲ Top: Max Lloyd (#193) puts on the finishing touches, next to the NB of Gavin and Scott Newman (#204/205)
 Centre: Alan Conrad; Kim Cole with Bryan Shedden (NSW Club) and Robert Downes; Robert with volunteer Ron Gillick
 Bottom: Kim puts the foot down; Daniel White with his #195 10AE, next to Robert's NC (#191)

.....

*Another AROCA 12 Hour
has come and gone ...*

... another fun weekend had by all, and once again the Club performed exceptionally well.

I'm really proud of all three teams, **Essendon Mazda Motorsport**, **Essendon Mazda Flyin' Miatas** and, the rookies, **Essendon Mazda Cutting Edge**. The teams finished **6th**, **9th** and **16th** respectively out of 40 competing teams.

The whole weekend is a massive effort by lots of people, the most important being the volunteers and team managers. These guys and girls keep we drivers in check and control the entire weekend. Their efforts in manning the wall to time each team's vehicles and passing on all the information via the pit boards is second to none.

We drivers would be lost without their efforts. I thank them all.

Also, a big thank you must go to all our sponsors: **Essendon Mazda**, **Open Road Roadsters** and **Barwon Tyre & Auto** as well as our Club for all the support and trust that was placed in us.

I'm already looking forward to next year's event. ●



▲ Paul Ledwith (top) and Tim Meaden (above), both of the Essendon Mazda Flyin' Miatas team

Club Code of Conduct

v2: August 2014

Members of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania Inc (“Club”) are required, under this Code of Conduct, to behave at all times in a way which upholds the Club’s values and complies with its Statement of Purposes and Rules. The Code of Conduct contained within the CAMS Member Protection Policy applies wherever the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania’s Code of Conduct is deficient.

Honesty and integrity	A Club member must behave honestly and with integrity in the course of Club activities.	Confidentiality	A Club member must maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the member has with any sensitive matter that relates to the Club.
Care and diligence	A Club member must act with care and diligence in the course of Club activities.	Conflict of interest	A Club member must disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with Club activities.
Respect and courtesy	A Club member, when acting in the course of Club activities, must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment.	Proper use of resources	A Club member must use the Club’s resources in a proper manner.
Lawful compliance	A Club member, when acting in the course of Club activities, must comply with all applicable Australian laws.	Undue advantage	A Club member must not make improper use of: – inside information, or – the member’s duties, status, power or authority, in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the member or for any other person.
Directive compliance	A Club member must comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in the Club’s organisation who has authority to give the direction.	Behaviour – general	A Club member must, at all times, behave in a way that upholds the Club’s values, integrity and good reputation.



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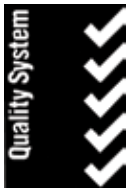
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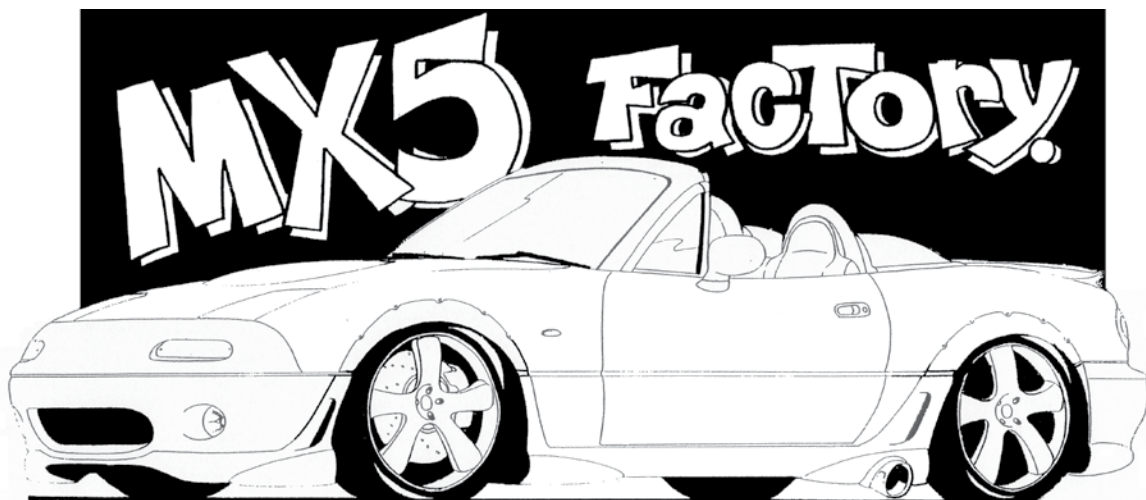
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