

# CLUB TORQUE

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

SUMMER 2010/11



## MX-5 Motor Sport Madness!

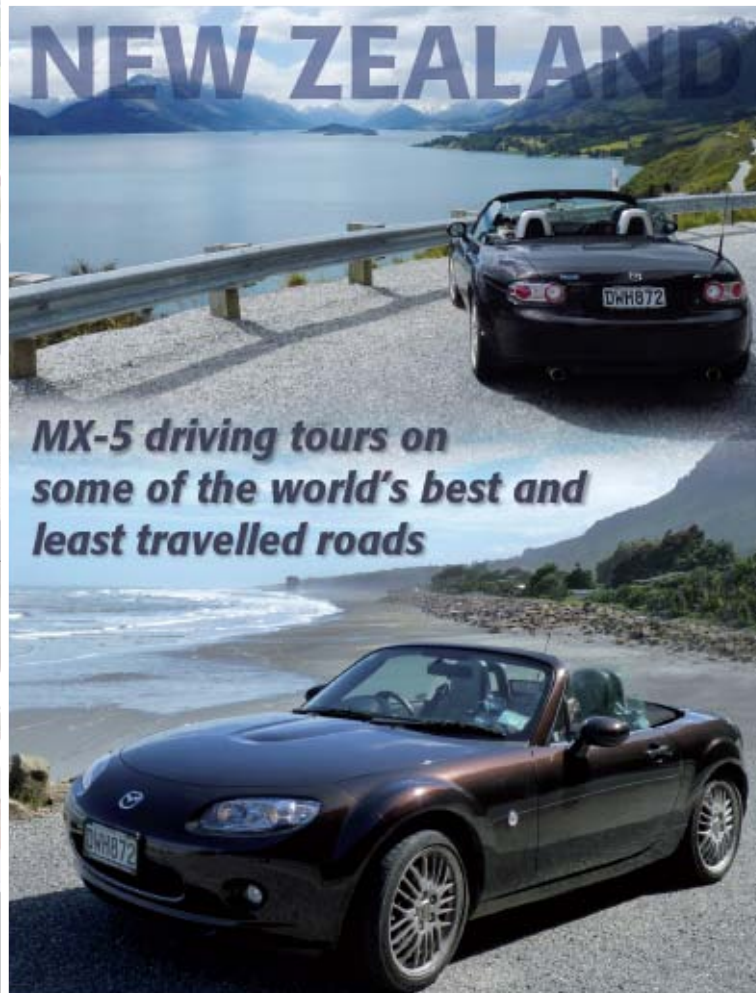
Interstate Challenge at Phillip Island  
Club Track Days at Wakefield Park  
Supersprint Championship  
Targa High Country  
Shannons MX-5 Nationals  
Wakefield 300



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**President:** Glenn Thomas  
president@mx5.com.au

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

**Secretary:** Phil Roberts  
secretary@mx5.com.au

**Treasurer:** Kevin Tuckerman  
treasurer@mx5.com.au

**Competition:** Mike Hicks  
competition@mx5.com.au

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

**Membership:** Ken Liston  
**Membership Database:** Stephen Carter  
membership@mx5.com.au

**Club Captain:** Mark Garven  
captain@mx5.com.au

**Publications:** Bryan Shedden  
publications@mx5.com.au

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

**Canberra Rep:** Damon Muller  
canberra@mx5.com.au

**Hunter Rep:** Phil Mayo  
hunter@mx5.com.au

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

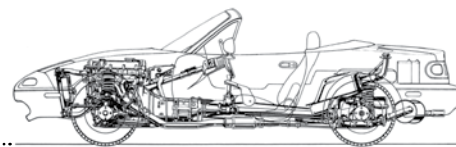
**Comp/Event Secretary:** Zan Menzel  
eventsec@mx5.com.au

**Webmaster:** Robert Gage  
webmaster@mx5.com.au

Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW Inc.  
PO Box 402, Beecroft NSW 2119

<http://www.mx5.com.au/nsw/>

*Main Cover Image: Andrew McKay and Alex Hailstone burn up the streets of Mansfield in the Targa High Country (Perfect Prints)*



## From the Editor



Welcome to the new look **Club Torque**!

I have only been a member of the MX-5 Club of NSW since February 2009, but that's easily long enough to appreciate that we have a very good thing going. I also know it doesn't happen without hard work by committee members and volunteers.

So when I was tapped on the shoulder by previous President, Sean MacCormaic, I had no hesitation in nominating for the vacant position of Publicity Officer at the Annual General Meeting in October. Your previous editor, Glenn Thomas has moved up to the role of President. Glenn did a wonderful job of refreshing the look and feel of the magazine last year. However, we were still limping along with *Microsoft Word*, which is a bit like performing brain surgery with a meat cleaver. I was also keen to find a better deal on printing. I've never been involved in any publishing or design process, so this'll be "interesting"!

First task was to seek quotes from new printers. **Print Media** in Wollongong came to the party with a competitive quote, excellent customer service, and a quantum leap in print & paper quality. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too?

Second task was to quiz my counterparts in the VIC, QLD and WA MX-5 Clubs, and review their magazines for design and production ideas. There was unanimous encouragement to use *Adobe InDesign*, and after playing with a trial version supplied by Murray Finlay (President MX-5 Club of Victoria and **MX-TRA** Publisher), I convinced the committee to spring for a full version, which I received for Christmas.

Finally, I begged, borrowed and stole for articles, reports and photographs. I'd like to thank all contributors for managing to meet the Christmas Eve deadline that I set. And then there was the small matter of learning how to use new and very powerful software!

Which brings us to this point. I hope you enjoy the new look **Club Torque** and welcome your feedback.



*Bryan Shedden #68*

# The President's Brief

• Words: Glenn Thomas • Photos: Oz Event Photo



Welcome to the New Year and even more opportunities to indulge your motoring passion whether it be taking in the world while cruising with the roof down, chatting over coffee or experiencing the adrenaline rush associated with pushing your little MX-5 to its limits. Maybe you like to make your special car just that little more so by changing one or two things; or maybe you like to keep your baby in showroom condition and show off this little work of art at the Concours de Elegance. Whatever your interest, the MX-5 Club of NSW has something for you and your MX-5. Hey, even if you don't own an MX-5 you can still enjoy the utility of the Club.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Committee, under the exceptional leadership of the previous President - Sean MacCormaic, for the exceptional dedication that made the past year such a success. The new format for the combined President's Picnic and Concours de Elegance introduced by Sean proved to be very successful as was the introduction of the on-line administrative system. Even so, opportunities to make the "Concours" run even smoother are currently being examined by Phil Ashton with the intention to hone our Club's assessing skills to provide more consistency and predictability; this should prove to be invaluable when the MX-5 Club of NSW hosts the next MX-5 Nationals at Canberra in April of 2012.

Your Club Vice President, Peter Feutrill, is heading up a subcommittee who are well on the way to making this next Nationals meeting something truly special. The event is to be appropriately held at our national capital and will be a once in a lifetime opportunity. Given this event is virtually local, it will be a fantastic opportunity for our members to experience a long weekend jam packed with great MX-5 experiences! Don't miss the chance to be able to say "I was there..."

The motorsport dimension of your Club has been going from strength to strength under the regime of

Mike Hicks, Zan Menzel and the large team of regular volunteers. The meetings continue to impress all who attend and provide a wonderful opportunity for anyone who has ever been curious about what it is like to drive on a racetrack. Your Club has a wonderful and friendly system to introduce you to this experience irrespective of your level of driving ability. This venue provides a fantastic opportunity to develop driving skills that can ultimately pay huge dividends when driving on the public roads, something to which I can personally attest.

Maybe you have enjoyed the social aspects of our Club that allow similarly minded people to get together to enjoy each other's company. These events provide opportunities to learn great tips and insight into your MX-5 by taking in the collective wisdom of your fellow Club members. I would suggest that the splendour that these events can provide was epitomised by the 20th Anniversary lunch. While all of the committee made great contributions to this wonderful event, Lesa & Greg Bunn should really include the overall running of the 20th Anniversary lunch on their CVs.

As you will see by the quality of the magazine that you are now reading, this aspect too continues to grow under the masterly eye of our new Publicity Officer, Bryan Shedden. Please don't hesitate to talk to Bryan should you wish to contribute an article or two.



All of the appealing aspects of your Club are made possible by a dedicated team of people; Secretary - Phil Roberts, Treasurer - Kevin Tuckerman, Club Captain - Mark Garven, Regalia gurus - Pam & Ray Esteich, Events Secretary - Cathie Curran, and Membership - Stephen Carter & Ken Liston. This team are inspiring in their selfless dedication to making your Club work so well.

If you can think of other ideas that can open up even more opportunities to enjoy our classic sports cars and the wonderful people who drive them; please do not hesitate to let your hard working committee know.

Until we next meet – enjoy your motoring safely.

# Club Track Days at Wakefield Park

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Daniel McKenna, Phil Lea, Bryan Shedden



*Rounds 2 and 3 of the 2010/11 Club Championship were held at Wakefield Park on Sunday 24th October and Sunday 5th December.*

## Round 2

Sixty seven club members and visitors enjoyed fine weather following overnight rain in Goulburn. All competitors had the opportunity to complete seven runs of four timed laps. On this occasion non MX-5s recorded the five quickest times, the first three being "clubmans". Visitor Eric Scheeren in his Arrow (1:07.40) narrowly shaded club member Leigh Hemmings in his PRB (1:07.47) with Ian Diven also driving an Arrow third (1:08.04). Fastest MX-5 and winner of Class 6 was Mark Hellmund with a time of 1:10.16. Phil Ashton in his blue NC kept Mark honest recording a PB of 1:10.64.



Other class winners were Allan Cruz (1:17.10) in Class 1, and President Glenn Thomas (1:16.22) in Class 2. Fastest of the standard NCs, Class 3, was Roger Palfreyman (1:15.64) whilst Ian Vickers won Class 4 (1:15.84). Stewart Clode (1:14.83) was fastest of the modified under 1600cc cars in Class 5, and Patrick Bramston (1:11.75) just shaded Russell Battisson (1:11.91) in Class 7 for the forced induction road-registered cars. Class 8 for race cars was won by Colin Moore (1:10.81) with newcomer Chris Ballard (1:12.39) in an ex Chris Gough SE in second, and Leigh Hemmings winning Class 10 for club members driving non MX-5s.

The Phil Roberts "Old and Bold" award was won by Phil Ashton.



## Round 3

With the Interstate Challenge at Phillip Island the following weekend, it was always expected that entries for the December meeting would be less than normal. The Bathurst Light Car Club hillclimb and supersprint at Mount Panorama on the same weekend also reduced our entry numbers.



Nevertheless, forty seven members and visitors enjoyed a fine day, the much anticipated and forecast rain not eventuating till the conclusion of the day's activities. All competitors had the opportunity to complete eight runs on the day, one of them being a six-lap regularity.



Fastest time of the day was recorded by Val Stewart (1:08.36) in her RX-7 with Mark Hellmund (1:10.80) second (and Class 6 winner), and Keith Bridgement (1:11.09) third in his Subaru WRX STi. Other class winners included Bryan Shedden (1:18.28, Class 1), Glenn Thomas (1:17.04, Class 2), Ian Miller (1:16.89, Class 3), Lindsay Burke (1:18.03, Class 4), Geoff Hemsell (1:17.04, Class 5) barely ahead of Peter Browning (1:17.05), Luke Kovacic (1:14.11, Class 7), and Chris Ballard (1:12.80, Class 8). The regularity was won by Bryan Shedden (1.59s) with Ian Miller (1.93s) and Geoff Hemsell (2.16s) taking the minor placings.

The "Old and Bold" winner on this occasion was Lindsay Burke.



## 2011 Track Days

Our first Track Day for 2011 will be on Sunday 20th February. This will be followed by a Driver Training Day at the Marulan Driver Training Centre on Sunday 13th March, and then the Supersprint / Track Day Double Header on 8th and 9th May.

# A Magic Weekend at Phillip Island

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Bryan Shedden & mxfive95



Who would ever have thought that *more than two dozen* club members could be convinced to travel over one thousand kilometres and back to compete at a supersprint? But that is in fact what happened on Sunday 12th December when 26 members of our club travelled to Phillip Island to defend the New South Wales / Victoria Interstate Challenge. The contingent consisted of 24 MX-5s plus Lance McGrath in his RX-7 and Craig Hasler in his BMW E92 M3. Getting there was a big enough challenge, throw in torrential rain that fell over the Great Divide in southern NSW a few days prior, cutting the Hume at Tarcutta, and it was made even harder. Those that travelled down the coast or via Cooma were not affected.



Despite the challenges, all made it to Cowes on Phillip Island by the Saturday afternoon. Members of the Victorian Club organised an enjoyable dinner at the Cowes RSL on the Saturday evening. It was obvious that the Victorians were concerned that not even the home track advantage would work in their favour on this occasion. We were to compete under MX-5 Club of Victoria class rules that differ from those that we run at Wakefield Park. We had all sent our Vehicle Declaration Forms to Russell Garner prior to the event in order that we could be placed in the correct classes.

Overnight rain and strong winds eased on Sunday morning. Phillip Island circuit can be a daunting proposition in the dry; we did not need it to rain. A few familiar smiling faces at early morning registration started the day on a good note. Thanks to Cobie, Pam and Lesa for helping AROCA Victoria (the host club) with registrations. Scrutineering and the drivers briefing went without any hitches and at 9:00am the first group was ready for the practice run of 10 minutes. The field of 126 competitors had been broken into five groups based on previous lap times and experience.

For the practice runs trainers were allowed in the passenger seats, most of our Phillip Island first timers taking advantage of the offers from our Victorian counterparts to show us the fast way round the Island. Only

8 out of our 26 entrants had ever driven the circuit previously. Unfortunately there were still occasional light showers of rain falling during practice and the first official run. From then on it was dry.

As indicated earlier Phillip Island Circuit is very different to Wakefield Park, it is considerably longer at over four kilometres, the corners are generally fast and free-flowing with most being taken flat in an MX-5. There are two exceptions, Honda and MG, that require heavy breaking and then the use of second gear on exit.

AROCA conduct their days a little differently to ours, rather than basing each run on a set number of laps, they use time as the basis for ending a run. In this case it was 15 minutes which would allow competitors the opportunity to complete six or seven laps in each run. There were also up to 26 cars on the circuit at any one time. This was not a problem because of the length of the circuit and width of the track. By approximately 4:30pm we had completed the practice run and five official runs. A total of an additional 167 km were on my odometer at the end of the day. AROCA and their officials had done a great job in the conduct of the event.

It was now time for the Victorians to hand out the trophies and whilst we were to only bring one trophy home we were far from disgraced.

In Class 1 for Standard NAs we had one competitor Bryan Shedden who earlier in the day broke the class record only to have that time bettered by two of the Victorians. Bryan was nudged into third place by only 0.08 of a second. In Class 2 for Standard NBs Brendan Thomas, Brad Carpenter, Glenn Thomas and Greg Bunn were third, fourth, fifth and sixth respectively. First recorded a time of 2:08.35 whilst Brad in fourth recorded 2:08.54. How close was that? Four cars within 0.19 seconds of each other! In Class 3 for Standard NCs Robert Pimm and Roger Palfreyman were second and third. We had no competitors in their Clubman class, which



is very popular in Victoria, catering to road registered NAs and NBs with limited modifications.

In Class 5 for Modified cars, Mark Hellmund, Mike Hicks and Steve Green were second, third and fourth. The gap between Mark and the class winner Russell Garner was only 0.31 seconds, Russell setting a new class record. Phil Ashton in Class 6, Restricted Open, spent most of the day on top of the time sheets only to be beaten by 0.21 seconds during the last run. Peter Feutrill was fourth. In the Open class, Class 7, Daniel Deckers ran out the winner by a handy margin of almost 3 seconds. Daniel's best time of 1:46.89 was the outright fastest time of the day for all competitors; well done Daniel. Unfortunately, his name does not go into the Victorian club record book, as it is only open to Victorian club members. Chris Ballard and Patrick Bramston were third and fourth in Class 7.

All that remained was to declare the winner of the Interstate Challenge Perpetual Trophy. Unfortunately the home state won by the narrowest of margins: 4.88 to 4.33.

The extra competitive spirit of the day did encourage the Victorians to post new club records in all but one class.



To the Victorian Club, President - Murray Finlay, Club Captain of Motor Sport - Robert Downes and his assistant Sam Gumina, Eligibility Officer - Russell Garner, and Neil Choi and his AROCA team, thanks for a great day.

In wrapping up I'd like to quote Neil: *"The only negative I saw (from my video evidence) was that there was always a pesky MX-5 either holding me up or harassing and passing me (Mike Hicks #151 doing it twice at Lukey Heights). Now what is the collective noun for MX-5s?"* I've edited out Neil's derogatory comment about our superb cars.

Rank	Name	Time	Class	VIC	NSW
1	Robert Downes	2:06.15	SNA	10	
2	Robert Heritage	2:08.20	SNA	7	
3	Bryan Shedden	2:08.28	SNA		6
4	Brendan Beavis	2:08.70	SNA	5	
5	Daryl Ervine	2:26.47	SNA	4	
1	Robert De Bont	2:08.35	SNB	10	
2	Max Lloyd	2:08.42	SNB	7	
3	Brendan Thomas	2:08.46	SNB		6
4	Brad Carpenter	2:08.54	SNB		5

Rank	Name	Time	Class	VIC	NSW
5	Glenn Thomas	2:09.78	SNB		4
6	Greg Bunn	2:13.68	SNB		3
7	Patrick Hamakers	2:14.64	SNB	2	
8	John Downes	2:15.42	SNB	1	
9	Robert Boucher	2:15.78	SNB	1	
1	Colin Denman-Jones	2:05.81	SNC	10	
2	Robert Pimm	2:09.30	SNC		7
3	Roger Palfreyman	2:10.39	SNC		6
4	Lindy Anderson	2:15.26	SNC	5	
5	Ian Rogers	2:30.22	SNC	4	
6	Jacqui Christie	2:49.92	SNC		3
1	Peter Phillips	2:02.71	CLB	10	
2	Teruo Delacroix	2:03.91	CLB	7	
3	Ben Sale	2:04.43	CLB	6	
4	Sam Gumina	2:04.45	CLB	5	
5	Robert Parr	2:07.21	CLB	4	
6	Mark Fitzgerald	2:09.17	CLB	3	
1	Russell Garner	1:57.92	MOD	10	
2	Mark Hellmund	1:58.23	MOD		7
3	Michael Hicks	2:00.92	MOD		6
4	Steve Green	2:03.03	MOD		5
5	Craig Healy	2:03.19	MOD	4	
6	Phil Munnings	2:03.29	MOD		3
7	Ray Monik	2:04.96	MOD	2	
8	David Wilken	2:05.72	MOD	1	
9	Owen Boak	2:05.80	MOD	1	
10	Mike Kirby	2:05.86	MOD	1	
11	Bruce Phillips	2:06.66	MOD	1	
13	Phil Mayo	2:08.67	MOD		1
14	Chris Baksa	2:09.09	MOD	1	
15	Keith Monaghan	2:13.58	MOD		1
16	Tony King	2:13.81	MOD		1
17	Robert Gage	2:23.71	MOD		1
1	Randy Stagno-Navarra	1:59.08	RES	10	
2	Phillip Ashton	1:59.29	RES		7
3	Kim Cole	2:00.27	RES	6	
4	Peter Feutrill	2:04.39	RES		5
5	Daniel White	2:05.73	RES	4	
6	Ray Estreich	2:06.23	RES		3
7	Ralph Thompson	2:07.31	RES		2
8	Paul Byers	2:12.74	RES		1
1	Daniel Deckers	1:46.89	OPN		10
2	Steven Cook	1:49.62	OPN	7	
3	Chris Ballard	1:59.06	OPN		6
4	Patrick Bramston	1:59.31	OPN		5
5	Christine Boak	2:02.19	OPN	4	
6	David Moore	2:14.01	OPN	3	
	Darrin Morice	1:49.87	N/A	N/A	
	Lance McGrath	2:02.38	N/A		N/A
	Craig Hasler	2:03.72	N/A		N/A
<b>Overall Points Tally</b>				<b>156</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Number of Competitors</b>				<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Average Points</b>				<b>4.88</b>	<b>4.33</b>

# Tackling the Targa High Country

• Words: Chris Gough • Photos: Chris Gough, John Douch & Perfect Prints

The weekend of 5th-7th November saw the **MX5 RACING** team travel to Mt Buller in Victoria for the inaugural **Targa High Country**. This is a two day tarmac rally based around Mansfield/Mt Buller and consists of over 200 km of competition stages including several passes up and down the famous Mt Buller road.

Our teams included the return of Geoff Kennedy and Kelly Handley together again for the first time since Targa Wreast Point in January, and the debut of Andrew McKay and Alex Hailstone competing in their first Targa event.

Friday got underway with the usual paperwork and scrutineering which both cars sailed through.



The first stage was a demonstration event on the streets of Mansfield on the Friday afternoon followed by Targa Fest in the evening where all the spectators and fans were able to get up close and personal with their favourite cars and drivers/navigators.

Saturday began with a clear but cool day with the first pass down the 7 km mountain road from Mt Buller. Most teams used this as a feeler for the event with most times being competitive but well within the generous nominated time allowed.



The next three stages took the crews towards Wangaratta where they would have lunch before returning on the same road for a reverse pass on the stages. These were very fast stages with some of the

top cars reaching well over 200 km/hr at various times. The MX-5s performed well but struggled against some of the more powerful cars on the open plains. The final stage of the day was the 16 km return up the mountain to the Mt Buller Summit. Again the MX-5s suited the tight, twisty corners and punched above their weight to beat some of the more fancied cars. By the end of day one, the McKay/Hailstone car was third in class just ahead of the Kennedy/Handley car.

Sunday began foggy on the mountain but the first stage down the hill was overall dry but with damp patches ready to catch out anyone who overstepped the mark.



Again this stage was taken carefully by all competitors as the cold condition combined with lower temperatures meant generating heat and grip in the tyres was somewhat difficult. The MX-5s suited the conditions well and with their exceptional brakes and good grip, were able to take advantage of the testing conditions. The crews then headed over to Jamison, then the long 28 km Big River stage into Eildon before the Skyline stage and back to Eildon for lunch. Unfortunately just five corners from the end of Big River, the Kennedy/Handley car ran wide on the approach to a sweeping right hand bend, ran out of grip and hit an earthen embankment.





Geoff was fine but Kelly suffered from lower back pain and was removed to hospital in Melbourne for precautionary checks and X-rays which revealed a broken tailbone. She was released the following day and is well on the way to a full recovery and can't wait to get back in the car with Matilda Mravicic for Targa Wreast Point in January.

Several competitors later, the factory Mazda Australia 3 MPS ran out of brakes on the same downhill section, and ran off the road hitting an embankment and rolled over. Fortunately the crew were fine but the 3 is slightly shorter than it used to be.



Due to these and other delays the second pass through Skyline after lunch was cancelled and the crews did the reverse pass over the other stages before the return to the Mt Buller summit and the finish.



After the demise of the class leading Mazda 3, the McKay/Hailstone car was now in second position in *Showroom*. They completed the final stages with cool heads and confirm a second position on the podium in their first event – outstanding!

Congratulations to both Alex and Andrew on this achievement and to all the other placegetters.



Now we roll on to Targa Wreast Point where we will be running four NCs and debuting a BMW 130i as well!!

**For more information on Targa High Country, visit <http://www.targahighcountry.com.au>**



# Shannons MX-5 Nationals

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Linda Moore & Oz Event Photo



The MX-5 National Race Championships for 2010 were held at Wakefield Park on the 29th to 31st October. Races were open to MX-5s conforming to Production Sports Cars Groups 2B and 2F. Group 2B cars were broken into a further two classes, one for forced induction (supercharged or turbocharged) and one for naturally aspirated cars. Regularity events were also conducted on the Saturday in conjunction with the Southern Sporting Car Club. For the races, eight competitors travelled down from Queensland with the remaining cars coming from New South Wales. There were five cars in 2B forced induction, six in 2B naturally aspirated and eleven cars in 2F, with four cars competing in the Regularities.



Over the weekend the cars competed in six races in addition to qualifying and practice that occurred on Friday. David Raddatz won five of the six races, car problems putting paid to his chance of a perfect score in the final race on Sunday. David did not have it all his own way with spirited competition being provided by Daniel Deckers, winner of the final race, Chris Tonna and Matilda Mravivic.

Rob Hay kept the NSW flag flying in the 2B naturally aspirated class winning three races and was second in the other three. His greater consistency saw him win over Queenslanders Brian Ferrabee (two wins) and Kerry Finn (one win).



Class 2F was an all Queensland result with Ashley Miller winning from David Grainer and Russell Schloss in third.

In the four regularities events Kevin Addison ran out the winner on 407 points to Mike Hicks on 412, Tony King on 563 and Lindsay Burke on 628.



# Motor Sport Trophy Presentations

• Words: Mike Hicks & Bryan Shedden

• Photo: Oz Event Photo

## NSW Supersprint Championship

On Saturday 20th November, Club President - Glenn Thomas accepted the NSW Supersprint Club Championship Trophy and Shield at the New South Wales CAMS Presentation Evening. This is the *seventh time* that the club has won this award since joining the Championship in 1999. Congratulations to the 28 club members who contributed to the win.

On the previous Sunday, Type and Class trophies were awarded to the individual winners and place getters at the Supersprint Presentation Day. MX-5 members to receive trophies included Stewart Temesvary first in Type 1 and Class 1B, Tony Williams first in Class 2A, Mark Hellmund first in Class 2B and second in Type 2, Bradley Cecil first in Type 2 and Class 2D, Phil Abraham second in Class 3B and Leigh Hemmings first in Class SVA.

In the course of the 2010 Supersprint Championship, new class records were set by two club members. Bryan Shedden set a Wakefield Park Class 1A record of 1:16.176 on 5th June, and improved it to 1:15.851 on 20th June. Tony Williams set a Wakefield Park Class 2A record of 1:13.061 on 20th June.



## Australian Supersprint Championship

Four MX-5 Club members from NSW made the long trek to Morgan Park at Warwick in Queensland to compete in the Australian Supersprint Championship on 13th and 14th November. The event was run on the recently extended circuit that now measures 3 km in length. The extension being considerably faster than the original 2 km circuit thus giving the new circuit an enjoyable balance of fast and slow corners. Unfortunately Lindsay Burke (1:34.82) driving Robert Kai's RX-7, Kevin Addison (1:36.91), Mike Hicks (1:37.07) and Robert Kai (1:45.05) did not manage to bring any of the silverware home. Nevertheless, the weekend was enjoyable despite some of the organisational shortcomings.

## Club Track Trophy Presentation

On Wednesday 20th October, trophies for the Club Competition Year 2009/10 were presented prior to the AGM at **Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club**.

### Class 1 - Standard NA

Allan Cruz, first place 46 points  
Bryan Shedden, fastest male (1:17.00)  
Michelle Matthews, fastest female (1:26.21)  
Peter Carpenter, encouragement award

### Class 2 - Standard NB

Brad Carpenter, first place 44 points  
Glenn Thomas, fastest male (1:16.04)  
Dominique Spoelder, fastest female (1:26.83)  
Kevin Tuckerman, encouragement award

### Class 3 - Standard SE and NC

Roger Palfreyman, first place 42 points  
Roger Palfreyman, fastest male (1:16.23)  
Jacqui Christie, fastest female (1:35.53)  
Robert Pimm, encouragement award

### Class 4 - Modified 0-1600cc

Stewart Clode, first place 48 points  
Tony Williams, fastest male (1:13.84)  
Keith Monaghan, encouragement award

### Class 5 - Modified 1601-2000cc

Mark Hellmund, first place, 41 points  
Mark Hellmund, fastest male (1:09.68)  
Dianne Byers, fastest female (1:24.25)  
Steve Green & Lesa Bunn, encouragement awards

### Class 6 - Turbo/supercharged

Cameron Macarthur, 36 points  
Cameron Macarthur, fastest male (1:09.75)  
Ray Estreich, encouragement award

### Class 7 - Race cars running treaded tyres

David Raddatz, 24 points  
David Raddatz, fastest male (1:09.26)  
Pat Rooke, fastest female (1:09.66)  
Linda Moore, encouragement award

### Class 8 - Race cars running slicks

Val Stewart, 20 points  
Peter Browning, fastest male (1:10.11)  
Val Stewart, fastest female (1:07.63)

### Class 9 - Non MX-5s

Lance McGrath, 30 points  
Leigh Hemmings, fastest male (1:08.52)  
Phil Abrahams, encouragement award  
Stewart Grigg, fastest ute

### Fastest Time of the Day

Val Stewart, 19th Oct 2009 (1:07.53) & 6th Dec 2009 (1:08.53)  
Cameron Macarthur, 14th Feb 2010 (1:28.22 wet)  
Pat Rooke, 3rd May 2010 (1:09.66)  
David Raddatz, 21st Jun 2010 (1:09.26)

### Regularity Winners

Roger Palfreyman, 3rd May 2010 (1:18.30 variation 1.31 s)  
Glenn Thomas, 21st Jun 2010 (1:17.00, variation 1.65 s)

# Wet & Wild at the Wakefield 300

• Words: Mark Hellmund

• Photos: Linda Moore

• 27th-28th November 2010

The **Wakefield 300** is an annual 300 km endurance race that has been held at Wakefield Park for the last three years. Mark Hellmund, the 28-year-old gun driver of our Club, and co-driver Andrew Irwin have raced Mark's modified NB8B at every one of them, finishing 9th in 2008 and 3rd in 2009. How did they go this year? Read on for Mark's report that was originally published in his "Garage thread" on <http://mx5cartalk.com>.



The Wakefield 300 was wicked fun for myself and Andrew. Highly recommended as it's run under AASA so a Type 2 Supersprint level car can compete. The only extra things Andrew and I ever had to get were a 2kg fire extinguisher for refuelling and a three-layer race suit.

The Wakefield 300 is run over two days, with lots of HQs, MX-5s vs RX-7s plus a bunch of other categories racing on the Saturday and the Sunday. The practice, qualifying and shoot-out for the Wakefield 300 were on the Saturday. Andrew and I were sharing my car for the weekend and it was competing in both the MX-5/RX-7 category and the 300 enduro.

New lesson learnt in the week before the race: if your car is so loud you wear in-ear headphones as earmuffs everytime you drive it ... maybe it's too loud. I took the car in to Pedders to have the alignment re-done and it turns out my passenger rear wheel bearing was gone rather badly. But with all the other noise in my car, I hadn't heard a thing, which left me needing to fix it two days before an endurance race! I think in future I will be doing one very important thing between trackdays: driving it to work at least once without headphones so I can actually hear the car properly.

So I spent most of Thursday night and Friday morning replacing that bearing. The rear wheel bearings are a significantly bigger PITA than the fronts. After spending a good 3-4 hours analysing, using a big hammer and then re-thinking the approach when nothing could budge the original bearing ... I went to bed. On Friday morning I made up a mount so it could be fitted to the

press. This was made out of a 15mm steel roundbar and an 8mm steel plate. Using a 40 tonne press, the round bar bent about 25mm before the bearing released!

On the bright side, at least the alignment was unaffected and Daniel Deckers was awesome to get me a bearing at such short notice. Quite incredible how even without really having any big excursions off the track this year, the alignment still gets knocked out of whack. I had 2.7mm toe-out on the passenger front and 0.9mm toe-in on the right.

The only remaining issue on the car was the side-seals on the diff had started leaking, but no-one had any stock in the country. For the weekend, I topped up both the diff and gearbox, and had my fingers crossed that the car would pound round Wakefield 110% for the whole weekend like it did last year. We left the license plates on the car for the races as it looked like it'd be the only road registered entry again.

The weather on the Saturday was really hot and we were running two-year-old Dunlop DZ03G in 205/50R15 in R compound. I did the qualifying for the MX-5/RX-7 races and got a 1:11:11. Andrew hadn't raced since February and he did well to run 1:11.72 in practice. The first days racing was pretty non-eventful. I managed 8th in the MX-5/RX-7 Race 1 and qualified for the 300 with a 1:11:46, which had us at 20th out of 37 cars. Not bad for what was likely the only road registered car in the race. The top qualifier was Ric Shaw with an unreal L98 V8-powered FD RX-7 that sounded and went incredible. He qualified first with a 1:02:71!



Sunday the weather changed for the worse - we got light rain overnight and it got heavier during the morning, and kept on drizzling all afternoon. I had gotten sick before we left and I was the worst on the Saturday night when I couldn't sleep at all. So on Sunday, we swapped to my 225/50R15 A050s and Andrew drove the MX-5/RX-7 Races 2 and 3. Meanwhile I was sleeping in the car listening to the announcer. Then Andrew knocked another MX-5 off the track ... with my car! Hearing "Hellmund goes for

a massive desperate ... blah" over and over while half asleep in the ute and unable to see anything is quite fear inducing!

There was only minor scraping really with a slight dint in the front quarter panel and some paint removed around the rear wheel arch, so overall I was stoked that so little damage had been done. However, Andrew got to visit the officials for making that contact overtaking mid turn-9. It was already incredibly weird hearing the announcers who thought that I was driving.



For the last MX-5/RX-7 race, I jumped in to get a feel for the car in the really wet conditions on the A050s and also to wake up properly before the race. However only one other car showed up. So it was me versus a very fast turbo FD RX-7 in Race 4. It was a pretty fun experience when the RX-7 fell off the track and I nearly overtook him. Watching all the people along the pit wall having a laugh and cheering was awesome as the FD hurtled away down the straight.



For the 300 itself I jumped in first and the field was packed. I got some really good video as well. In the slippery conditions, I managed to fall off the track three times total and Andrew went off about four times. We qualified 20th, actually started about 22nd due to some people jumping the gun in the rolling start, and fought our way through to finish 11th outright. Amazingly with the bad conditions and 36 cars there were no massive accidents and only 9 cars failed to finish the race.

Massive thanks to Tim who was our entire pit crew, who refuelled us in the rain, carried a dodgy radio and listened for signals. We'll be back for more in 2011!

## MX-5 One-Two!



David Raddatz of *MX-5 Mania*, finally achieved his goal of winning the Wakefield 300, having previously finishing runner-up with Shane Otten in 2009 and DNF in 2008. This time out, he incredibly took out first place with Shane in "Goldie", and second place with Rob Hay in his twin sister car. David started the race in Goldie and swapped into Rob's car at the pit-stop. The two MX-5s crossed the line only 35 seconds apart after three hours and 122 laps, in a one-two finish that will be fondly remembered.



Check out the Wakefield Park website for an excellent report on the race: <http://bit.ly/hVsM1x>

# Hunter Chapter Goes Central West

• Words & Photos: Peter Hilkmann

• 2nd-4th October 2010



This was a weekend that was organised around food, wine and driving (wine and driving NOT at the same time of course), with mandatory stops for morning tea & lunch, and lots of nice twisty MX-5 roads in between, followed again of course with a "Happy Hour" and a good dinner in the evening.

With a convoy of 14 MX-5s, it was quite a sight for the locals up early enough to see it. In total we had 3 cars from Sydney, and 11 from the Hunter Chapter attend.

We started early at 7:30 am on the Saturday, with a nice country drive along some of the back farming roads between Maitland and Branxton. Then on to Denman and the Bylong Valley Way - a perfect MX-5 road - to Bylong for our first Morning Tea Stop.

After sharing some cake and bickies with fellow MX-5ers, we were on our way again.



We were now driving in one of the most picturesque valleys in the Hunter Valley, (or anywhere for that matter), on our way to Rylstone, where we were greeted by Franck and Marg from the Sydney Club. After a short introduction, it was on to Mudgee, as we were booked in for lunch at the **Blue Wren Winery**, followed by a bit of



socialising and wine tasting at several wineries. We were now ready for a little happy hour, followed by dinner at the **Oriental Hotel**, where everyone enjoyed a great meal with great company, and plenty to talk about things like "smoky tyres" ... and "slow 4x4 vehicles" going up "OUR" hill climb.

The night passes all too quickly, and before we know it, it's Sunday morning, and we are having breakfast and getting ready for the day ahead.

Today we leave at a more realistic time of 9:00 am, and head back to Rylstone via a different route, and then on to Sofala, for - yes, you guessed it - Morning Tea and a stroll through old Sofala. Walking through Sofala is like stepping back into the past, it's a place where time seems to have stood still for a hundred years or so.

Morning teas done, and we are on the road again. This time a great MX-5 road between Sofala and Bathurst, over the mountain range, and down to Bathurst, where our first stop (before Lunch) was MOUNT PANORAMA. We completed a quick (well not too quick) lap of the mountain, before heading to the RSL for lunch.





We arrive at the **Zig Zag Motel** in time for Happy Hour, before we are greeted in the motel's restaurant with a huge TV screen to watch the NRL Grand Final, and another fantastic meal.

Monday morning, and it is time to start heading home, but before we do, there are a couple of stops along the way.

We start with a little drive to Hartley Vale, where we encountered the mysterious case of the "Self Locking MX-5" (with the keys stuck in the car's ignition????). Thank goodness for the NRMA.

Next stop was the Zig Zag Railway for a ride on the old rail motor, a tour of the workshop and a "Photo Opportunity" with the Steam Train, and of course "Morning Tea".

After lunch was over it was back to business, a couple of laps of Mount Panorama, and a quick photo shoot, of 14 MX-5s hurtling down conrod straight (at 60 km/h) and then around the corner to head down pit straight for another **Q u i c k** lap.



It's now time to start our drive to Lithgow, where we had accommodation booked for the second night of our trip. We leave Bathurst and head east along the Great Western Highway, for approximately 30 km. Then turn right at Diamond Swamp Rd and head for Tarana, where we turn left at Hazel Grove Road, before continuing on to Lithgow. Travelling via Sodwalls and Lyell Reservoir. The highlight for me on this section of road must be the "BIG DIPPER". It must be quite scary for the uninitiated (i.e. my wife Maureen), when you are travelling at close to 100 km/h up a hill towards a crest, and then when you reach the crest, the road appears to disappear from beneath you, and all of a sudden you are heading down a 1 km long straight, with a couple of little dips at the bottom ... great fun!

Then it was off to Bilpin for Lunch, and a farewell to our friends from Sydney. After lunch we head for the Putty Road, for our final run home.

After travelling over 900 km on the weekend, everyone that came on this trip experienced at least one new road, on which they had never travelled before.



Yes it did rain for quite a bit of the weekend, but that did not matter, as the roads were great, the company was fantastic, and the food was first class. What more could you ask for on a long weekend driving with friends in your MX-5?

# Sydney Cruiser Runs

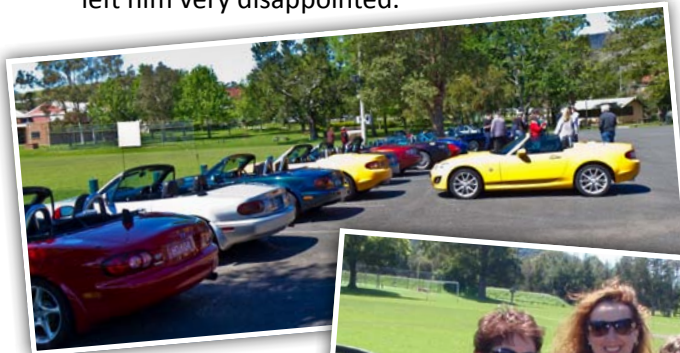
• Words: Kim & Peter Ranger, Lesa Bunn, Mark Garven

• Photos: Keith Monaghan & Peter Howe

## Land & Sea Run 17th October 2010

Well here we are back in familiar territory leading a run for the MX-5 Club. Today's run was an oldie but goodie and thankfully the weather was just perfect. There were lots of regulars and some new members on their very first run.

We started out from Heathcote Subway at 9:30am in glorious sunshine with 23 cars, and the Underwoods met up with us on the way. We ventured down the highway for a short while before taking the Old Princes Highway and joining up with Mount Ousley. We headed towards Wollongong then followed the highway to Albion Park ... where one of the boys in blue was waiting with his radar. He surely looked excited to see all our little sports cars but to no avail as we are all **Perfect MX-5 Drivers** adhering to the speed limit. We left him very disappointed.



Shortly thereafter we headed off on some country roads before meeting up with Macquarie Pass. We were very fortunate that the caravan in our way moved across so most of the cars had a nice run up The Pass. Then there was an even better run down Jamberoo Mountain Road before coming to Jamberoo for a regroup, chat and comfort stop. The new members seemed to be enjoying themselves and mixed in well.

Back on the road, we headed through Jamberoo onto Swamp Road (another great MX-5 road) before joining up with the highway, taking in the lovely coastal scenery. We turned off towards Gerringong and through to **Gerroa Boat Fisherman's Club** for a very enjoyable lunch and refreshments with spectacular views along Seven Mile Beach. Pam & Ray Estreich even managed to win a tray of prawns in the raffle.

## Hartley Daylight Saver Run 13th November 2010

The 13th November saw the start of our "Summer Daylight Saver" runs. A chance to get together in the later part of the day and enjoy a leisurely afternoon drive finishing with dinner together.

28 members including 2 new members joined the run. From a start at McGraths Hill, the run headed off via some well known MX-5 roads through Wilberforce and East Kurrajong and then onto Lithgow via Bells Line of Road. The run took a short deviation through the back of Hartley before arriving at our dinner destination at **Talisman Woodfired Pizza Café** at Hartley.

The weather was perfect on leaving Hartley but started to rain slightly heading up Victoria Pass, by Mt Victoria it was obvious roofs were going to be needed. By Blackheath you couldn't see the road in front of you – such a contrast in a short distance.

Some members made a weekend of the run and stayed over in the Lithgow area to discover the area further and others travelled great distances to join us.





## Highlands to Surf Daylight Saver Run 18th December 2010

What is it with the weather these days? Our "daylight saving" run down to Austinmer delivered all four seasons in the one afternoon! Anyone would think we were in Melbourne, or maybe it's just La Niña doing her thing?!

Anyway, most people seemed to experience a torrential downpour on their way to our meeting point at Pheasants Nest. Fortunately, by the time we arrived, the sky had cleared, although the wind was still quite strong. So 38 members set off down the old Hume Highway in 22 cars with tops optimistically lowered.



As we skirted the back of Mittagong, the sky started to darken and the wind started to howl. It's always a good drive along the back roads to Robertson, but all the debris being blown down from the trees and lying on the road was a bit unnerving. At one point the convoy had to halt so that we could move a large gum branch that was blocking the road. Just as well it hadn't fallen on top of an MX-5 - even one of those new-fangled folding hardtops would have been in trouble. Soon after another halt was called so we could put our tops up as the rain started to fall. But by the time we arrived in Robertson, the skies were clear again!



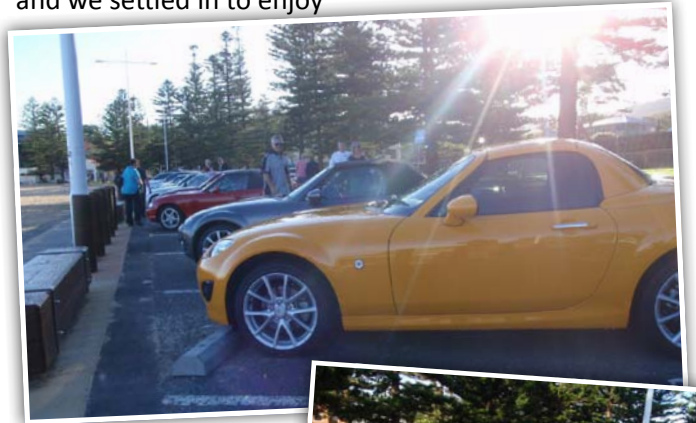
Although we'd let the café in Robertson know to expect a horde of MX-5ers, somehow the word hadn't been passed on to the girls working that afternoon. Luckily there weren't any other

customers at that point, and the girls did a great job organising coffees, hot chocolates, scones and banana bread. By the time we were ready to leave, the weather was looking quite promising, so most decided it was safe to drop the tops again.

From Robertson, we had a largely unimpeded run down Macquarie Pass. What a great road it is when you're *not* stuck behind a Camry. It's just *made* for MX-5s. At the bottom of the Pass, we took the back roads rather than going through Albion Park. A bit of water over a causeway provided some excitement - especially as we were cheered on by a bunch of locals who just happened to be parked nearby. Luckily, we all made it through, so no embarrassing moments for lowered MX-5s. Then another tree branch across the road which needed to be cleared.

After a short run up the freeway, we exited to take the loop up through Mt Kembla and Mt Kiera. This road has only re-opened fairly recently after being closed for a couple of years due to subsidence. Good news for MX-5ers! Once again, we basically had the road to ourselves, so a nice run through some twisty bits was enjoyed by all. Then back onto the freeway for a cruise up to Austinmer.

We finished the run in the park behind Austinmer Beach. By this time, we had an absolutely perfect summer's evening. Picnic gear emerged from boots, and we settled in to enjoy



each other's company against the gorgeous backdrop of the beach, a calm ocean and the setting sun reflected against some high cloud. Magic! Who would have known it had been so windy and wet up in the highlands just a couple of hours earlier?



# Christmas Party at Canada Bay Club

• Words & Photos: Glenn Thomas & Lesa Bunn

• 21st November 2010

The 2010 MX-5 Club of NSW Christmas Party was held at the **Canada Bay Club** on the shores of the Parramatta River at Five Dock. The glorious weather on the day offered our Club members with a great opportunity to take advantage of the retractable roof and enjoy the sunshine en route. Plenty of parking was a prelude to how smooth the rest of the day would run.

Thanks to the efforts of your Club's committee and friends - in particular, Lesa Bunn - the day ran like a finely tuned MX-5! I don't know how she does it but

Lesa just keeps on finding the ways, venues, and themes to make our events fun.

The gathering members were welcomed to the Canada Bay Club all decked out in a friendly Christmas theme with a big Christmas tree at the entrance and table centre decorations that highlighted the volunteers' caring touch. After being

welcomed and given a Lucky Door Prize ticket, guests were soon mingling; catching up with old friends and meeting new ones while enjoying a cool drink and some tasty finger food – just enough to keep the hunger in check.

Once all of the guests had arrived, seats were taken just in time for the traditional entrée of prawns and oysters - well, it is an Australian Christmas! It was fairly obvious, from the constant din of the voices, occasionally broken by laughter that everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves. At this point Lesa addressed the group and outlined the order of the day; food, awarding concours trophies, more food, lucky door prizes, even more food and some dancing to burn off the calories! Entertainment was provided by the very energetic Paul and Melissa from *Double Trouble* with Melissa putting most of us to shame with her ability to move around the stage effortlessly despite being many months pregnant.

The Club President took this opportunity not only to

welcome the guests but to specifically recognise the contributions made by the committee members and the band of people who also assist the committee in making the Club successful and relevant for the members. Of particular note were the huge efforts of Stephen Carter and Cathie Curran in setting up the new Club online management system as well as super effort of the former President, Sean MacCormaic.

The meals were great and plentiful and no one complained of not having enough choice, quality or quantity. Our Club Captain, Mark Garven then began the eagerly awaited proceedings ... who will win the coveted concours trophies? Well we had to wait just a little longer while Mark recognised the fine efforts of the organisers and judges that made the concours de elegance competition work. Well earned recognition was given to the Club members who contributed their time to perform the critical judging duties; a hard job well done! And here are the winners ...



## Concours de Elegance Awards

- Best Standard NA - Colin Caldwell
- Best Standard NB - Luke Kovacic
- Best Standard NC - Dianne Byers
- Best Modified NA - Mark Sando
- Best Modified NB - Luke Kovacic (Sole entrant, also judged with Standard NB)
- Best Modified NC - Phil Ashton
- Best Custom NA - *no competitor*
- Best Custom NB - Jeff Swords (Sole entrant, also judged with Standard NB)
- Best Custom NC - Annette & Gary Moss
- **Best Overall** - Colin Caldwell
- People's Choice - Dianne Byers





# Membership Update

• Words: Stephen Carter & Bryan Shedden

## New Members

A warm welcome is extended to 37 new members who joined our ranks in October-December 2010:

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Malcolm Cancian | Peter Kemp       |
| Anne Culloden   | Debra Webb       |
| Ian Culloden    | Steven Williams  |
| Grant Freeman   | Cameron Williams |
| Timothy Heppell | Rob Williams     |
| Brad Johnson    | Denise Rideout   |
| Clare Hall      | Mark Rideout     |
| Tony Pollard    | Rob Stafford     |
| Damian Shaw     | Jeff Stone       |
| David Spankie   | Jeff Piggott     |
| Sandra Wakeham  | Stephen Ingram   |
| Craig Hasler    | Peter MacDonough |
| Sean Dunkley    | Ross Green       |
| Paul Harrison   | Annie Taylor     |
| Michael Howard  | Steve Hudson     |
| Sandra Howard   | Norm Gens        |
| Chris Hundleby  | Monika Conca     |
| Kate McLennan   | Stuart King      |
| Jo Kemp         |                  |

## Show & Shine Awards

- Best Show & Shine - Dave Perin
- Second Place - Frank Verheyen
- Third Place - Greg & Lesa Bunn

The day wore away as people with full bellies and lots of trophies, finally tired by dancing through much of the day, gradually departed one by one. It was a day well lived and well enjoyed by 86 members!

The guy in the red suit never showed up but excitement rose when it was realised that Keith Monaghan had a new addition to his MX-5 family and it was off to the carpark and bonnet up to check out his new NB.



## Membership Count

We currently have 457 financial members and another 142 members who are unfinancial as of 31st October 2010. Please renew so that you may continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, including receipt of **Club Torque** magazine.

## Membership Renewals

If you intend to renew your club membership and have not received a 2010/11 Renewal Advice, please phone Ken Liston on 02 9872 1639, or email Stephen Carter at membership@mx5.com.au.

## Club Events Calendar

All members are encouraged to make the most of their membership by participating in the huge variety of club activities. Please check the **Club Events Calendar** on our website, and I'm sure you will find something you will enjoy. You can use this shortcut: <http://bit.ly/efLNED>

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Summer cruise runs  | • BreakFast Club runs |
| • Midweek runs        | • Coffee & Lies meets |
| • Weekend runs        | • Dinner meetings     |
| • Driver training day | • BBQs                |
| • Club trackdays      | • Dyno Day            |
| • Supersprints        | • Tech Night          |

# Canberra Chapter

• Words & Photos: Damon Muller

## Orroral Valley Picnic 17th October 2010

Three cars gathered in the heart of the military-industrial complex in Russell, under the benevolent gaze of the disembodied head of Buggs Bunny. Not exactly a strong turn-out for a run but certainly a workable number. Other than being a little windy, it was a perfect day for a drive – crisp and clear, and we were going to make the most of it. It's likely, however, that the weather the previous day, when it actually *snowed* in the morning in parts of Canberra, had put people off.



We had a surprisingly good run down the Cotter Road and along Paddys River Road. Apart from a handful of cyclists, a couple of slow utes (and one very quick ute), we more or less had the road to ourselves. As we passed through Tharwa we picked up another MX-5 (prearranged, not serendipitously), and headed to Honeysuckle Creek. The scenery on the run was amazingly green (for Canberra). You could see the effects of all the rain we've had recently.

Due to logistical issues, the originally planned BBQ at Honeysuckle Creek had become a picnic at Honeysuckle Creek. Unfortunately the road to Honeysuckle Creek was closed (probably due to the aforementioned rain), affording us the obligatory U-turn for the run. Several people suggested we keep going to the picnic site at Orroral Valley, so we turned around and kept driving. So the BBQ at Honeysuckle Creek eventually evolved into the picnic at Orroral Valley, but that was good too.

Unfortunately no one bothered to tell me that Orroral Valley was spelled like that (in my head it was spelled starting with an A), so driving straight past the turn-off afforded me the second U-turn of the run (just me – everyone else knew how to spell). And after a couple more kilometres of road we came to a cute little picnic



ground that had originally been the site of another space tracking station. Like Honeysuckle Creek, all that was left to see was a number of large concrete foundations and the occasional information board. Still, it was a nice spot, with picnic tables and a good view of the surrounding hills.

The six of us ate our lunches and had a bit of a natter, but it was a bit on the chilly side so didn't loiter too long. Two of the cars went back via Tidbinbilla for a coffee at the **Moonrock Café**, and the other two of us headed back home via the Tharwa Bridge.

For anyone interested in going on the drive themselves, the route can be seen on Google Maps here: <http://bit.ly/cHnz0C>





## Christmas Lunch at *Grazing* 19th December 2010

It is universally agreed that the highlight of December's crowded social calendar in our nation's capital is the annual Christmas lunch of the Canberra Chapter of the MX-5 Club of NSW. More popular than the Prime Minister's Christmas BBQ, and slightly less awkward than public service departmental Christmas parties, the Chapter Christmas lunch attracts members from as far afield as Tuggeranong to the south and Belconnen to the North. Some members had to drive for as long as 20 minutes to arrive at the meeting point in Russell, from where Paul led the gathered throng to Bungendore for coffee and then through to Gundaroo for lunch at ***Grazing Restaurant*** by 12:30pm.



Running fashionably late, my mobile rang at 12:10pm to let me know that said gathered throng had just arrived at our lunch venue as Rachael and I were departing Canberra. The well-stocked wine cellar of *Grazing* helped prevent open rebellion, and we eventually arrived more or less on time.

By the time we had gotten ourselves settled, the staff at *Grazing* started bringing out the first of entrées. Members sat down to find a package of home-made MX-5-themed gingerbread biscuits awaiting them, courtesy of a working party the previous day.

The menu for the lunch involved a choice of crispy fried quail or pork croquette for the entrée, chicken sausages or cod & ocean trout for mains, and dark chocolate *delice* or *crème brûlée*. None it of particularly Christmasy, admittedly, but delicious nonetheless. Those of you who are now cursing your poor fortune for not living in Canberra may eventually get to sample this fare for yourselves, as *Grazing* is one of the proposed ***Natmeet 2012*** venues.



After dinner concluded, we had some

acknowledgements of the members who had helped out during the year and presentations of tokens of appreciation (a nice bottle of red). This year, the following members either organised runs or helped out in some other concrete ways:

- Paul Beerworth
- Greg and Pat Rooke
- Malcolm Bernhardt
- Roger Textor
- Ian and Barbara Leyton-Grant
- Norm and Roz Barker
- Peter and Lia Battison

Finally, but by no means leastly, it was my pleasure to announce the Chapter member(s) and motorsport member of the year. This year our motorsport member of the year was Paul Beerworth, for his achievements competing in motorkhana hosted by the MG Club. The members of the year were Bob Judd and Bricet Kloren for their ongoing involvement of the club motoring and social events (including making the aforementioned gingerbread biscuits). All of the recipients received stylish custom trophies. Each of these



awards was well and truly deserved, and hopefully communicates to these members how much I as convenor appreciate their support.



And just as a final personal note, I'd like to thank Pat Rooke for her wonderful stewardship of the Canberra Chapter for the last few years. Hers are big shoes to fill (especially her racing shoes – but I'm not even going to attempt to fill those!), however I shall do my best!

# Hunter Chapter

• Words & Photos: Phil Mayo

## Bob's Port Stephens Bash 21st November 2010

Eleven cars headed out from our Beresfield BP meeting point to Morpeth and over the Hunter River bridge to cruise the farming flats turning at Woodville through the farm land to Seaham. We then headed east via Itala Road where the Ringwood Racing Circuit is to be built, stopping at the **Medowie Macadamia Nut Farm** to test run their new café for morning tea. Afterwards we drove to Salamander and followed Port Stephens shoreline around to Nelson Bay, then onto the eastern seaboard to Fingal Bay for a great seafood lunch at **Fingal Sports Club**. People yarned on into the afternoon and made their own way home after a great 140 km run.



## Christmas Picnic 19th December 2010

Ten decorated MX-5s arrived at 4pm at our usual Beresfield meeting point, their occupants all with a variety of Christmas hats. Debra Webb had Santa as her navigator in her NB. He even had his sack taking up the area behind the seats, he did not say much - probably stuffed with good cheer, but he had a smile on his face! He was probably encouraged by Mark and Lynda Gray's Christmas carols on the CD player that this was going to be a good night.



We headed off through Minmi to cruise through Warners Bay foreshore, up through Charlestown to Merewether Beach and onto the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore cruising grounds. Funny, there did not seem to be many of the on-show street machines and doof-doof Hiluxes dressed in Christmas livery - it must be an MX-5 thing. Crossing over the Stockton Bridge we had a fabulous vista of the afternoon sun shining through the storm clouds that were building over the sea and out over the mountains to the west.



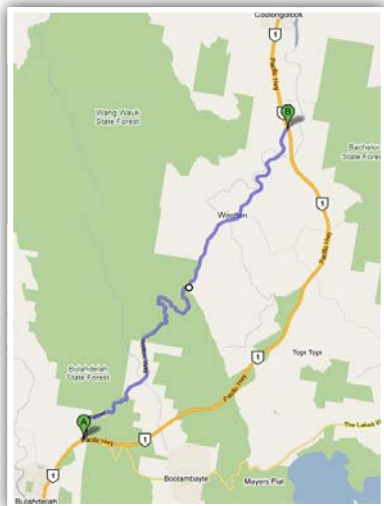
Our picnic venue was a picnic shelter on the Stockton Breakwall with a stunning view over Newcastle City and through the heads out the harbour entrance. There was even a ship entering port 100 m from us. The champagne was opened and shared as we had dinner watching the storms passing by us even casting a rainbow that ended 50 m away. A competitive game of bocce decided who would win the bottles of wine before the setting sun had us packing up. We were able to watch the lights of Newcastle decorate the twilight before the first shower had us rushing to get the roofs up before saying goodbyes and heading home. A memorable afternoon in our MX-5s.

# Great MX-5 Roads: Bulahdelah Gap

• Words & Photos: Michael Soulos

When I was an undergraduate the most notorious stretch of road in NSW was the Bulahdelah Gap, an obstacle that had to be overcome to reach the “Open Road” for the charge from the Hastings River Bridge

to the Queensland border. Back then it was a single two way road with a reputation for carnage until the RTA completed a road around the Gap.



In 2000 the Bulahdelah Gap was bypassed and the infamous ribbon of winding tarmac that snaked its way through 50 changes of direction was all but forgotten.

The RTA had abandoned glorious sections of wide and divided road, built well cambered corners and installed Armco fencing and cement barriers leaving behind the “Nurbushring” for your driving pleasure.

If you love repetitive long sweeping corners on undulating roads then the Bulahdelah Gap is *Jinba-ittai*. Where else can you get a quiet road with Armco fences for those drivers who over cook a corner. A roadway with Jersey barriers to protect you from oncoming cars that might take the wrong line. The Nurbushring



winds its way for 15 fantastic kilometres, rising and falling 200 metres twice in the process. For your enjoyment it has a wide looping switchback with cambered shoulders not

dissimilar to *Das Karussell* in the Eifel Mountains.

The Nurbushring is a short 2.5 hour drive up the highway from Hornsby. Leave home early and plan to have breakfast at the **Mountain View Motel Café** in Bulahdelah, a Route 66 style roadside diner with large black and white wall posters of departed movie stars that offers hearty country meals with great service and hospitality. Mien Host is Patrick Bramston, a member

of our Hunter Chapter, a track aficionado and the master of his training track now called the Wootton Way.



In October, I drove the Nurbushring with a few Breakfast Club friends including a run out and back with Patrick, the Ringmeister, a run I will not forget in a hurry. On the way out I was chuffed, an open road with Patrick a fixture in my mirrors. We drove in unison over hill and dale roaring around fast left then right turns on a mixture of four, three and two lane roads for an incredible 10 minutes to the farmlands near Wootton.

A few kilometres into the run back my mirrors cleared. Patrick had slipped past. I hung on as best I could without ever looking like getting around him. I was amazed at the rush and my tacho readings (unwilling to glance to the right side of my instrument panel) and the sheer ease at which the bitumen raced up to meet my MX-5 as corner after corner whipped past in a sky blue, green and brown blur in my peripheral vision as I concentrated on following Patrick's lines.

With the exception of the carousel type switchback over the top of the northern ridge, all the corners induce you to relax and go with the flow of sweeping left and right changes of direction as you drive your MX-5 closer to its potential than you may be accustomed too. The Wootton Way is a near perfect road for your MX-5.

A great thing about the Nurbushring is that it costs nothing. To top off your day there is a bonus of a scenic drive home via Booral, Stroud Road and Dungog to Paterson or Morpeth, or the vineyards in the Lower Hunter for lunch if you are not in a rush to get back to the city. The Nurbushring is one of the great MX-5 roads in NSW that is always ready to open up for your MX-5 at whatever pace you feel most comfortable.





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



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



Unit 2/8a Kookaburra Road  
Hornsby Heights NSW  
(02) 9482 3238



20 Joseph Street  
Belconnen ACT  
(02) 6251 3911