

# CLUB TORQUE

The quarterly magazine of the Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW Inc.

WINTER 2012

## CENTRAL TABLELANDS WEEKEND

*Tony takes the BreakFast Club out west*

### In this edition:

Club Motorsport Season Review

First taste of Sydney Motorsport Park

Illawarra Chapter Kicks Off

Charity Run for CareFlight

It's cold – Let's Do Christmas

Fuel Economy: How Low Can You Go?





## AUTOMOTIVE COMPUTER DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE

*1-9 Mazda's Fine ... 9-1 Mazda's Fun ... Drive a 5 and come alive*

We provide the professional service you want

- » 2wd or 4wd dyno-tuning & power runs
- » Computer diagnosis, upgrades & re-mapping
- » Auto electrical services, overhauls & re-wiring
- » Fuel injection diagnosis, servicing & upgrades
- » ECU diagnosis, repairs & upgrades
- » Weight-corrected steering alignments & repairs
- » Suspension testing, repair, overhaul & upgrade
- » Exhaust modification, bending & upgrades
- » Brake testing, overhaul, upgrade & machining

**23 Kemble Court Mitchell ACT 2911**

**Ph: 02 6262 2680 Mob: 0417 269 325**

**Web: [www.acdcptyltd.com.au](http://www.acdcptyltd.com.au)**

**Email: [info@acdcptyltd.com.au](mailto:info@acdcptyltd.com.au)**



## Committee

**President:** Glenn Thomas  
president@mx5.com.au M 0402 410829

**Vice President:** Peter Feutrill  
vicepres@mx5.com.au M 0409 453322

**Treasurer:** Brad Robinson  
treasurer@mx5.com.au M 0419 223003

**Secretary:** Phil Roberts  
secretary@mx5.com.au M 0408 161100

**Club Captain:** Mark Garven  
captain@mx5.com.au Ph 02 9746 9685

**Membership Database:** Keith Monaghan  
membership@mx5.com.au M 0418 976279

**Membership:** Ken Liston Ph 02 9872 1639

**Competition:** Mike Hicks Ph 02 9894 9167  
competition@mx5.com.au M 0419 201588

**Publications:** Bryan Shedden  
publications@mx5.com.au M 0422 340010

**Event Calendar:** Cathie Curran  
calendar@mx5.com.au M 0421 141445

**Regalia:** Pam & Ray Estreich  
regalia@mx5.com.au M 0428 970998

**Social Secretary:** Lesa & Greg Bunn  
socialsec@mx5.com.au M 0423 276152

**Canberra Convenor:** Damon Muller  
canberra@mx5.com.au M 0411 116311

**Hunter Convenor:** Peter Hilkmann  
hunter@mx5.com.au M 0404 911640

**Illawarra Chapter:** Peter Feutrill  
illawarra@mx5.com.au M 0409 453322

## Ex-Officio Representatives

**Competition/Event Secretary:** Zan Menzel  
eventsec@mx5.com.au Ph/Fax 02 6558 4190

**Webmaster:** Robert Gage  
webmaster@mx5.com.au M 0409 450906

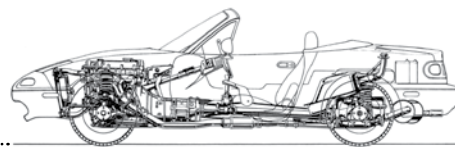
**BreakFast Club:** Michael Soulos  
M 0413 113399

**Committee Advisor:** Victor Lee  
M 0433 110303

Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW Inc.  
PO Box 402, Beecroft NSW 2119  
<http://www.mx5.com.au/nsw/>

*Main Cover Image: Sampling the delightful  
country lanes of the Central Tablelands.  
(Timothy Heppell)*

## CLUB TORQUE - WINTER 2012



## From the Editor



The showcased event for this edition of **Club Torque** is the *Central Tablelands Weekend* – brilliantly organised by Bathurst local Tony King under the banner of the BreakFast Club. Tony did a superb job preparing the event, including an impressive 16-page program guide for each participant. The pride he has for his region was clear for all to see and it was a credit to him for wanting to share it with other club members. CTW

was in late April and I held over the report for this edition so that it could be properly highlighted after the NatMeet special. Turn to page 6 for the report and more of Timothy Heppell's brilliant photos.

Speaking of regional pride – I'm delighted to have helped get the Illawarra Chapter up and running, and had the honour of leading our first official run in June (page 21). Peter Feutrill took a bullet and volunteered to serve as the Convenor, despite swearing that he'd "done his bit" with NatMeet – thanks mate! The Illawarra Chapter aims to provide more convenient opportunities for southern members to participate in club events, while also building a sense of local identity and developing friendships. And yes, members from the Sydney region are very welcome to join our events if they like – there are no fences.

All this talk about regional activity seems to have stirred interest in setting up even more Chapters. A small group of keen members from Penrith and the Blue Mountains are already talking about uniting. They've even thought up a cool name: "RPM" for Rivers, Plains and Mountains! My advice: if you want to see these things happen, you need to get together and make them happen.

Meanwhile, about half of the club membership is based in the Sydney basin, and the Club will continue to provide a wide range of activities for these members. However we need *your* help to do it. Mark Garven is stepping down as Club Captain and we're searching for *someone* to take the baton. The Club Captain role is critical for coordinating our Sydney events, so please consider: "could that *someone* be me?"

In motorsport news, the Phillip Island GP Circuit has been our stomping ground recently. In June, we had a small group compete in the *NSW/VIC Interstate Challenge* – sadly, the weather conspired against us and the trophy stayed in Victoria (page 11). Then on 4th/5th August we had three teams of four drivers compete in the *Victorian 6 Hour Regularity Relay*. All three teams finished in the top 15 places (out of 50), and our best team finished *second*! Unfortunately, you will have to wait until the Spring edition to read about this one.



*Bryan Shedden #68*



# The President's Brief

• Words: Glenn Thomas

Hi people and welcome to another addition of your magazine.

Why "your" magazine? Because this is *your* club and it's a great one because - *it is yours!* As it is *your* Club, you can jump in and bring about changes should you feel passionately about something. While there are a lot of things being worked on at the moment, your help can only enhance this capacity.

If you are interested in seeing how your club works – maybe like to help a little or even a lot – come along to our committee meetings. We want people who can spare a day or two, through to those who may be interested in filling the Vice President or Club Captain positions; if this is you, please contact me. The only real requirement for helping out is to have the desire and be willing to help, learn, teach and have some time available. As your Annual General Meeting is coming up on 24th October, you can use this event to register your interest for *any* function within the Club.

Our membership has experienced continual and steady growth and, while this is great for the Club, it also brings some issues too. One of which is retaining the "intimate" relationship that smaller groups foster. The June Committee meeting ratified the formation of the **Illawarra Chapter**

which, like the Hunter and Canberra Chapters, has the capacity to bring "locals" together in pursuit of fun with their MX-5s. Interested? The requirements for forming your own regional Chapter are simply explained in the Club Constitution (<http://www.mx5.com.au/nsw/PDF%20Content/General/MX5%20Constitution%202010.pdf>):

*"A Chapter of the club may be formed and approved in a regional area subject to the Committee being satisfied that a minimum of 12 members will support the activities and events organised by the chapter and a Chapter Convenor is elected."*

Being in a large Club can also foster the false assumption that "my thoughts or ideas are probably not important" – this could not be further from the truth! You may be interested in helping out but feel a little apprehensive. If this is the case or if you are just interested to see how the current Committee goes about running your Club, please feel free to come along to our committee meetings. These are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the **Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club** starting at 7:30pm. Come a little earlier and join us for dinner in the bistro! ■



## WE WANT YOU

for the positions of ...

### Club Captain, Vice President

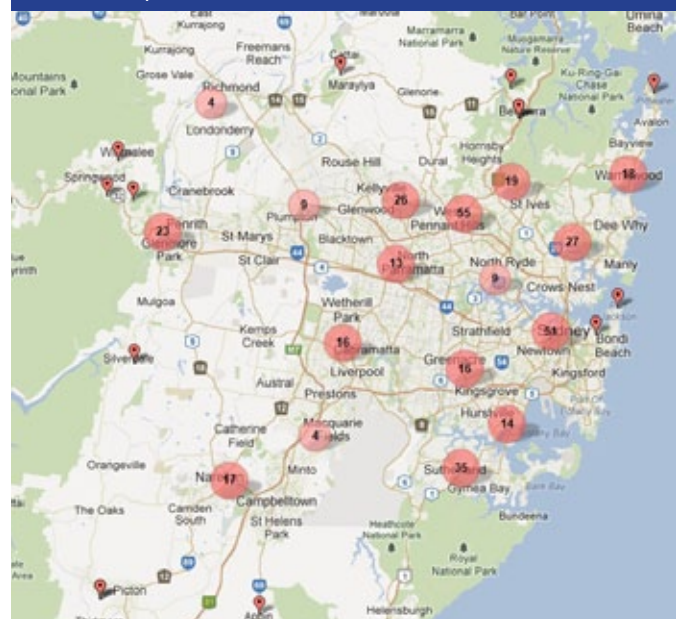
... or any other Committee role.

**Annual General Meeting**

Wednesday 24th October 2012  
Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club  
117 Ryedale Road, West Ryde

## WHERE ARE OUR MEMBERS?

Your Club Committee has recently adopted Google Maps and geocoding to analyse the locations of our members and identify the size and placement of regional clusters. This tool has provided excellent guidance and contributed to the successful formation of the Illawarra Chapter. Another potential Chapter in our future *might* be the Penrith and Blue Mountains area, or perhaps the far north coast, centred at Port Macquarie. What do *you* think? Please send your feedback to [president@mx5.com.au](mailto:president@mx5.com.au).



# Membership News

• Words: Keith Monaghan

We have had an increase of 25 financial members since the last magazine.

Total Active members = 686

Financial = 609

Unfinancial = 77

**Our current membership count is 609**

A note to all members: if you change your email address please contact us (membership@mx5.com.au) and we will change our records for you.

## New Members

Welcome to the 54 new members who joined in the last quarter. We hope to see you at one of our activities. If we don't say hello please come up and say hello to me, Ken and Maggie your membership team.

A special welcome to the proprietors of the **Robertson Pie Shop**, Jennifer & Will Bleeker. Say gudday to them next time you stop in for a pie! ■

Ian Bailey  
Jenni Bailey  
Jennifer Bleeker  
Will Bleeker  
Paul Brazier  
Alex Chen  
Maxwell Corfield  
James Crowhurst  
Anne Cusick  
Peter Diven  
Craig Durrant  
Sally Durrant  
Gustavo Elias  
Gillian Fletcher  
Graham Fletcher  
Andrew Fordham  
William Fordham  
Ian Fung  
James Glissan  
James Glissan (Jnr)  
David Grice  
Maxine Grice  
Joe Grima  
Pauline Grima  
Clare Hall  
Michael Hall  
Rob Harkness

Helen Harris  
Peter Harris  
Tim Hill  
Spencer Hulme  
Ian Hung  
Brad Johnson  
Jozsef Kleiner  
Anthony Lalor  
Peter Launt  
Peta Lilburne  
Carol Lothian  
Chris Magill  
Andrew Markerink  
John Metham  
Gary Nobrega  
Barry Pope  
Tristan Rappo  
Peter Ryan  
Louis Serret  
Claire Shipley  
Mike Shipley  
Charles Simmonds  
Leonardo Sjoen  
Marie Smart  
Barbara Stockill  
Graham Watts  
Delia Waugh

# MX-5s in the News

• Words: Bryan Shedden

There's been quite a fluster of MX-5 news over the last few months, most of which you've probably read about already. Here's a quick summary:

**May:** Mazda and Fiat made a joint announcement to confirm the signing of an agreement for the development and manufacturing of a new roadster for the Mazda and Alfa Romeo marques. Both vehicles will be based on Mazda's next-generation MX-5 rear-wheel-drive architecture and be manufactured at Mazda's Hiroshima plant. This is big news for both companies and the relationship should bring efficiencies and economies of scale for Mazda and Alfa Romeo as the new roadster is developed.



**June:** At the Leipzig Motor Show, Mazda showed the *Yusho Concept* ('victory' in Japanese), powered by a supercharged 2.0L engine tuned to produce 177kW. A few weeks later, Mazda showed the track-focused *GT Concept* at the **Goodwood Festival of Speed**. Fitted with uprated adjustable suspension and naturally-aspirated 153kW.

**July:** Somewhat an anticlimax, Mazda revealed another facelift for the NC arriving by the end of 2012. It features a new nose treatment, an active bonnet to improve pedestrian safety and a few mechanical tweaks to improve driveability.



Internet rumors have been brewing on the next generation MX-5 for a few years now. Mazda's most senior engineer, R&D chief Hirotaka Kanazawa has promised a return to the lightweight origin of the first generation and a few more hints too:

- less than 1000kg kerb weight
- Skyactiv naturally-aspirated engine
- higher power-to-weight ratio than NC
- both soft-top and folding-hard-top versions

What're you doing this October? The Presidents of all MX-5 Clubs in Australia are being hosted at the **Australian International Motor Show** in Sydney by **Mazda Australia**. Could there be something big just around the corner? ■



# Central Tablelands Weekend

• Words: Participants

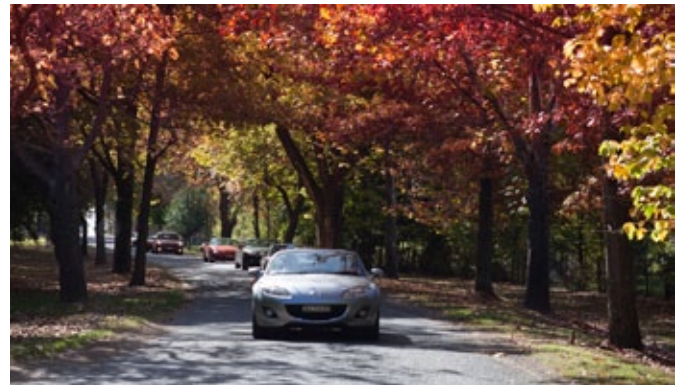
• Photos: Timothy Heppell

• 27-29 April 2012

It started with an amazing post on mx5cartalk.com – well done Tony. My old man and I applied with neither of us really aware of what was in store. Stories abound about the “BreakFast Club Runs” so we were a little nervous to say the least. Once away it became very apparent that we had joined a very special and friendly group of MX-5ers. ■ DB



John promised he would be speed limit fast with a few twists and turns (*driving to the conditions* - JP). I quite enjoyed the early morning start (*didn't exactly say that at 4.30am* - JP) and the Putty Road wasn't that bad (*was very good* - JP). Off to our lunch stop – why are all the cars turning left and we are going straight ahead (*Ooops* - JP)! Quick U-turn and to my surprise, the cars have stopped to wait for us. I see why John enjoys it so much – more than the drive it's the camaraderie and the welcoming chats over coffee breaks (*it's more about the run than chat* - JP). Who knows, with Pete as my instructor, maybe I'll get behind the wheel next trip (*not my wheel Petie boy* - JP)! ■ SG & JP



I led Friday's *Prologue Run* over some of my favourite roads. The run up the awesome Putty Road with nobody in front of me was stunning with another running of the notorious gorges rewarding as always. The drive across to Mudgee on Lue Road after the sweeping corners of Bylong Valley Way was superb. For the four members who joined us for the day run, glad to have had your company and I hope you enjoyed yourselves. Unfortunately you all missed the run from Hill End to Bathurst that has been added to my favourites list. ■ RF



Heading down from Mudgee reminded me of my childhood except the countryside is green and the road is now sealed. After the switch backs on Bylong Valley Way, my CoolPro radiator was proving to be anything but. With more twists and turns to Hill End, I pulled up at the heritage **Royal George Hotel** with both fans running at capacity. We enjoyed our lunch in the sunny beer garden with the crew getting twitchy for the final section to my old home town via Turondale ... onwards and downwards the road swung left then right to everyone's delight, more fun than the backseat of Dad's Commodore to Bathurst. ■ SK





As my first multi-day event with the MX-5 Club, I couldn't wait. I drove up on Friday afternoon with Melinda and the next morning away we went on the CTW. Beautiful countryside, light mist, sunshine and great roads through to Blayney, where to my surprise my Dad was waiting in his yellow NA. We drove on to Milthorpe for some pics under the autumn trees then on to the **Beekeepers Inn**. On route it happened – a rutted road section – steering wheel suddenly pointed 45 degrees left – gingerly, I tested the turn in – the car responded – Phhheeww!!! Luckily, Don had both the tools and advice that got me to Orange. We pulled into the local Bob Jane that gave us priority to rejoin the main run to climb Mount Canobolas and drive down to Cowra. ■ JM



After a much appreciated lunch stop at the **Japanese Gardens** we headed off on our 210km afternoon romp through Derby's Falls for a short break at a full Wyangala Dam. From the dam we drove up some brilliant tight and twisting roads to Woodstock, Walli and Mandurama then more fantastic back roads to Barry and Trunkey Creek running series of short straights and sweeping corners making the afternoon drive in fading light one of the best sections of the weekend in perfect autumn weather. On arriving back at Bathurst, Stu arranged for a young lady in short shorts and wet T-shirt to clean our dirty cars with a group discount being an added bonus to end Day 1. ■ BB



We started Day 2 of the CTW from **The Hub** (awarded Australia's Best Breakfast Café for 2011) following Tony on some great back roads past the quaint village of Perthville. The quiet Rockley Road opened up to provide us with enough sweeping bends and fast straightaways to calibrate our sights for the day ahead. South of Rockley, the road began to narrow, delight and twist its way to Mt David cutting, an undulating swathe through the pastures and alternate scrub through the valleys for a convenience break in Black Springs. ■ AL



From Black Springs the route took us through Shooter's Hill and pine plantations which, together with the rolling landscape and smooth, clean winding roads combined to evoke a feeling of European motoring. The Edith Road wound its way through grass covered hills dotted with grazing sheep, idyllic roads for a relaxed second stage to morning tea in Oberon. ■ TH



Each day was a series of fun runs right down to the last section after coffee in Oberon to Tarana, Sunny Corner and the **Wallerawang Railway Station Café** to finish the run in the company of old and new friends. ■ RM



As a BreakFast Club newbie it was just wonderful to be able to follow and learn from very skilful drivers who went to the trouble to individually coach less experienced members. The event was just fabulous on exciting and sometimes very demanding roads all done in a safe and spirited fashion. For both the Prologue Run and CTW the run and organisation was fantastic and will long be remembered. I am a major Club sponsor and congratulate our BreakFast Club on what they do – my money is well spent. ■ PB





We enjoyed some great dinners, starting on Friday night when we all partook in a royal feast at **Kings Hotel** that was surpassed on Saturday at **Jack Duggan's Irish Pub** where we all heaped praise on Tony & Moira. The Club is forever indebted to Tony King for his efforts and, as promised, introducing the Breakfast Club to some fantastic back roads in his backyard that will forever become a part of our Club's day and weekend runs going forward. A big thank you to our happy snappers whose photographic efforts adorn the CTW thread on mx5cartalk.com. ■ MS



As the Club's number cruncher, I report that 15 MX-5s and 1 MINI left Sydney, 1 joined on the Putty Road, 2 returned from Singleton with 2 more near Rylstone. Q: How many cars were at Hill End for lunch? 2 MX-5s were waiting at the **Bathurst Motor Inn** and Tony, a local, was waiting in his 5 at breakfast to start his CTW picking up 1 more 5 at Blayney. Q: How many MX-5s were at lunch at Cowra? 1 MX-5 was collected by the NRMA and 2 drove home from the motel on Sunday morning, 2 more returning to the ACT from Wallerawang and 1 spent the day with his Mum. Q: How many 5s took part over 3 days? ■ BR



As sorry as we all are for the vandalising of Victor's SP days before this event, our sympathy does not extend to allowing him to report on his experiences driving way off the back in his rental MINI Cooper S. ■ Ed.

### The Participants

Don Battisson	Victor Lee
Peter Battisson	Andrew Lord
Barry Byerley	James Manion
Gavin Cross	Russell Maxwell
Robert Forsyth	John Petrich
Sue Goudie	Brad Robinson
Timothy Heppell	Melinda Sirmais
Stuart King	Michael Soulos
Tony King	



# Sydney Motorsport Park - South Circuit

• Words: Mike Hicks

On 27th October, the MX-5 Club will host our first track day on the **South Circuit** at **Sydney Motorsport Park** (formerly known as *Eastern Creek Raceway*). This new circuit will be ideal for our cars. It incorporates part of the original layout around "Corporate Hill" with an extension that features flowing corners, blind crests, two hairpins, and many elevation changes creating a challenging *anti-clockwise* circuit that is 1.8km in length. The new circuit will have its own independent Control Tower, pit and paddock area.

Our meeting will be conducted under a CAMS Permit that will require a few changes compared to our Wakefield Park Track Days. Firstly, all competitors will need to hold a CAMS L2S licence or higher. The cost of this licence is \$105, will last for 12 months, and is valid at all tracks, including Wakefield Park. The Licence Application form can be downloaded at <http://www.cams.com.au>. Complete the form including your medical details and post it to CAMS. You should receive your licence within 2 to 3 weeks. Secondly, your car will need to be fitted with a 1kg fire extinguisher on a metal bracket, and a blue triangle indicating the position of the car battery. All other requirements are as per our usual Track Days.

In order to conduct this event under a CAMS Permit we will be running the event very similar to the NSW Supersprint rounds that we have hosted at Wakefield Park over the past six or seven years. Accredited officials will be required to fill the positions of Clerk of Course, Chief Scrutineer, Timing and Steward. Fortunately we have accredited officials within

the club to fill the first three positions and a favour has been asked of an Accredited Steward for this day. We will need to man 4 or 5 flag-points, preferably with two people per flag point so I am seeking volunteers to carry out these duties. We will also be hiring the services of **Firechase** to look after crash rescue and **Ambulance Services Australia** to provide Paramedical Services.

It will be our intention to run the day in exactly the same way as we conduct our Wakefield Park Track Days. This means a Supersprint format with up to 10 cars on the circuit at any one point in time. Initially we will grade all drivers in groups of similar speeds based on your Wakefield Park times. We envisage that each group will spend six competitive minutes on track at one time. Being a new circuit, all groups will start with a familiarisation run that will be untimed. First timers will be welcome and will be trained in the normal way.

This circuit will not be as forgiving as the wide open spaces of Wakefield Park. The top speeds achieved are lower than those at Wakefield Park; five-speed cars will use second, third and (briefly) fourth gears. A large part of the circuit has only limited run-off areas between the circuit and the concrete barriers. A slightly more cautious approach will be required when driving this circuit.

I look forward to seeing you on 27th October. Come along and support the club's first track day in the Sydney area, if not as a competitor, then as an official or spectator. ■



Aerial photography on 2nd August 2012, courtesy of <http://www.nearmap.com>

# Club Track Days

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Tiit Saul



## Round 5 – 4 June 2012

On the Monday following our Supersprint Round (see page 12), we conducted our traditional “Thank you to our Supersprint Officials” track day. It was also the final Wakefield Park meeting in the 2011/12 Competition Year with only the Interstate Challenge at Phillip Island at the end of the month to round out the year.

The field of 70 cars was broken into six groups, with all but three of the entrants being members. There was only one first-timer for this round, allowing us to skip the driver training and get cracking with the timed runs.

Unlike the previous day, the track was dry from the first run, however the weather was cold with little warmth from the track thus ensuring that it would be difficult to break any class records. Nevertheless Bryan Shedden (1:16.34), Glenn Thomas (1:15.72), Luke Kovacic driving Dad’s NC (1:14.99), and Ralph Thompson (1:10.16) all managed to better the 2011/12 records for classes 1, 2, 3 and 7 respectively. Lesa Bunn (1:21.22) also bettered her previous record for ladies in class 6.

Patrick Bramston in his turbo NA set the fastest time of the day with a 1:08.43, second was Daniel Deckers driving one of Michael Hall’s race NCs with 1:10.11, followed by Ralph Thompson third outright and only 0.05s behind. It can’t be too long before Ralph breaks the 1:10 barrier. Towards the head of the field *eight* members were covered by *less than a second*, all recording a best time in the 1:10s.

Class winners on the day were Bryan Shedden (1), Glenn Thomas (2), Luke Kovacic (3), John Karayannis (4 - 1:16.08), Peter Browning (5 - 1:16.21), Phil Munnings (6 - 1:13.59), Ralph Thompson (7), David Hammon (8 - 1:10.69), Daniel Deckers (9), Patrick Bramston (10) and Keith Bridgement (11 - 1:10.78).

SE driver David Hammon was unlucky to blow a turbo in a spectacular cloud of smoke whilst climbing the hill out of turn 2. With the assistance of Robert Kai, David was able to transport his car into Goulburn from where he arranged to have it shipped to the Blue Mountains. Stewart Temesvary was able to give David a lift close to home. Thanks to those members for their assistance in the true spirit of the MX-5 Club.

Our next Wakefield Park track day was held on Sunday 29th July and was the first event in the 2012/13 Competition Year. The report for this event will appear in the Spring issue of **Club Torque**. Classes for the new season have seen some minor tweaking to ensure strong competition in most classes. The changes include moving the quicker road registered modified NCs into class 9 as occurred with the quicker modified NAs and NBs the previous year, and the turbo/supercharged race cars moved from class 9 to class 10. ■

*The first round of 2012/13 was held on 29th July and will be reported in the Spring edition of Club Torque.*





# NSW/VIC Interstate Challenge

• Words & Photos: Tony Maxwell



## Round 6 – 30 June 2012

*The NSW/VIC Interstate Challenge for 2012 was held at Phillip Island on 30 June. This event also served as the final round of the 2011/12 NSW Club Competition Year. Unfortunately a clash of calendars limited the number of NSW club members who were able to compete. Six hardy travellers made the long trip south to represent our state: Tony and Denni Maxwell, Peter Battisson, Phil Munnings, Steve Green, and Ralph Thompson. Read on for Tony's report on how it went.*

On a cold wet weekend in June six brave souls competed for NSW in the Interstate Challenge on the Vic's turf at Phillip Island. The GP circuit is very much a horsepower track, totally different in nature to Wakefield Park, but is definitely an experience to be tried at least once in your life.

After a lovely trip down, we had Friday to spend sightseeing on the island. We sampled some lovely chocolate, checked out the wildlife and got a taste of things to come with blizzard-like conditions out at the Nobbies. Beautiful scenery and well worth the visit.

While waiting in line to enter the circuit, the Saturday dawned still and clear if a little cold, and we held out hopes for a clear day and some fast lap times. The briefing held news of rain on the way, which reminded me of the old adage about Victoria "If you don't like the weather wait half an hour ..."

And so we headed into the instructional warm-up laps, I had Robert Downes as my instructor, and I remember being told to keep it flat, don't brake here, hold the gas on through here – a "keep up it" mentality seems to be called for at Phillip Island.

The practice was dry, and trying to muscle a standard NA6 through the fast sweeping corners at this circuit was too much to ask for from me and my abilities. Great fun to stretch the legs of the little stocky, but not a fast lap time producer at least with me at the wheel.

Not quite half way to lunch time and the heavens opened, with rain, heavy rain, very heavy rain, and even some small hail greeting drivers both on the track and in the pits.

Every session thereafter seemed to be more about exploring where the limit of traction was than hitting braking markers and nailing smooth gear changes.

The result yet again went the way of the Mexicans. Not a great result this time around for NSW and congratulations to the Vics. We competed in four classes and lost three of them before we turned a wheel when the first two runs of the day were the only dry runs and there were no NSW drivers in them. This was not a set-up, just purely the luck of the draw.

Thanks to the Victorians for hosting, AROCA for putting on the day, and everyone who was there for making it an enjoyable outing. Hopefully we can take the trophy back on our turf next year. ■



# NSW Supersprint Championship

• Words: Mike Hicks, Bryan Shedden

• Photos: Tiit Saul, Bryan Shedden



*Our club hosted Round 3 of the NSW Supersprint Championship at Wakefield Park on Sunday 3rd June. This was followed on Monday 4th June by a club track day (see page 10). The ARDC hosted Round 4 at Eastern Creek on Saturday 21st July.*

## Round 3 – 3 June 2012

Continual heavy rain on the Friday and Saturday night did not set the scene for a very pleasant two days at Wakefield Park for the 3rd and 4th June. The Sunday was Round 3 of the NSW Supersprint Championship and we were expecting close to a full field of 83 entries. Although overcast in the morning, it had stopped raining and the clouds were breaking in a few places. Unfortunately, the Goulburn Mulwaree Council picked a shocking time to do some resurfacing of Braidwood Road, and most cars were covered in muck by the time they reached the track!



Russell Maxwell

Registration and Scrutineering commenced on time and with the aid of the recently introduced Targeted Scrutiny program, most of the cars were scrutineered prior to the Driver's Briefing at 8:30. Officials were briefed and distributed to their posts, and with the Steward's happy that all was in place, the first runs commenced at 9:15. Because the track was still damp and with water seeping across the racing line in the usual places, the track was declared "wet" for the first two runs. This meant that all had to be on treaded tyres – slicks were not allowed.

Despite drivers being warned of the slippery nature of the track, there were still many spins and off track excursions in the early laps including the warm up lap. Fortunately there were no major delays during this time. Lap times were much slower than usual due to the damp surface.

After two complete runs by the field, the track had improved sufficiently to declare it "dry". Those that had not been able to venture out earlier were now free to do so.

The field had been broken up into the normal colour groups, depending on car type and lap times. There were 8 groups in total all being given at least 6 minutes of competitive time per run. Our one and only "Red Flag" incident occurred

during the third run of the fastest "Tin Tops". Rudi Frank's fast VW beetle began to smoke badly about the same time as Tom Ainsworth backed his Subaru-engined Alfa Sud into the gravel trap at turn 10. Firechase, the crash rescue team, had things cleaned up relatively quickly and the meeting resumed.

The remainder of the meeting ran without any further incidents. By 4:00pm all competitors had the opportunity to complete 6 runs and we called it a day. Fastest time of the day (0:59.124) was set by Andrie Tan in his Radical Supersports V8, second and fastest "Tin Top" was Jason Wright in his Subaru WRX (1:04.826) with Chris Kostakis third in his MNR Vortex (1:05.050). Club members to perform well in their class included Bryan Shedden (1:16.795) first in 1A, Glenn Thomas (1:15.638) second in 1B, Ian Caldwell (1:14.660) second in 1C in Letitia's Golf GTI, James Horne (1:15.307) first in 2A, Ralph Thompson (1:11.395), Russell Maxwell (1:12.577) and Phil Munnings (1:14.718) first, second and third in 2B, Bradley Cecil (1:09.668) and Luke Kovacic (1:12.847) first and fourth in 2C, Peter Browning (1:15.122) second in 3A, Steve Green (1:11.535) and Kevin Addison (1:13.630) second and third in 3B, and Patrick Bramston (1:10.512) third in 4C.

A very big **thank you** to all club members who acted as officials. The day's success would not have been possible without their contributions. To quote from the Steward's Report *"The event was well run with sufficient competent officials to ensure that the schedule was maintained with minimal delays between groups"*. Members who acted as officials were rewarded with a 50% discount on their entry fee for the Club Track Day held the next day, or one later in the year if unable to attend. ■ **MH**



Ralph Thompson



Tony King



## Round 4 – 21 July 2012

A near capacity field of 91 drivers arrived at the freshly renamed **Sydney Motorsport Park** (formerly *Eastern Creek Raceway*) on Saturday 21st July to compete in Round 4 of the NSW Supersprint Championship. Our club was represented by 14 members and another 4 MX-5s were entered by other clubs. The round was hosted by the ARDC and was run on the main circuit. It was our first Supersprint on the main circuit since November 2011, and all were keen to try the realignment of turn 7 (now called turn 6), following the removal of the old righthand kink that was turn 6.



The weather forecast was for possible showers, but thankfully it stayed dry all day. Temperatures ranged from 12° to 16°C and there was plenty of cloud cover. We even saw a little bright sunshine creeping under the clouds in the late afternoon.

Rather than the usual 3 flying laps, we were given 8 minute runs which meant that most had 4 flying laps per run, and a total of up to 5 runs - including a half hour lunch break for the officials. That total of 20 laps is much better than the usual 15 laps, but there's still room for improvement with quite a few mysterious delays through the day.



David Alland

Our Club enjoyed class wins to Ralph Thompson in 2B (1:51.362), Steve Green in 3B (1:52.737), and Peter Browning in 3A (1:59.897). Second places went to James Horne in 2A (1:58.308), Russell Maxwell in 2B (1:54.104), and Phil Abraham in 3B (1:53.957). Third places went to Glenn Thomas in 1B (1:59.386), Luke Kovacic in 2C (1:54.345), and David Alland in 2B (2:05.466).

At the completion of four rounds of the 2012 Supersprint Championship, Glenn Thomas is in second place in type 1 and class 1B, James Horne is second in 2A, Ralph Thompson leads class 2B and is second in type 2, Russell Maxwell is second in 2B, Phil Munnings is third in 2B, Luke Kovacic is third in 2C, Peter Browning is first in 3A, in 3B Steve Green leads with Phil Abraham in second, and Mike Hicks is second in SVB. In the Club Pointscore, the MX-5 Club of NSW has a healthy lead on 401 points, to ARDC (340), and NSWRRRC (263). ■ BS



Glenn Thomas, Keith Monaghan and Tony King on the marshalling grid

# Motorsport Presentation Night

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Tiit Saul

At 7:30pm on Wednesday 24th October at the **Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club** in Ryedale Road, West Ryde, we will honour our trophy winners for the MX-5 Club **2011/12 Competition Year**. Trophies will be awarded to class winners for the Fastest Laps (both male and female), the pointscore winners in each class, Fastest Time of the Day, Encouragement Awards, and Awards for the Hunter and Canberra Chapters. We will also say thank you to our officials who have contributed to the continuing success of our competition events.

Trophies will be presented to the following members who recorded fastest time for their class *and* won their class pointscore: class 1 - Bryan Shedden, class 2 - Glenn Thomas, class 5 - Peter Browning and class 7 - Ralph Thompson.

Class Pointscore Trophies will be awarded to Robert Pimm - class 3, John Karayannis - class 4, Phil Munnings - class 6, David Hammon - class 8, Steve Green - class 9, Patrick Bramston - class 10 and Keith Bridgement - class 11.

Trophies for Fastest Laps will be presented to Denni Maxwell - ladies class 1, Dominique Spoelder - ladies class 2, Luke Kovacic - class 3, Jean Cook - ladies classes 3 and 9, Brad Carpenter - class 4, Michelle Matthews - ladies class 4, Sally Rewell - ladies class 5, Deen Hameed - class 6, Lesa Bunn - ladies class 6, Matilda Mravcic - ladies classes 7 and 10, Cameron Macarthur - class 8, Mark Hellmund - class 9, George Vergotis - class 10, and Leroy Day - class 11.

Fastest Time of the Day trophies will be awarded to Patrick Bramston, Mark Hellmund, Leroy Day and George Vergotis.

Encouragement Awards will be presented to Peter Battisson, Phillip Lea, Mitchell Bennett, Allan Cruz, Barry Jones, Bernie Tresidder, Tony King, Russell Maxwell, Ray Estreich, David Hilling and Matthew Perry. Chapter Awards will be presented to Peter Browning and Robert Pimm.

The following dedicated officials will receive gifts of appreciation for their efforts over the past year, Rod and Zan Menzel, Cobie Hicks, Kevin and Jenny Tuckerman, Jean Cook, Pam Estreich, Judy Hilling, Robert Kai, Joe Kovacic, Don and Peter Battisson, Phil and Narelle Roberts, Marilyn Bridgement, and Bill Dougall.

We look forward to seeing a *large* turn-out of members at the Presentation Night in support of the sporting activities in the club. Finger food will be provided from 7:00pm and the club's AGM will follow the trophy presentations. ■

## 2011/12 Class Pointscore

Class	Sex	Driver	Points
1	M	Bryan Shedden	75
	M	Peter Battisson	27
	M	Tony Maxwell	25
	M	Phillip Lea	24
	F	Denni Maxwell	10
	M	David Kent	10
	M	Phillip Cristie	10
	M	Don Battisson	10
	M	Fred Robertson	7
	M	Hilton Pollard	5
	M	Stephen Ohye	4
	M	Andrew Dearing	4
	M	Renaud Degois	4
2	M	Glenn Thomas	45
	M	Keith Monaghan	32
	M	John McKenzie	29
	M	Mitchell Bennett	20
	M	Kevin Tuckerman	18
	M	John Kerford	14
	M	Peter Oppert	11
	M	Stewart Temesvary	10
	M	Alex Reid	10
3	M	Robert Pimm	45
	M	Luke Kovacic	30
	M	Stewart Temesvary	15
	M	Roger Palfreyman	15
	M	Bruce Davies	10
	M	Chris Flak	9
	M	Jason Atkins	7
	M	Ian Miller	7
	M	Howard Fleming	7
	M	Joe Kovacic	5
	M	Eric Hardas	4
	F	Vanessa McBride	3
4	M	John Karayannis	60
	M	Allan Cruz	32
	M	Barry Jones	27
	M	Peter Carpenter	25
	M	Brad Carpenter	25
	M	Ian Vickers	23
	M	Paul Byers	14
	M	Rohan Matthews	6
	F	Michelle Matthews	2
	M	Clive Jones	1





Class	Sex	Driver	Points
5	M	Peter Browning	60
	M	Bernie Tresidder	32
	M	James Horne	25
	M	Lindsay Burke	22
	M	Rod Menzel	19
	M	Anthony Brooks	12
	M	Phil Mayo	10
	M	Mitchell Mathieson	10
	M	Nemo Lwin	7
	M	Stewart Clode	5
	M	Wade Rewell	3
	M	Tony Maxwell	3
	F	Denni Maxwell	2
	M	Andrew Brooks	2
	F	Sally Rewell	1
6	M	Phil Munnings	67
	M	Tony King	31
	M	Joe Craddy	29
	M	Deen Hameed	22
	M	Ian Caldwell	20
	M	Greg Bunn	15
	M	Stuart McFadyen	10
	M	Tristan Rappo	10
	M	Neil Tribe	8
	M	David Alland	6
	M	Alex Tribe	5
	M	Glenn Thomas	4
	F	Lesa Bunn	4
	M	John McKenzie	4
	M	John McGrath	3
	M	Bryan Teo	3
	M	Amos Byrne	2
	M	Brendan Thomas	2
	M	Chris Feutrill	1
	F	Letitia Caldwell	1
7	M	Ralph Thompson	80
	M	Russell Maxwell	34
	M	Phil Ashton	32
	M	Peter Feutrill	18
	M	Chris Gough	15
	M	Robert Young	15
	M	Roger Palfreyman	7
	M	Bill Dougall	7
	M	Stuart James	7
	M	Jimmy Hsiang	6
	M	Neil Hamilton-Ritchie	6
	M	Guy Coles	5
	F	Matilda Mravicic	5
	M	David Lawler	3
	M	Kristian Van Mourik	1
	M	Timothy Heppell	1

Class	Sex	Driver	Points
8	M	David Hammon	35
	M	Ray Estreich	32
	M	Cameron MacArthur	30
	M	Luke Kovacic	26
	M	Simon Kendrick	15
	M	Craig Gartlacher	15
	M	Alan Townsley	10
	M	Chris White	7
	M	Justin Ibrahim	5
	M	Hayden Tilley	5
	M	Tony West	4
9	M	Steve Green	64
	M	Mark Hellmund	54
	M	Chris Ballard	20
	M	Will Rugg	19
	M	Kevin Addison	17
	M	Daniel Deckers	15
	M	Dennis Brady	15
	M	Bill Rugg	10
	M	Andrew Irwin	5
	M	Allan Rewell	4
	M	Col Faulkner	4
10	M	Dann Jolly	3
	F	Jean Cook	3
	M	Russell Windebank	2
	M	David Lawler	2
	F	Jean Cook	1
	M	Wade Rewell	1
11	M	Patrick Bramston	45
	F	Val Stewart	17
	M	George Vergotis	15
12	F	Matilda Mravicic	10
	M	Keith Bridgement	57
	M	Craig Hasler	40
	M	David Hilling	20
	M	Lance McGrath	20
	M	Stewart Grigg	17
	M	Matthew Perry	15
	M	Leroy Day	15
	M	Phil Abraham	15
	M	Greg Perry	8
	M	Craig Hopkinson	7
13	M	Ian Caldwell	4
	M	Ben Hilling	4
	M	Luke Tourish	4
	M	Mathew Hilling	3
	M	Ian Hung	2
	M	Andras Szekely	1

## 2011/12 Class Records

Class	Driver	Time	Date
1M	Bryan Shedden	1:16.34	4/6/2012
1F	Denni Maxwell	1:30.84	4/9/2011
2M	Glenn Thomas	1:15.72	4/6/2012
2F	Dominique Spoelder	1:27.79	4/12/2011
3M	Luke Kovacic	1:14.99	4/6/2012
3F	Jean Cook	1:25.18	8/4/2012
4M	Brad Carpenter	1:15.88	4/12/2011
4F	Michelle Matthews	1:22.92	4/12/2011
5M	Peter Browning	1:14.56	23/10/2011
5F	Sally Rewell	1:22.12	4/12/2011
6M	Deen Hameed	1:12.69	8/4/2012
6F	Lesa Bunn	1:21.89	23/10/2011
7M	Ralph Thompson	1:10.16	4/6/2012
7F	Matilda Mravicic	1:12.08	4/9/2011
8M	Cameron Macarthur	1:10.09	4/12/2011
9M	Mark Hellmund	1:10.06	4/9/2011
9F	Jean Cook	1:18.00	23/10/2011
10M	George Vergotis	1:05.87	4/12/2011
10F	Matilda Mravicic	1:07.78	4/9/2011
11M	Leroy Day	1:09.20	19/2/2012

*The class pointscore for 2011/12 is based on results from six club track days:*

### Wakefield Park

- » 4th September 2011
- » 23rd October 2011
- » 4th December 2011
- » 19th February 2012
- » 4th June 2012

### Phillip Island – Interstate Challenge

- » 30th June 2012.

*The NatMeet trackday on 8th April 2012 was a non-championship round although class records were still counted.*

*Steve Green and Ralph Thompson were the only members who competed in all seven of these events. Now that's commitment!*



# Charity Run for CareFlight

• Words: Barry Byerley, Ken Liston

• Photo: Peter Hilkmann, Ken Liston

• 20 May 2012

Our annual Club Charity Run for **CareFlight** was split into three routes from Dural (BreakFast), Mt.Colah (Cruiser), and Morisset (Hunter). The destination was brunch at the **Cracked Pepper Restaurant** on the **De Iullis Estate Winery** at Pokolbin.

## BreakFast Club

The BreakFast run was 7:00 for a 7:30 start and covered 190km through Wisemans Ferry along the Hawkesbury River through Spencer then Mangrove Mountain to Wollombi, Broke and onto Pokolbin.

Arriving at Dural at 6:55 and being run leader for the BreakFast group, I was surprised to see five cars already in the McDonalds carpark, and a lot of enthusiastic people coffeeing up inside.

At 7:30, 12 cars with 21 passengers headed off on a brisk and overcast morning to the ferry at Wisemans. The dash past Spencer and up Mangrove Mountain is always a highlight and after waiting for traffic to clear, did not disappoint.

The planned stop at Wollombi was perfectly timed, for as we prepared to depart, the Cruiser and Hunter groups arrived, by which time the sky had cleared and it was beautiful top down weather. The half hour sprint to Broke was perfect with no traffic and the initial sharp bends followed by long sweepers: true MX-5 country.

By the time all groups had arrived at Cracked Pepper the head count was 55 and brunch lived up to expectations provided by the delightful setting.

Over the course of the meal seven **MX5 Mania** discount vouchers were presented, three odometer challengers won, and the main raffle prize of two nights at a luxury waterfront **Pearl Beach Apartment** won by Pam and Ray Estreich.

All in all a great event and the \$632 raised will be matched by the MX-5 Club of NSW and presented to CareFlight. ■ BB

## Sydney Cruisers

On arriving at Mt.Colah McDonalds at 7:45 we were greeted by a number of well known MX-5ers and were pleased to meet a few new faces as well. The aroma of fresh coffee was in the air and lots of conversations sprang up, including previous and forthcoming overseas trips and of course MX-5s.

Mark our illustrious Club Captain and run leader distributed the carefully prepared "Run Sheets" and copies of the "Club Run Code of Conduct" and gathered us around for a briefing of the route and with special mention of a huge bicycle ride which possibly could have caused delays, and explained the "odometer" reading completion.

At 8:15, it was "zero your tripmeter and let's get going". Ten MX-5s left McDonalds and turned left onto the Old Pacific Highway. The cloud covering was clearing and all cars except for one (due to doctor's orders) had their tops down. Our string of shiny little sports cars traveled north and joined the F3 at Berowra. After turning off the boring F3 onto Peats Ridge Road things became a lot more interesting. The variations in scenery, the smells and the ever changing road conditions "not all for the better" provided much more of a challenge and interest than freeway driving. We then headed towards Wollombi via Wisemans Ferry Road and George Downs Drive and met up with members from the Newcastle Chapter. ■ KL





# Midweek Run to Bargo

• Words: Peter Carpenter

• Photos: Cathy Tribe, Nick Simmonds

• 29 May 2012

Its about 5:45am - coldish too. I looked out from the bedroom window across the balcony at a completely enveloping yet attractive light grey mist, with some dark smudges. "Tree Trunks!" – 702am, lets me know that it's raining up in the Blue Mountains and light showers in some areas of Sydney. Glad it's an MX-5 run and not a Ulysses ride mainly because:

- Wet, we can just put up the hood.
- Cold, put on the heater.
- Cas has no qualms about travelling in the MX-5.

This is a very different story to being a pillion on a 1000cc bike. She had one go at it and subsequently refused flatly to ever, ever get on it again! However, I still love the bike.

Take off at Camden, therefore by leaving early we thought we could kill three birds:

- Return library books (those fines mount up).
- Take some specs and other relevant material to Tezz's. Tez builds beautiful '32 Ford rods. He is currently building a hot rod to challenge for the title of "Fastest Rod in Aus". Tez even manufactures his own chassis by the use of laser beams and a unique large table he sectionally manipulates!
- Arrive at takeoff surprised when 7 cars turn up.

Talked and left on time, through Camden Valley and up the old treacherous Razorback Road. I can remember as a kid of about 7 in the early 1950s, an occasion when our old car would not climb the range, so Dad took luggage and Mum back to Camden station promising to meet her in Goulburn. Dad, Paul (my younger brother) and I returned to "Razorback". It was so steep that Dad had to at times reverse up the bloody thing – Paul and I loved the adventure.

Viewed lookout Oblisk – 2500km to Broome – Michael, now there's a challenging destination for the Breakfast Club!

Good coffee, many natters then a slowish run (about an hour), a bellbird calls on narrow tarred and occasionally potholed back roads to Bargo for stomach fuel (potholes easily avoided as we were only cruising).

Took lunch to Nepean Dam picnic area. Had a great day – finished up about 3pm. Thank you to Kathy & Neil, Megan & Charlie, Pauline & Joe, Margaret & Franck, Ken & Maggie, Roger & Frank, and Paul & Mena for making our day so enjoyable!

Home and fire lit by 3:15! ■





# AHOC Brass Monkey Run & Return

• Words: Michael Soulos

• Photos: Timothy Heppell, Adam Walker

• 3 June 2012

3:45am: quick turn off the alarm! Too late – doona moved.

4:30am: away in pitch black with rain falling.

5:25am: eight MX-5s waiting at Eastern Creek with another 22 reported by 6:00am when the **Brass Monkey** started – a cannonball run, organised by the *Austin Healey Owners Club*.



Slipped onto the F4 to chase red-eyed road insects darting every which way in the dark with glow worms dancing and illuminating our mirrors. Adrenaline levels only stabilised after we crossed the Nepean River. On the ascent to Glenbrook there was a lead group of dozen MX-5s and an old 318 punching well above its weight.

The gaps to the following headlights grew by the minute as we pushed on. Driving top-down in fog, mist and showers, we all stayed dry by maintaining a steady pace across the mountains. Surprisingly the fog and mist was scary, exhilarating and disorientating all at the same time in the darkness. Leura underpass looming out of the mist was unexpected with Katoomba shrouded in mizzle as we flashed past on green lights all the way.

After Victoria Pass, the Beemer touched his brakes, swapped ends then reversed into a concrete barrier – write-off. The good news was no personal injuries. Over ridges, down straights and around the bends the reduced bunch continued through intermittent showers on wet roads. To a bystander there was a leading group of MX-5s strutting their stuff down the highway accompanied by rooster tails all the way to Bathurst looking more like tunnel boats than automobiles.



The first to arrive at the **Bathurst RSL** were all MX-5s (well done Chris) for the fourth year running. The Brass Monkey had run its course for 2012. If you have never run the Brass Monkey then add this annual event to your bucket list.

After an early breakfast for 200 people, the **MX-5 Return Run** got underway from Mt Panorama. Our spirited run home was over many of the fantastic back roads we became acquainted with during Day 2 of our recent **Central Tablelands Weekend**.



Andrew led out down Conrod Straight to Rockley, Mt David and Black Springs. Timothy downed his camera to take us through the pine plantations and Oberon to Tarana for refreshment break. From Tarana, Adam and Deen did their thing on a road recently resealed to perfection then on to Richmond over Bells Line of Road with others heading home on the Great Western Highway. ■





# Economy Run Weekend

• Words: Damon Muller

• 16-17 June 2012

As a rule, MX-5 runs tend not to be competitive events. But no one really wants to be the last car to the destination, or the car that everyone else is stuck behind on the beautiful winding road. The economy run that the Canberra Chapter ran on 16th June turned a lot of those assumptions on their heads.

Last year the Canberra Chapter did an economy run to Young, but inadvertent poor timing meant it wasn't particularly well attended. As such, Lance McGrath offered to try again with a run from Canberra to Mittagong. Lance is regularly seen guzzling fuel in his RX7 around Wakefield Park, but he is also an old hand at economy runs – events that are much less common these days than they have been in the past. So we knew we were in good hands.

The aim of the economy run, predictably enough, is to see who can get to the destination using the least fuel. Each of the cars was required to fill up at a service station just outside Canberra to prepare for the run. The canny amongst us had various techniques for squeezing the maximum amount of juice into the tank. The less canny occasionally got lucky by serendipitously orientating our car the correct way to allow the maximum amount of fuel to be added. Sights such as bouncing the car to get any air bubbles out of the tank were also readily observed. Had we been particularly competitive about it Lance was prepared to tape shut and stamp fuel covers, but we decided that we could take the gentlemanly approach and trust our fellow drivers not to cheat. Ha!

Seven and a half cars left Canberra on a chilly morning (the half being the members who ended up at the wrong meeting point and met the rest of the group half-way). Lance had drawn up detailed rally-style instructions, which was an interesting challenge for the two solo drivers! Most of the cars were MX-5s, with a couple of other bits and pieces along for the run.

Lance's route took us up around Lake George and Tarago, with a stop at Goulburn for lunch by the big merino. Whilst one can drive an MX-5 perfectly legally between Canberra and Goulburn in under an hour with time to spare, the name of the game in the economy run was to assume a more stately pace. If you ever wanted to experience the schadenfreude of a 4WD towing a caravan being stuck behind your slow MX-5, then an economy run is what you're after. Of course, finding the balance between driving economically and arriving at your destination some time after the heat death of the universe is where the skill is. You can do it without driving like a pensioner in a Prius (sort of).

One of the economy run tricks is coasting, either by putting the car in neutral or turning the engine off all together. One thing you notice when you attempt to coast is how there are always more hills going up than there are hills going down. I don't know how that works, but it's probably something to do with the curvature of the Earth and us heading generally

north. But it's actually quite fun seeing how far you can get in neutral with a good hill and a bit of inertia.

The second part of the run was from Goulburn to Mittagong. Again, not a long way as the MX-5 flies, but a scenic drive when you're going a little slower. Unfortunately by that point the weather had generally made a turn for the worst. But as no one was going fast enough to aquaplane for more than a few centimetres, that wasn't too big a problem. Most of us managed to arrive at Mittagong around 5ish, where we filled up again to record the amount of fuel consumed. We ended the day with a pleasant dinner at one of the local restaurants, regaling each other with spirited tales of how we cheated friction and OPEC.

The winners of the run were announced at dinner and presented with the inaugural Canberra Chapter Economy Run Trophy. Taking out the event with a figure of 5.61L/100km (50.27mpg for the oldies) were Norm and Roz in their NB. The secret to their success, they revealed in their victory speech, was coasting with the engine off. We weren't too far behind in our NB, with 6.03L/100km (46.77mpg). Sure, that's still 50% more than a Prius, but you retain at least twice as much self respect driving an MX-5, so it's all worth the extra greenhouse emissions.

And that consumption was actually better than some much newer (non-MX-5) cars on the run, so there is a lot to be said for a light car with a small engine. This will be useful to remember when peak oil hits and we're all living in a dystopian Mad Max-esque future. Sure, the last of the V8 interceptors looks cool, but your MX-5 will still be going when Max is stuck cooling his leather chaps with an empty tank.

The economy run was a great experience in a different way to drive an MX-5. But if I'm perfectly honest, the big 110km/h sign as we hit the Hume Highway for the drive back to Canberra was like a big hug from a forgotten friend. And whilst the drive back probably didn't come close to the fuel consumption of a Prius, it was fun. ■ DM



# Phil's Hunter River Run

• Words & Photos: Phil Mayo

• 17 June 2012

After a week of cold rainy days, Sunday 17th June did not look promising for top-down MX-5 fun. The opposite eventuated - clear skies and only a light breeze made the early start a pleasant surprise.

16 cars left Beresfield running west along the New England Highway through Maitland then turned off onto the Golden Highway before Singleton. Our first stop was a coffee drinker's relief at Jerry's Plains where we found there was only a single toilet so that meant a crossed legged Le Mans start to find an alternate venue in the village park. We then continued west to the **Hunter Belle Cheese Factory** just north of Muswellbrook for cheese and fudge tasting with our coffee.



After morning tea, an easy run along the highway to Scone where we turned off onto the Gundy Road which leads up to Barrington Tops. This is a good MX-5 road winding through the hills alongside the Hunter River to the **Linga Longa Inn** at Gundy for a great pub lunch.

Another 20km up the road we drove to **Belltrees Station**, home of the White family since 1831. In 1912, the Belltrees Property covered 240,000 acres surrounded by 2,000 miles of netting fence and had 64 houses scattered over it. Close to 60 employees lived and worked full time on the property. During shearing time a further 100 employees worked the



shed, all living on site. They grew their own vegetables, milked their own cows and killed their own meat. The station was a self-contained community, with a public school, a store, chapel, a community hall and even its own post office. Most of these buildings are still in use today.

After Belltrees, we crossed the Hunter River another four times before arriving in Moonan Flat village, which we drove around managing to split the group causing a lot of "where are you? where are we?" radio calls. But everyone managed to regroup at the **Victoria Hotel** to soak up the bush atmosphere around the open fire of a real country pub.

The trip home was through the horse studs in the area around Lake Glenbawn and then down the highway to our respective homes. Over 350km was covered and we crossed the Hunter River a total of 18 times so it was a *proper* "Hunter Run". ■





# Illawarra United Run

• Words: Mark Garven, Bryan Shedden

• Photos: Keith Monaghan

• 24 June 2012

*After all our efforts earlier this year to get it up and running, the MX-5 Club of NSW formally ratified **Illawarra** as an official Chapter of the Club on 13th June. A fortnight later Paul's Illawarra Run provided the perfect opportunity to kickstart the Illawarra Chapter activities by linking up with the Sydney Cruisers who came to play in our backyard.*

## Sydney Cruisers

About 30 members met up at Kirrawee McDonalds for this run south. The venue was absolutely packed – what were all these people doing at McDonalds at 9:00am on a Sunday morning? Thankfully it was a beautiful winter morning and shaping up as a great day for a drive with the top down.



After our briefing from Paul Byers, our run leader, we jumped in the cars and headed down through Royal National Park. "Nasho" can be a bit dicey on weekends, but thankfully we didn't strike much in the way of cyclists, bikers or Sunday drivers, so we were able to enjoy a nice drive right through the park from north to south. The view down the Illawarra coast when you emerge from the trees at Otford is always a stunner, and the scenery as you continue past Bald Hill and across Sea Cliff Bridge is equally amazing. It requires a conscious effort to keep your eyes on the road ahead!

After passing through the coastal villages, we turned left after Thirroul and climbed up Bulli Pass (that hairpin is always good fun). A quick run down the freeway took us to Picton Road, which we followed around to the back of Mt Kiera. After running up and over the hill, we stopped to regroup for the next section of the run, and the Illawarra group joined us at this point. ■ MG

## Illawarra Chapter

Getting started with a new club Chapter was always going to have it's teething problems. We had a great start finding a keen sub-committee to organise a full calendar of events, and Peter Feutrill "volunteering" to serve as Convenor. We thought it'd be a great idea to start our run at Stuart Park in North Wollongong. Little did we know that Sunday morning in winter at North Beach is Mecca for joggers, fitness trainers, surfers, and café diners. Luckily we squeezed into

the last remaining carpark spaces. Our small group of four cars included Peter & Jill Feutrill, Terry & Noeline Smith, John Waugh, and myself. It seems several of our northern starters preferred to meet at Kirrawee.

Our little convoy of two NAs, an NB and an NC headed north to meet up with the Sydney Cruisers at **Bald Hill Headland Reserve**. At least that was The Plan. First we lost John when he got stuck in the wrong lane and found himself going up Bulli Pass while we continued up the coast. He was intending to head home early anyway – but not quite *that* early! Then, upon entering Sea Cliff Bridge, we found ourselves waving to the Cruisers heading south already. U-turn at Coalcliff, wave goodbye to Peter & Jill (they had other lunch arrangements), leaving Terry & Noeline and myself to catch up to the conga line of MX-5s. At the bottom of Mount Keira, our two groups were finally united. Hoorah!



A quick run down the Southern Freeway brought us to Albion Park, the Illawarra Highway, rolling green hills of dairy country, and ... I get delightful little shivers everytime I think of it ... Macquarie Pass. We had a sedate run up the Pass thanks to the usual mid-morning quota of whitegoods drivers, but the promise of a loo break at **Robertson Pie Shop** kept us focussed. And let's face it, even at Camry pace, the rainforest of Macquarie Pass National Park is gorgeous, and it gave us a chance to spot lyrebirds scratching in the bush.

The final leg took us down the eucalypt-lined Tourist Road, then diverted onto the narrow and bumpy Range Road for the run into Mittagong, where the RSL was waiting for us. We were also joined by Ray & Dianne Conway who had driven up from Nowra to meet us. An enjoyable lunch was had in the bistro with lots of great conversation and hatching of plans for more Illawarra runs. Things will go much smoother next time ... promise! ■ BS





# Hawkesbury Valley Run

• Words: Michael Soulos • Photos: Neil Hamilton-Ritchie, Kevin Ho

• 7 July 2012

The BreakFast Club is undertaking three laidback Saturday morning runs for brekkie at the *Coffee & Lies* venues. Young Club members are all leading their first runs and learning the ropes. If the first of these runs is any yardstick, then the Club is in good hands with Neil Hamilton-Ritchie and members like him willing to put something back to ensure that their favourite Club activity endures.

Neil is a graphic designer and professes not to be a wordsmith. Neil supplied the colourful promo header and despite his pre-run anxiety did a superb job on the day. Leading a Club run with a clear road ahead, one eye on your mirrors and 20 plus cars driving your wake is rewarding and alone worth your membership fee.



The run from Mt Colah down and out of Galston Gorge was awesome with 15km/hr switchbacks on the descent and fast sweeping corners up to Galston on the other side. A few members joined us at Dural for an uneventful drive to Wisemans Ferry to start the focus of our run, the River Road.

The River Road snakes its way alongside the Hawkesbury River for over 30km to the Sackville Ferry past a scattering of secluded water ski gardens and colonial river front farms. In the off season it is a lovely driving road with enough short straight runs with open and blind corners to ensure you have fun in your MX-5.



Neil captured the River Road on his car cam driving alongside walls of Hawkesbury sandstone that dwarf and sometimes overhung his NC with the steep riverbank often only meters away. To view Neil's video and all the photos visit the Hawkesbury Valley Run thread at <http://mx5cartalk.com>.

From the Sackville Ferry our route took us along the ridge through East Kurrajong to the Bells Line of Road. We continued up to the **Kurrajong Heights Hotel** that opened its City View Grill on a Saturday morning especially for our breakfast. Thirty plus members and guests on the BreakFast Club Run joined Jean, Ken & Maggie at C&L ... or did they join us at breakfast? ■



# Wakefield Park “Long Circuit”

• Words & Photos: Timothy Heppell

• 15 July 2012

The Wakefield Park “Long Circuit” represents a different challenge from the better known, but much shorter, Wakefield Park. While Wakefield Park is known for its tight raceway, the Long Circuit sprawls over 200km of public road, as it criss-crosses its way through the farmlands between Lake George and Bungonia Recreation Area, like a colossal Circuit de la Sarthe.

On the morning, the driver’s briefing was held at Pheasant’s Nest, where we welcomed four new starters to the BreakFast Club. Refuelling (breakfast) was at **Greengrocer Café** in Goulburn, followed by some “scrutineering” of the cars.

Firstly we headed out onto Mountain Ash Road. This wonderful stretch includes some great twists and turns, although on the day it was a damp track, which only added to the challenge. From Bungonia, we turn into Oallen Ford



Road that kept us occupied as we negotiated its tricky turns through to Windellama.

With the morning brightening but still very few backmarkers to contend with, we drove along Sandy Point Road and Cullalla Roads to Tarago and a great conclusion to the first part of our circuit at the only pub in town. **The Loaded Dog** is a recommended diversion due to its plethora of appropriate historical memorabilia. However we were keen to set our personal best laptime so we didn’t hang around long.



We reformed onto Tarago Collector Road and Currawang Road. These two roads cross through MX-5 dream country – rolling hills, quiet, winding roads, and great scenery. A deep flooded causeway beside the old bridge under repair just before Wakefield Park didn’t stop us, and we traversed through to Windellama Road for our second loop of the figure 8 circuit.

As it approaches Windellama, the road becomes progressively more technical and entertaining, until at last we were back on Oallen Ford Road – this time heading north. Jerrara Road through to Marulan provided our final farewell to the quiet, enjoyable roads of the Long Circuit.

We followed up with a driver’s debrief and catch up at Berrima. On a sad note we bade farewell to Barry Byerley as he heads overseas, but look forward to his return to the BreakFast Club in 18 months. ■

*(Tim modestly failed to mention that the day before this run, while reconnoitering the route, he blew the clutch in his NC. He got his car home on a flatbed and returned to lead the run from the passenger seat of Barry’s NC. Well done mate! – Ed.)*





# Mark's Mountain Run

• Words: Peter Feutrill • Words: Peter Feutrill, Bryan Shedden

• 14 July 2012

What sort of a person takes a peek at the weather conditions even before he attends to the morning ablutions? Ah – that would be an MX-5 owner who is hoping for a fine winter's day to get that top down on a drive up the mountain.

Yes – the day dawned with beautiful sunshine for Mark's run to **Xmas in July** at Robertson. Five cars gathered at our meeting point at Stuart Park and after the usual introductions, oohs, ahs and photos, away we went.



We cruised through the northern parts of the 'Gong past the lighthouse and beach and south to Kiama. Those bends between Kiama and Gerringong are classic in an MX-5. Our NatMeet scarves came in very handy as we zoomed up the mountain after Berry, across the top and down the other side into Kangaroo Valley. Stopped for a coffee and chat etc in the Valley where Luke had the best looking hot chocolate I have seen. A mug of hot milk was served and there was a massive "blob" of chocolate on a stick for Luke to swizzle. As this melted – voilà – hot chocolate.

Across the refurbished Hampton Bridge (still looks the same actually) and up the pass we went and turned off near Fitzroy Falls to cross over to Robertson via Wildes Meadow. What a great road that is.

**Fountaindale Grand Manor** was our destination and the paddock carpark had a nice selection of MX-5s on display, as many of the "Christmas in July" attendees had already arrived. I parked next to the newly purchased (ie. 1 day in ownership) NC2 hardtop of Bryan and Fiona Shedden. Yes folks Bryan can stop making cardigan jokes about NC owners!

We had seen the best of the day and the chilly breeze reminded us that we were in the Highlands. Unfortunately it wasn't quite cold enough for the promised ice skating.

Inside the Manor was toasty warm and we had a great afternoon with our friends around the log fires indulging in a hearty three-course Christmas lunch (see next page).

Thanks to Mark and Hella Underwood for leading this Illawarra run. ■





# Christmas in July

• Words: Fiona Shedden

• Photos: Bryan Shedden

• 14 July 2012

We were hopeful for a suitably cold winter day for our traditional Christmas in July lunch, which this year was held at **Fountaindale Grand Manor** in Robertson. With cars arriving from *Mark's Mountain Run*, and most just meeting at the Manor, we found a perfect Southern Highlands winter day – clear and sunny but still crisp (read cold!). After parking in a paddock and wandering up through the gardens to the 1920s-era house we were greeted by some distinctly modern sculptures, which somehow looked at home amongst the otherwise heritage-styled surrounds.



After a few photos in the gardens, most people quickly entered the Manor to escape the chill in front of open log-fires. A lovely Victorian-dressed lady greeted us at the door. Little were we to now that she also has a lovely singing voice, which we discovered over lunch when she sang Christmas carols to us, unaccompanied by music.

Most of the ladies ventured upstairs past the beautiful stained glass windows and the fantastic Christmas

decorations, for a little retail therapy at the dozen or so small shops set up in the rooms. Purchase of the day (for a couple of people) had to be the *Angry Birds* beanies which were promptly put on – even though nominally they were purchased “for the kids” – and showcased for the enjoyment of the other MX-5 clubbers. The shop owner should have paid us to wear them!



We joined the remaining group who had assembled in our private dining room, and admired the amazing effort that had been undertaken to transform the room. The mood was set for eating a hearty Christmas feast, the bons bons were popped, and the bad jokes shared. As the food was served course by course, we filled up with warming fare and drinks from the bar. The room resonated with the sound of hauntingly melodic carols, and the sound of 61 people tucking into a yummy three-course buffet-style traditional Christmas lunch.



Once everyone had consumed far more than they needed to eat – in keeping with those Christmas traditions – it was time for those inevitable words of wisdom from our committee members.

Three cheers for our successful NatMeet organisers who were recognised for their fantastic job just a few months earlier, and to Lesa for arranging our Christmas in July.

NatMeet was my first experience of the MX-5 Club as a member, and my second was this lunch. Given how much fun both were, I'm sure there will be many more for me! ■





# Christmas in July Run

• Words: Bruce Bettinson

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann

• 22 July 2012

An overcast sky greeted the 21 members (12 cars) as we gathered at 8:00am on Sunday 22nd July at Toronto McDonalds. However we were in fine spirits as we departed shortly after 8:30am.

We left Toronto heading south towards Ourimbah via Morisset, Wyee and the old Pacific Highway. Once on Dog Trap Road the fun could begin. The road was damp and care needed to be taken as there were some surprises on the road in the shape of potholes. Our route took us along Wisemans Ferry Road and George Downes Drive as we made our way to Mangrove Creek Dam picnic area for morning tea. The weather was kind and we were able to have our morning tea without getting wet.

Mangrove Creek Dam is a picturesque place and the main catchment area for the Gosford/Wyong area. We had the place to ourselves ... until a coach load of people turned up, so there were a lot of people running to the toilet to beat the rush.

Started to drizzle as we left so unfortunately had to put the tops up. The second half of the run went through Bucketty,



Laguna and Wollombi. We were ahead of schedule so made a slight detour for some enjoyable wine tasting at **Nightingales Vineyard**.

It was dry as we departed Nightingales so tops down heading back towards Cessnock for lunch at **Potters Brewery**. Just got through Broke and the sky in front of us looked grey and heavy with rain so there was a need to pull over and put the tops up, and away again heading for Potters Brewery. We detoured around the rough road passing Drayton's but the rain eventually caught up with us.

Potters Brewery was very busy, we did not realise there was a marathon in the area on that day. Luckily we did not get held up too much. Not that it mattered as there was such good company around. A few tales were told over lunch and a few good ales were consumed.

End of the run for most, however some members visited a few wineries to finish off the day. I hope all those who attended enjoyed themselves despite the weather. ■





# Christmas in July

• Words & Photos: Damon Muller

• 22 July 2012

On a typically perfect (sunny, though crisp) Canberra winter's morning, 32 members and friends gathered at the **Homestead Café** in Hall for a *Christmas in July* lunch.

The views from the deck where our tables had been set up were spectacular, with farmland in the foreground, the Brindabella Ranges in the distance and a hint of Belconnen suburbs in between.

The tables had been tastefully decorated, with little Christmas trees and Santas in snowglobes and a small Christmas tree graced the corner of the room. People shared bon bons with those around them, read their jokes and put their hat on their head. It was a very convivial atmosphere.

The menu consisted of ciabatta bread with butter, traditional Christmas turkey or ham with roast vegetables, followed by vanilla panna cotta with passionfruit coulis or plum pudding with yummy sauce, and tea or coffee. The staff timed the meal very well, although they were very busy, as the venue was fully booked.

There was lots of happy chatter and Santa Claus made a brief stopover, to drop off some treats. All in all, a very pleasant time was had by all. Whilst there was no run organised in association with the outing, some people will no doubt have taken advantage of the perfect day to take their little car for a spin. ■







23 Kemble Court  
Mitchell ACT  
1800 444 711



Unit 6/55 Nettleford Street  
Belconnen ACT  
(02) 6253 1396



24-26 Hollywood Drive  
Lansvale NSW  
(02) 9727 6788



20 Joseph Street  
Belconnen ACT  
(02) 6251 3911