

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE MAZDA MX-5 CLUB OF NSW INC.

club TORQUE

WINTER 2021

“I belatedly heeded
my doctor’s advice to
“... leave the roof up
in winter!”

IN THIS EDITION

Ken Keeling talks about his long road from
motorcycles to MX-5 Nirvana

Two-way radios

NA Versus NC

Outgoing and incoming Presidents messages

Motorsport and more

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CANBERRA CHRISTMAS IN JULY

28 August 2021

Story: Rod Nicholas

Images: Rod Nicholas and Lili Chi



The latest Covid-19 restrictions and general uncertainty about travelling to regional centres had led to a rethink. A jiggle to the plans was needed. The original plan was to travel to Galong, an hour and a half down the road, enjoy a good Christmas lunch, stay over at St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, and take a leisurely trip home. But the appetite for a regional overnight trip just wasn't there, so I sat down, adjusted the thinking cap and got on the phone.

Forget Galong, I thought, at least for this year. Think 'local club'. Think 'a Chrissy-style lunch'. Think 'a nice little run to get members in the mood'. Think 'lunch with friends'. Think 'bon-bons and Christmas raffles'.

And so, The Clubhouse in Kaleen came to our rescue offering a traditional Christmas lunch and a private room at short notice. Lunch, tick. I prepared a decent run, around 150 km over two hours

on mostly rural (and occasionally narrow) roads. The roads, usually quiet, we're in good nick despite the recent rains, and presented opportunities for a good fast fun or – depending on the registered drivers – a pleasant weekend drive in the country.

Registrations grew pleasingly as the day drew near. But so too did the COVID concerns. And – if that wasn't bad enough the weather continued its cruddy pattern – cold, windy and wet. Car by car members withdrew from the run while promising to turn up to lunch ready to party.

Saturday arrived and I still had (I hoped) four cars (down from more than a dozen) ready to follow my lead on the proposed run, so I took the short drive to our start point in the carpark of The Baker in Sutton (great coffee, great pies). I was early, even by my standards, but all four cars were already in the carpark, caffeine-fuelled and ready.

Confident no one else was coming, we headed off into the drizzle a little early. From our starting point, we headed to Murrumbateman along the Murrumbateman Road, travelled on to the outskirts at

Yass, and turned west towards Wee Jasper.

A few extra potholes had made their appearance since my recce run a few days earlier, thanks to a week of wet weather, but traffic was sparse and the rain kindly held off. Wee Jasper Road down into the Murrumbidgee River Valley, and the crossing at Teamas Bridge, was in its usual good form.

A cut back to Canberra via Mountain Creek Road took us past green (but soggy) hillsides followed by a quiet mosey on past the emerging suburb of Whitlam as we made excellent time to meet up again at our lunch spot, just a little early.

Not long later, 34 members were busily creating a joyous noisy hum in the Clubhouse. Catch-ups were happening, gossip was exchanged, updates on what everyone was up

to in the COVID-restricted times were echoing across the room. Yes, the weather was ... wintry, but the friendship was warm, and the lunch was welcome.

The noise dropped to a light rumble as the tucker was tucked into, and the odd drink was drunk but it sparked up a few notches as the bon-bons were pulled and the 'lucky door' raffle began. With as many prizes on offer as tickets in the tin, the chances of a win were pretty good. And so it was; winners were grinners all around the room. The afternoon was well drawing to

a close by the time the last guest left and the brief clean-up began.

As I pulled the tinsel from the Christmas tree my assistant coordinator - the ever lovely Maryanne - said everyone seemed to have had a fun time. 'My thoughts exactly' I replied.

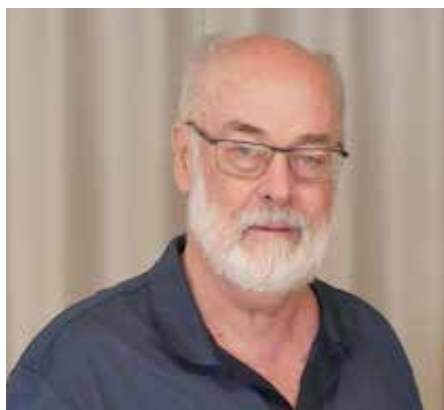
Rod Nicholas, ~~Run~~ Fun Leader





RETIRING PRESIDENT

Words: Keith Monaghan
Image: Keith Monaghan



This is my last magazine report as president of the club. I've been a member of the committee since 2011 and president since 2016. In this time, I've seen a great deal of changes to the club which have been positive.

During my tenure on the committee, I've been involved in and seen the start of the Illawarra chapter, the RPM chapter, the Mid North Coast chapter and the South Coast chapter.

During this time, the membership of the club has risen from 566 to where it stands today at around 1090. With this expansion the chapters have become increasingly important in running the club.

If we didn't have this decentralised event management situation, I feel the committee would have collapsed under the load. In saying this I'd like to thank all the volunteers that have taken on the convener and other roles within the chapters.

The recent times have been the most difficult for the club with COVID-19 all but shutting down any activities that the club had wanted to do.

With the current vaccination programme, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel and have started some events. This will allow our members to get together with their friends at social runs and events and talk about our favourite subject the Mazda MX-5.

I would like to thank the various committee members and chapter officials that have helped me in my roles on the committee for the last 10 years. These people are volunteers and give their time to make our club the great one it is. To all the members I thank you for your support and participation, without this the club wouldn't be what it is today.

As COVID-19 restrictions lift this club will quickly come back to where it was and go forward from there.

I'm retiring from the committee but not the club and wish the new committee all the best for the future.

I still have my latest MX-5 and another toy I plan to use as much as possible. I hope to see you at an event in the future.

Keith Monaghan
Outgoing President



HARRINGTON VIA JOHNS RIVER RUN

28 April 2021

Words: John Harrison
Images: John Harrison

We gathered at Oliver's in the Port Macquarie Service Centre on a sunny warm day for a midweek run down to Harrington on the Mid North Coast. It was a pleasure getting out with fellow enthusiasts to enjoy a top-down run in the open air.

The run had attracted a large group of club members and we even had the pleasure of the President, MX-5 Club New South Wales; Keith, who was holidaying in the local district, for a greet and chat before we set off on our way. Jane and Greg were the run leaders in their MX-5 GT RF, Chris

and Mick ND, Oli ND, Peter ND, Keiran Heritage special edition NB, Judith and John NC and Pam and Allen sweep car in their ND. Off we swept, with the tops down onto the Pacific Highway bound for morning tea.

First stop was Rosie's Cafe John's River; it had been quite a while since we had last visited and were pleased to see that the place still offered decent food and drinks and of course coffee! The pleasant atmosphere was very conducive to convivial conversations. Eventually we finished and it was back in the car for the next leg of our run down to Harrington.

The weather was still fine and quite warm which made the

trip down as pleasant as Pacific Highway driving can be. There seemed to be large numbers of heavy vehicles on the road and their size, appreciated from the low height of the MX-5, especially when one occasionally passes! The trip down to the Harrington turn-off safely negotiated and great care taken in ensuring that the posted



limit observed, especially when it changes to a 100kph zone prior to the turn off - as the road is speed monitored.

We had time before lunch and continued on the Harrington Road to the Captain Cook Bicentennial Park in Harrington. The road to the Bicentennial Park was interesting and at one point quite exciting, as it climbed steeply and then fell away sharply so that for an instant, from the low slung MX-5, it disappeared from view as the car's nose pointed up in the air and then downwards. I wondered what it would be like taken at speed? The view from the park was remarkably interesting showing the exceptionally long break-wall and one of the entrances to the sea of the Manning River; that has silted up over time. It was hard to believe that Harrington in the late 1800's was the site of one of the largest wooden shipbuilding centres in the Southern Hemisphere and this continued well into the 1900's. The Manning River was also one of the major shipping transport corridors connecting towns such as Taree and Wingham to the rest of the world. Little of the river traffic remains today.

The park provided an interesting opportunity for photographers and the photographs Peter and Keiran took are on the MX-5 Mid North Coast website.

After the stop, we went back to Harrington and then to our lunch stop which was the Harrington Irish Pub. One of the attractions of the eating place is the extensive views of the Manning River from the windows of the dining area. The food and choice are always agreeable and lunch became a

leisurely affair with lively chit chat and the world's problems solved.

We decided a pleasant end to the day would be to take in the magnificent view of the river and countryside from the Crowdy Head Lighthouse, which is a small, squat light with extensive views to Diamond Head and a panoramic view out over Crowdy Bay National Park. This was the official end of our most enjoyable run which combined great fellowship, extensive scenery, a variety of eating experiences, an interesting drive and a glimpse into the history of the region. All from the comfort of our MX-5s.

Thanks to the club's coordinators and route planners Allen and Greg. Also thanks to Peter and Keiran who took photographs of the day.

Of course the day would not have been so enjoyable without the participation of our club members.

Although the run had officially ended it's hard to keep good people down. We decided the trip back home would be via the Taree turn off along the Landsdowne Road then back to Port Macquarie.

Safe and happy MX5'ing.





NATMEET 2022 CANCELLED

Words: Wes Hill
Image: Stock footage

It is with sadness that I advise you all the recommendation for cancelling NatMeet 2022 was discussed and endorsed by the Club Committee at the September meeting.

This decision has not been taken lightly – indeed the go/no go decision has been delayed for as long as possible in the hope that things would normalise but given the virulent COVID Delta variant and its impact on all our lives, making a return to normality is becoming an extremely lengthy process.

This is worsened by the imposition of strong quarantine requirements by several state Premiers making it extremely difficult for potential attendees to plan future interstate travel.

Wesley Hill - NatMeet 2022 Chair
natmeet@mx5.com.au



The Hunter Valley, NSW



Words: Andrew Lord

Images: Andrew Lord & Jason Brown

A perennial favorite on the calendar, the Breakfast Club annual February run to Berry did not disappoint.

A hardy band of travellers met at Heathcote and huddled over their coffees, watching the rain gently patter on their canvas roofs. With spirits a little dampened, the group mounted up and headed down the Old Princes Highway with a degree of caution due to the slippery conditions. They need not have worried. Before long, the clouds parted to reveal a sea of...cyclists. Seemingly always encountering them on blind corners, the group kept a steady pace to ensure everyone enjoyed their early morning ride or drive.

After picking up our Canberra correspondent in Appin, the group sampled the sublime Broughton Pass before taking the fast Macarthur Drive to Picton Road. This section took us to one of two special stages for the day. The descent from Picton Road into Mount Kembla is a challenge and not for the faint of heart. Slippery at all times of the year, the narrow windy road, perennially shaded by wet sclerophyll is a brilliant challenge early on a Sunday morning. The council is also gradually resurfacing this road, so its quality has improved greatly and is well worth an explore as an alternate route to the Leisure Coast.

After catching their breath outside the Mount Kembla Hotel (necessary for lunch with great food and even better staff), the group continued down the highway to Albion Park where they spliced off to sample the delightful Jamberoo Road before taking on the Saddleback Challenge. To the uninitiated, the challenge on Saddleback Mountain is not maintaining a fast pace on a challenging road, it is maintaining focus on a challenging road in the face of one of the most spectacular vistas on the planet. Indeed, despite the temptation to blast through the sweeping bends, this was one of the slowest sections of the day as drivers paused to drink in the wonder of where the green,

rolling pastures meet the sapphire of the sea.

After the gob smacking wonder of Saddleback, the group undertook the short schlep to Berry and indulged in a hearty breakky at one of our sentimental favorites - The Garden. After not visiting for years, the group agreed it was great to breakfast in the relaxed atmosphere supplied by the beautiful surroundings, friendly staff, and top-notch produce.

Friendships cemented and world problems solved, the group decamped and headed off to the realities of their Sunday afternoons.



RPM CHAPTER TO MAYFIELD GARDENS

28 April 2021

Words: Tammie Hotz
Images: Graham & Gillian Fletcher

The alarm sounded at 5:30am on Saturday 22 of April. It was one of those mornings you would rather stay snuggled in the warmth of your favorite doona after a night of wild stormy weather and heavy rain. In true RPM spirit, not to let the weather put a downer on our day, we arrived at Glenbrook at 6:30 to meet other fellow RPM'ers and prospective "Newby" members to start our journey towards Oberon.

Tops down we set off over the mountains at 7am - zoom zooming past Blue Mountains Mazda with

craned necks hoping to catch a preview glimpse of the RF. After banter, about who wants one and who cannot have one, we motored on too Little Hartley for Morning Tea.

After a cuppa and cake we set off nine cars present to our next destination "Mayfield Gardens". A light mist of rain and a crisp breeze greeted us on arrival, but a hot coffee soon hit the spot and we were ready to start our journey through thirty six of the 130 acres of private gardens owned by the Hawkins family.

The most breathtaking gardens ever seen. A complimentary bus ride begins. The Chapel, perched on the highest point of

the gardens, makes you feel like you are in the clouds looking down over the most magnificent gardens the type only ever seen in magazines.

We follow the path, from the Chapel to the Temple waterfall & Cascade, down to the walled



kitchen garden, past the chooks (pecking free range in the orchard), past Mayfield House, through the rose garden, up the creek garden path past the sunken gardens to the Grotto and then over the Stone Bridge we follow the path to Cooper Tree fountain and through the Water Garden Amphitheatre to our final destination the Kitchen Cafe for our catered lunch to finish off a great garden adventure with lovely friends.

RPM recommends a visit to Mayfield Gardens. It is truly breathtaking and a great drive, in your MX5, on the best winding roads in the Blue Mountains.

Note to self : If rain predicted, do not bother washing the car



Mayfield gardens, Heartley NSW

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'Tis the season, not quite



CHRISTMAS IN JULY, IN JUNE

30 June 2021

Story: Adele Weatherall
Images: Senia Gaunson

Bookings were made in February for our Christmas in July celebrations. Even then we had to settle for June as there were no vacancies for July. How fortuitous!

On Saturday 18 members arrived at the Robertson Hotel at midday,

enjoyed pre-lunch drinks by the open fire, before being served a three-course meal in our private room. At 2pm the phones started ringing and conversation stopped.

Gladys was announcing a lockdown for the Greater Sydney, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour Regions. Undeterred

most people stayed on for more mulled wine, coffee, tea and even more red wine beside the fire. Those who were organised even stayed overnight.

Next year we will have our annual Christmas in July in June!



wheels
T W E N T Y
21
CAR OF
THE YEAR

AN OLD MOTORCYCLIST'S LONG ROAD TO MX-5 NIRVANA

September 2021

1956 - in "going to town" riding gear - 1956 BSA 250cc C12

Words and photos: Ken Keeling

This is the story of one old man's love of nice machines that eventually led him to Nirvana – when he discovered MX5-ing. It is a rather long story, but it has taken me some seventy years to get there...

To really want to own an MX5 one needs to be interested in good machinery. And my interest in machines started in 1945 when a Lancaster bomber flew low right over our house in Griffith, NSW, at the end of "The War". I have later learnt that it was "G for George" (now in the Canberra War Memorial) doing a victory tour to celebrate the end of World War Two. So, it seems my affinity with

interesting machines started at the age of nine and has not yet faded some 76 years later.

By the time I was a sixteen year old teenager in 1952, Mazda was an American brand of domestic light bulb and there were no such things as MX5 cars as yet. But there were British sports cars and the MG TFs and MGAs seemed pretty nice and I set my long term target on eventually owning one of those. Even though I could drive the farm tractor and ute, I was too young to get a licence to drive, but I could ride my mate's motorbike on the farm - and my memory of that Lancaster had grown into a fascination with aircraft, which was constantly refreshed by the RAAF Wirraway and occasional Mustang planes that came out our

way on navigation exercises, using Barren Box Swamp as their turning point.

So, it was a natural progression that the first learner licences I got when I left school at the end of 1953 were for aeroplanes, then a motorbike and last of all, my car licence - I could legally fly a plane before I was eligible to get a vehicle licence. My interest in bikes and planes has since lasted many decades.

I learnt to ride a motorcycle around Xmas 1953, on a friend's 1949 Triumph Sprung-Hub 3T. But, working on my father's farm at Hanwood, near Griffith, for "ten bob a week and keep," before I could buy anything in the way of transport I had to wait until I

decided farming was not for me and had got a job in town that paid proper money. It was mid-1955 before I had accumulated enough money to buy a dilapidated, rigid frame, 1949 BSA C11 250cc, which proved to be a mistake. The C11 proved to be a cantankerous and unreliable little thing. But it alerted me to how unreliable post-war English machinery was - and taught me how to work on engines. Six months of trying to cajole it into reliability proved more than long enough and I got rid of it - traded-in on a brand new 'bike. Another BSA and another 250, a newly released 1956 C12 and, as I eventually discovered to my sorrow, yet another mistake!

Despite being reasonably reliable and, with its' swing-arm suspension, comfortable, the C12 struggled to maintain the "mile

a minute" cruising speeds of my mates on their "big" 500cc AJS and Matchless bikes. There were also a couple of 650cc "Gold Flashes", one Tiger One Ten and a Road Rocket around, but they were usually well over the horizon by the time I was off the centre-stand.

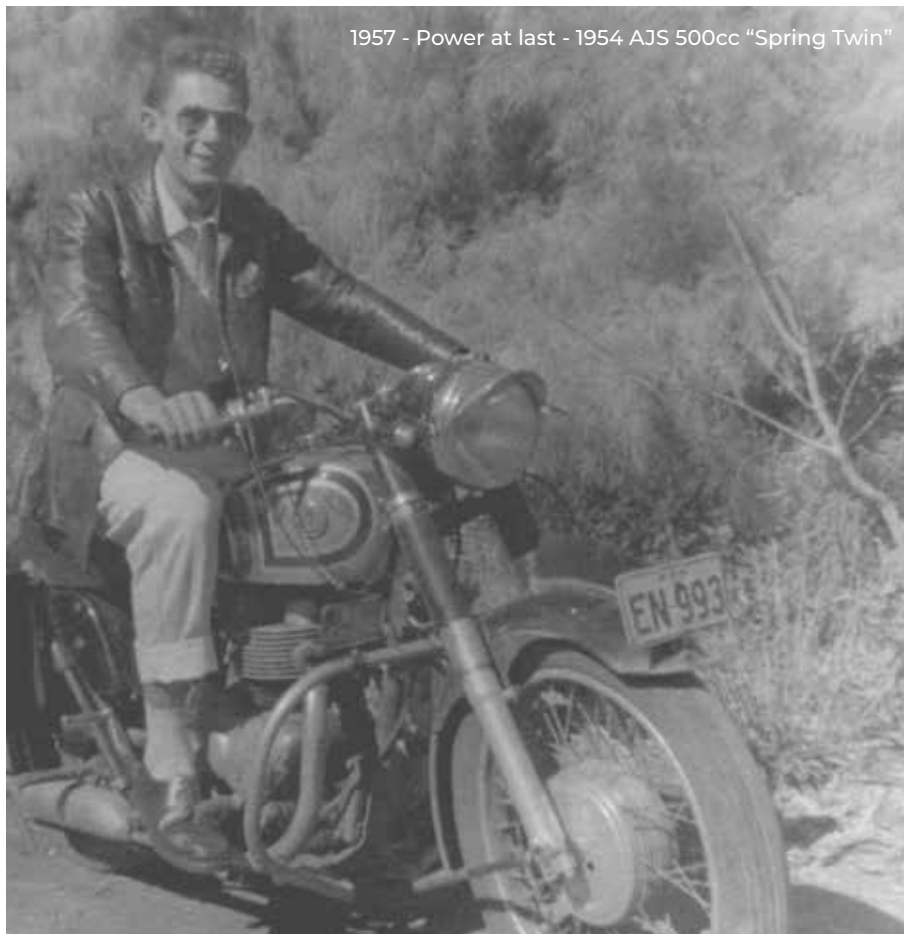
But, on the way to the Bathurst races on Good Friday, 1957, attempting to keep up with "the big boys" my little C12 expired of a seized piston, I left the bike with a farmer and hitched a pillion ride to and from the races. The C12 was in due course repaired but I realised it was time to get with the strength and move up to a "big bike" - my 1956 250cc BSA morphed into a 1954 AJS 500cc "Spring Twin".

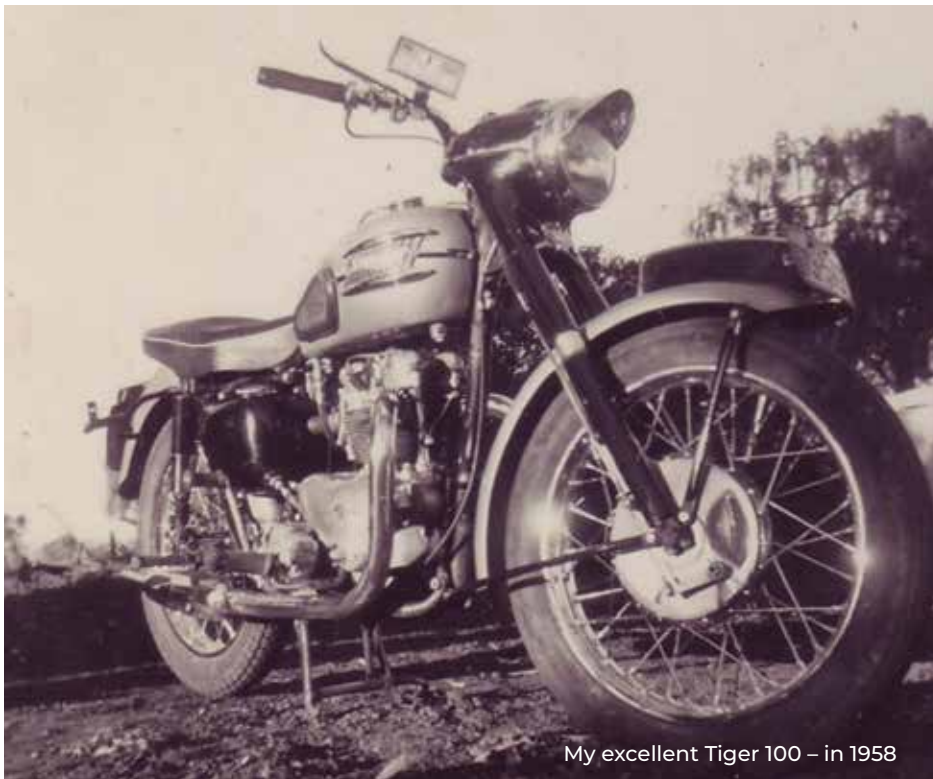
With my power upgrade, I could generally keep up on the "Ay-Jay" and it had the added advantage of

continuously waterproofing my right flying boot with a gentle but steady stream of oil emanating from the generator seal. The generator retainer bolts stubbornly proved unwilling to stay tightened, the downside being that when it came properly loose, the lights eventually went out - which was quite disconcerting when well away from town out on a dirt road at night! Once, far from home, was enough of that trick so, in early 1958, the AJS Twin was traded on a brand new "Trumpy", an all alloy 1957 500cc Triumph Tiger 100 - at that time nobody in my country town rode anything other than a British bike.

For months I "ran it in" carefully and obsessively, with colloidal graphite in the oil, running it up and down through the gears and slowly increasing the rev range and top speed. It rewarded me in due course with great reliability and, easily able to do "the Ton" (100mph), it was the quickest T-100 around, almost equal to my mate's T-110 and faster than some other local 650cc machines.

That alloy Tiger 100 proved to be one of the most enjoyable bikes I have owned - it was comfortable, fast, light and reliable, even if it did leak a little oil and vibrate a bit when travelling at 70mph (there were no 100kph speed limits on open roads back then). My Tiger 100 took me hunting in the western Riverina, exploring the South Coast and - over dirt roads in summer heat and, below freezing, into the snowy Victorian Alps in mid-winter - exploring almost all of South-Eastern NSW and Victoria.





My excellent Tiger 100 – in 1958

That bike was a revelation in that it taught me that the British did not understand how to make machinery that didn't leak oil. Nor did German machinery need constant maintenance to run well. But things change and when I had turned twenty-six, I was still not married, and my soul longed to see some adventure before I "settled down" and joined my married mates – generally (but not always) happily coping with their irritating ankle-biters under-foot. So, I sold-up, packed-up and departed my hometown at the beginning of 1963 for the last place left on earth that had not been totally explored – to Papua New Guinea. PNG really was the last unexplored wild place left on earth – some fifty years later they were still making "first contact" with small, isolated groups of tribesmen in the remote mountains.

Great stuff for an unattached young man with a desire to see his land – whilst such status lasted

Of course, as with all young men, I eventually developed an interest in female company, which is when I belatedly discovered that girls really do prefer to go out, especially when in a nice dress, in something more comfortable and waterproof than on a motorbike. So, inevitably, the Tiger 100 was traded on a Morris Minor 1000, ensuring both social happiness and continuing female company. The Morris was tarted up with a sporty Lukey muffler, twin SU carbys, Munroe-Wiley shockers and a fox-tail aerial. It handled reasonably well and sounded pretty good but, sadly, didn't go much faster.

twenty-three! I hadn't seen much of Oz, much less The World! So, I bought another twin AJS, this time a 1955 M20, which also leaked oil. I got rid of that and bought yet another M20 – I liked the sound and comfort of twin Ay-Jays. But inevitably, that one also leaked oil – everything British-made leaked oil! So, it came about that in late 1959 I started my "air-head addiction", an affliction that endured for some 60 years – I bought my first BMW "airhead" Motorrad, a nice "Earles fork" 1957 R50S.

But the call of two-wheeled freedom remained strong and, when I eventually realised that I was able to afford both two- and four-wheel conveyances, I gave in to that primal urge – much against everyone's advice that it was time for me to "grow up and settle down." Not yet! Jeez, I was only



But fifteen months of living in tent camps in malaria-mosquito infested jungle, mainly in New Britain, had given me just about enough of adventure. So, despite the novelty of bush living and opportunity to meet interestingly different people, I decided to reduce the “explorer” component of my life and get back into civilisation - where I could get decent food, cold beer and a bed with sheets on it. And, importantly, it was during this time in PNG that I crossed a mental boundary - and acquired my first sports car,

By mid-1964 I had found myself a new role, based in Port Moresby, where I luckily blundered upon and quickly acquired a nice 1962, T-120C Bonneville, unlike any “Trumpy” I had ever seen. It was a factory Clubman bike, with upswept pipes and was factory set up for club events with a detachable headlight and almost everything except the frame and some engine parts made of alloy.

But once back in Port Moresby I again got into “girlfriend mode” and, to accommodate those girls that didn’t “do motorbike,” I bought my first sports car, a 1962 Austin Healy Mk2A Sprite. Initially I kept the T-120C but eventually sold it as I was rarely using it and, whenever I wanted to go for a ride somewhere on a motorbike, I could always borrow a mate’s 650cc BSA Thunderbolt

The Sprite was a pleasant toy to drive on the better roads around Port Moresby and both almost as much fun as a bike and very much more acceptable to my female companions. It seems I was slowly learning!



Unsurprisingly, without wind-up windows, the Sprite’s side curtains leaked vigorously when in tropical rain. But it did prove that the car body was pretty watertight - when I inadvertently left it with the roof off whilst I was away having fun on the Thunderbolt, it received the full weight of a heavy tropical downpour.

When I returned and unhappily reviewed the result of my lack of foresight, I was somewhat dismayed to find that there was very little water leaking out from under the car, despite there being some three inches (75mm) of water in the footwells. Removal of the mats, carpet and rubber floor plugs allowed the accumulation of water to drain away, but it did smell pretty mouldy for some time until

it properly dried out enough for me to replace the floor coverings. Dried out, it still performed well enough to hold off three MG Bs all the way up “3-mile Hill”, despite it not being all that powerful or quick.

In mid-1965 the Honda agent in Port Moresby imported six “soft top” and three coupe models of the just released Honda S600 sports cars. And, to get them out the door and onto the road, they were interested in doing “deals.” As I had accumulated 5 months leave that I was about to take and would need a car in Australia whilst on leave, I decided to see what could be achieved with trading the A-H Sprite.

I managed to do a very good deal on a red S600 coupe - the Honda dealer would register it in PNG and then





ship it to Brisbane for me. I had at my cost to arrange the import/re-export carnet and then ship it back to PNG within 12 months. And I was able to keep using the Sprite for a month until I left to “go South” on leave. When I arrived in Brisbane in September the S600 coupe had been in storage for only a short time, waiting for me to arrange quarantine cleaning and customs clearance - and to present the all-important carnet. That all went quite smoothly, and as soon as I got it on the road, it proved to be not only fun transport but also a head-turner wherever I parked it. I think the fact that it revved freely to 14,000 rpm and needed about 8 or 9k revs before you let the clutch out was a contributing factor to that attention.

It also attracted the unnecessary attention of police in a car who

stopped me after I passed them parked on the other side of the road. It seems that they thought I had to be speeding because of the high revs sound. I explained why it needed revs to be driven, even at 30mph, sat them in the S600, pointed out the tachometer with a 14,000rpm red-line on it, then the OHC 4-carby engine, explained the chain drive rear suspension and showed them my PNG number plate and licence. They both seemed quite pleased to have had a good look at the car and almost friendly when they cautioned me to “keep the rev noise down” - if I could. In hindsight, I suspect that they really only wanted to look at a most unusual car for 1965.

That little car took me in comfort and with reliability from Brisbane to the NSW Riverina, over the mountains to the South Coast then

to Sydney and did the Putty Road in good style on the way back to Brisbane. And it went very well too: able to pull 10,300rpm in top gear on the flat (@ 10.095mph/k rpm = 104mph), it was more than fast enough, handled nicely and, with only 606ccs, was extremely economical. I began to realise that my little car was still quite unusual as, during my travels, I had seen only one other S600, a soft top in Sydney. When I took it in for a service to Bennett-Honda in Sydney, it caused quite some consternation - they wanted to know how I had got that car.

It was the only one in Australia! They had received a recent shipment of soft tops, but at that stage, no coupes. Being unique, it was little wonder my car attracted attention, not just because of the high revving engine sound.

By mid-1967 I was still in PNG, was recently married, and though the Sprite had morphed into the Honda S-600 coupe, I realised I had not lost the yen for two-wheel machines. That was when I discovered that someone had paid a shipping deposit on a new Norton 650SS and, now that it had arrived in Port Moresby, he could not produce the readies. The importers were most unhappy and wanted to get rid of it ASAP. Naturally, I made them what I thought was a very cheeky offer and was rather surprised when they accepted. But not as surprised as my new wife was when I rode it home and excitedly told her to come outside and see what I had - on her birthday! She said, "But I don't do motorbikes"! That was when, somewhere between my ears, the penny belatedly dropped, and I hastily retrieved and presented her with the real birthday present. The day (and the marriage) saved - but only just!

But by the end of 1967 the S600 was starting to show that the metal in it was never designed to resist the assault of the weak carbonic acid that formed when the crushed coral used to surface a lot of PNG roads gets wet. The mud then accumulates under the mudguards, no matter how diligent you try to clean it away. The S600 was a nice little car in the wrong place - in PNG there are a lot of coral surfaced roads, and it definitely rains a lot.

Luckily, there was a co-worker of mine who, despite the obvious signs of rust appearing on the mudguards, was very keen to own that car so it was sold to him. We replaced it with a new 1968 model

VW 1500 beetle - which I was told was a much more sensible car for a 31 year-old married man! Fortunately, I was still able to occasionally enjoy an enthusiastic "drive" up the Owen Stanley escarpment to Sogeri, not far from Port Moresby, as I also had use of a FIAT 2300 that friends had left with us while they went on long leave. Italian sedans really do have sporty souls!

In mid-1968 we moved to Madang where, in my new job, I could enjoy

my passion for flying - and from our house we could, even in the Xmas period, see the snow-capped top of Mt Wilhelm at 14,800ft.

Time and years passed and by mid-1970 it was apparent that PNG was both moving toward independence and becoming a much less safe place in which to live. (Sadly, it is even more dangerous 50 years later for everyone - cruise ships will no longer go to Port Moresby). So, it came about that in mid - 1970 I decided to relinquish the best



Same as my red 1965 Honda S600 Coupe
(file photo - 35mm slides don't keep well)



SCessna 336 -VH-GKY - "Work Transport"
(one of the planes that I used to fly out of Madang)

job I was ever likely to have, based in Madang on the north coast of PNG and flying myself all over my areas of responsibility – ensuring maintenance of safety standards of all aerodromes and airstrips in the Madang, East and West Sepik Districts (all the north side of New Guinea) and Manus Island. When the weather was reasonable, I would do my inspections and when the snow topped mountains (up to 15,000+ft) and steep, ragged valleys were cloud shrouded and rain filled, I stayed in the office writing up the reports. That way I didn't become one of the "aircraft missing" SAR alerts for which we sometimes had to mount futile aerial search and rescue operations.

After having decided that we really needed to return to our country and make a home and secure new life in Australia, after a lot of consideration Canberra was our final choice of places to relocate to as it was then still the "bush capital." It also was close to both the South Coast and the snow fields for our skiing, was a reasonable drive to Sydney and Griffith, where I originated, had

mountain streams to fish and, very importantly, had some great roads in the nearby mountains for motorcycles. So, I sought and won a job in Canberra, we packed up house and the VW came with us to Canberra, while the Norton stayed in Madang with a pilot (and priest) mate who flew for the Catholic Mission.

A new life in Oz required transport for two people and one car was not enough between the two of us, so (only to get to work economically) I found a Suzuki TC125 ag bike. It had a high/low range gearbox that enabled one to almost climb brick walls but, to my great displeasure, when a mad moment urged me to open it up in low range, it reared up and over, unceremoniously dumping me on my butt. Fortunately, that was in the backyard of our home, so no one witnessed my disgrace. And the TC125 was more than good enough to both get to work on and, on occasional weekends, ride some of the fire trails in the nearby forests.

But the need for two cars for two people continued to manifest itself,

so by 1972 it was decided that another "family car" was required. Fortuitously, I managed to locate a 1962 1600cc MGA MkII soft top in a nice "Orient Red" colour, with a distinctive recessed front grille and wire wheels. I thought it was just the car for me as it nicely filled both the "need" and "want" niches. Reality dawned on me later.

Sadly, it was only after a short period of ownership I discovered that, although classic MGs look great and are fun to drive, by 1972 standards it really was an old and pretty agricultural machine. The soft top frame had to be dismantled and left in the boot with the side curtains and spare wheel. If it started to rain when out on a drive, by the time everything was assembled and the roof fastened in place with the press-studs, one was pretty wet. If not already really wet, then the rain leaking around the side curtains finished the job. Also, it wasn't as quick and didn't handle nearly as well as the Honda S600 and felt positively "loose" if I tried to emulate the Honda's cruising speeds – but by then there were national 100kph speed limits



It had taken only 20 years for me to acquire my MG!
(file photo - sadly my 35mm slides didn't keep well)

that discouraged doing that. It nevertheless was very enjoyable to drive sedately in sunny conditions, even in winter when there was a heavy frost. Unfortunately, despite my being well rugged up with gloves and beanie, without windows the heater that was almost hot enough to melt the rubber soles on one's shoes totally failed to prevent my getting pneumonia - in two consecutive winters.

Eventually, I belatedly heeded my doctor's advice to "... leave the roof up in winter!"

By 1976 we had acquired both a child and a 1975 Volvo 144. One day, when I returned after taking the Volvo to be serviced, my dearly beloved advised me that she had that day taken the baby, with car seat, in the MGA to do some shopping. But she then discovered that, with the boot full of spare wheel and roofing, there was really no room for groceries. Faced with a decision to either bring home the week's groceries or the child, being very maternal, she elected to do only a very limited shop. I did the balance of the shopping when I got home and faced the reality that an MGA really was not suitable for the second "family car." Aficionados of MGs will not believe that I promptly resolved my "appropriate vehicle" issue by deciding to swap the MGA for a low kms, bronze, 1975 VJ Dodge "Town and Country" ute with the 4.0 L (245 cu in) Hemi-6 engine.

It looked pretty schmick with its beige vinyl roof and tonneau against the bronze paint. After only little negotiation, the swap was agreed and the dealer got a soon-to-be classic car, and I got a very

useful vehicle that very nicely filled all our needs at that time. The baby seat fitted neatly between the two adults on the bench seat, it was waterproof, handled and stopped a whole lot better, and was very much faster, than the MGA.

Problem solved! For over a decade that ute served us well around



"The Blue Toy" – Eunos Roadster NA

town, carting fire-wood, touring, going bush and towing our caravan on holidays.

By the early nineties we were still a ute and a car family, the Volvo had morphed into a Falcon wagon and the VJ Dodge into a Ford Courier crew-cab ute. A very mundane assortment - but nicely offset by a small fleet of mixed motorcycles that had quietly insinuated their way into the garage. This was when my "obsessive compulsive acquisitive disorder" re-appeared in moments of weakness and, to give me something classic (and take me back to more youthful days), I bought both a 1958 Triumph Tiger 110 and yet another 1955 AJS Twin M20! With the input of considerable time and money, the AJS was rendered almost oil-leak free and the Tiger One Ten rebuilt after almost every classic



The Fleet - 2005

rally. The Poms really did know how to put crappy metal and poor workmanship into their 1950's British machinery!

By early 2000, I was getting very disgruntled with the need to constantly fix my two "classic" bikes, as well as the futile and continuing expenditure of our resources in pursuit of the non-achievable. But, in an informal but mutually beneficial arrangement with the local Kawasaki dealer, I had been taking their demonstrator bike of the then newly released Kawasaki W650 to nearby classic bike gatherings. I got to ride a nice new bike that looked and sounded much like, but handled better than, a 1950s classic. I had a nicely reliable and "classic looking" bike to ride to wherever, I left business cards on the seat at the rallies and



spruiked the delights of the new Kawasaki W650 to anyone who would listen - and the dealer got his first couple of W650 sales. I even won a "frugality" prize on the Kwaka W650 - at a Ducati Club fuel economy event! This bike was good, in an old fashioned sort of way that well befitted my aging status. So good in fact that eventually I swapped the Tiger 110 with the dealer for a brand new W650 - and sold the AJS to someone who loved British machinery, crappy metal and oil. By 2005 I had reluctantly sold off some of the little-used accumulation of the other bikes and had a nicely consolidated fleet of motorcycles - four bikes that fully met my needs to ride anywhere, at any time.

Unfortunately, in 2005 (at age 69) the encroachment of old(er) age brought with it retribution for the sporting mishaps of youth and the decades of accumulated damage to my maltreated knees (judo, basketball, rugby union, squash, motorcycling accidents and a nasty skiing fall) finally demanded serious attention.

The repetitive treatment and surgical repairs over almost 50 years to my right knee had reached their useful climax and a new "tin knee" was required. Most unfortunately, a mishap during rehabilitation produced a setback that meant I could no longer flex my right knee sufficiently to even sit on, much less ride, motorcycles when seated in a normal position.

After considerable agitation and mental anguish, I bit the bullet - and ALL the bikes were sold! But I needed to keep travelling al fresco, so sought solace in a previous form of enjoyment. Why not do "sports car" again? But it needed to be an interesting vehicle, reliable and able to perform reasonably well. I liked the look of the Lotus Elan - but they were "British" and not readily available. My research revealed what Mazda had achieved with their "Jinba Ittai" design philosophy for the Miata/MX5/Eunos Roadster sports car. And the first model MX5 looked so very much like the Lotus Elan. Decision made!

So, I searched for the right car from the initial batch of red, white and blue vehicles and in late 2005 obtained a nice import from Japan,

a 1990 “first release” Mariner Blue Eunos Roadster - essentially an MX5 that came with factory fitted hard-top, aircon and also power steering, of which the latter was not an option for Australian delivered NAs. That car proved to be almost as much fun as a motorbike and without need for my allowing time for putting on all the now almost-mandatory motorcycle-riding gear.

Importantly, I now enjoyed company as my wife was happy to join me on a run in, and occasionally drive, “the MX5” - she had not been at all interested in joining me on any of the motorbikes. Our first trip away from Canberra was in 2006, to Griffith, my hometown and our new toy performed most satisfactorily.

That initial trip was a great success and a good, enjoyable outcome for us both that soon led to our joining the local ACT Chapter of the NSW MX5 Club. We found we really enjoyed the social aspect of the monthly “Coffee & Lies” get-togethers, which provided opportunity to meet and make new friends of people with a similar interest and who also enjoyed conversation and coffee.

We soon went on a couple of the Chapter’s runs and found group fun was a very worthwhile way of spending a day or weekend (or weeks) away from home. My first Club run was to Tasmania, which I had done before on my BMW ‘bike - the MX5 was just as enjoyable, plus I could take a friend - this time not my wife, but a long-time mate.

Being retired and unencumbered by the demands of employers, the planning for some of those runs also gave me good excuses to do enjoyable preparatory exploring, sometimes with a co-driver and sometimes alone, and always with the opportunity to explore some more of the interesting by-ways. And the exploratory runs alone also gave ample opportunity to do things not readily done when leading a group - like stop in at aerodromes to again fly an old plane of my youth - like a DH 82-A Tiger Moth.

Strangely enough, after some sixty years, I easily remembered all the important numbers for rpm and airspeed, much to the surprise of the pilot who was most keen to accompany me - he owned the plane!

And, without any sensible companion’s restraint, I could do something exciting from my “Bucket List” - like see if I could still fly aerobatics, but this time in a former “Ost-block” jet, a Russian fighter trainer.

But the real purpose my recce runs was not to seek out personal fun but rather to organise runs for our Canberra Chapter MX5ers, so after deciding where to, my next step is planning when, by which by-ways and where to sleep and eat. For a 14 car run over 2 weeks that requires a reasonably decent time input.

For me, the responsibility that goes with leading a run includes not only organising it, but also seeing that everyone in the group is OK as we travel. I have found that, particularly if on a “convoy type” run, even with a smallish group,



In Strahan on my first long Club run

radio contact with a responsible “Tail-end Charlie” greatly alleviates any angst about who had fallen behind, broken down or got separated and then become lost by taking a wrong turn. And I have experienced all of those issues on runs I have led.

Overall, I have found there is great satisfaction to be derived from preparing for and leading longer multi-day runs, particularly so in the conviviality at the end of the day at an overnight stop somewhere interesting, whether it be in a pub, at a nice restaurant or around a Bar B-Q in a caravan park or at sunset on the banks of the Noosa River.

And we have also found that being an MX5er provides a link worldwide. When at a hotel on Lake Maggiore in northern Italy,

we noticed one of the staff drove a black NB MX5. Naturally, a conversation in broken English and my poor Italian developed - and enough camaraderie was generated for the hotel owner to present us with a Touring Club of Italy commemorative plate. It seems, along with an interest in cars, they also, like me, go on drives seeking restaurants renowned for offering good food and wine. I continued to persevere with the knee rehabilitation and slowly it responded enough for me to consider again riding a motorbike.

That was when, in late 2008, I went on holiday to Noosa and caught up with an ex-PNG mate who had bought my first Kwaka W650. He suggested that, as my metal knee was now bending reasonably well,

I might like to try again riding my old bike. I accepted his generous offer with alacrity and, by sitting halfway onto the pillion seat, it was certainly manageable and undoubtedly still enjoyable.

I promptly hired a nice 650 Suzuki V-Strom from The Aussie Biker in Noosaville and, together with my mate, set out to ride the interesting roads of the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Even with some discomfort, it was still great fun, so much so that I decided to return to riding motor bikes. My friend declined, not so politely, my most generous offer to “buy back my W650” - and that was probably a good thing as the “tin knee” was still a bit of a problem. A rare moment of logic indicated that, if I were to buy another ‘bike, it should be another 1200cc “Harley”

The Bylong Valley - before they turn it into another abominable open-cut coal- pit!



Sportster, which both look good and handle quite well in the twisty bits of our nearby mountain areas.

It didn't take long for me to find a good one - this time a 2005 "1200cc Custom" model with forward controls (for the unbending tin knee) and lots of chrome bling, so it filled the required niche quite nicely - and I still had the blue NA MX5. That proved to be a nice balance of my "needs and wants" - at least for the interim...

As the tin-knee improved, so did my yearning for wind in my face. Perseverance brought improvement to the knee and eventually it again bent well enough for me to ride normally seated. Naturally, I then bought another Kwaka W650. I also tracked down my black and yellow BMW R100 GS, "Die Hummel", (the Bumblebee) out at Condobolin. It had only done 900kms in the year since I sold it and the owner was not going to again be in a position when he could ride it around Australia, which was the reason he had bought it. After protracted negotiation over a couple of months, I bought it back for what he had paid me, less the cost of my going to get it in a ute. Once again "Die Hummel" helped me to comfortably, and with great reliability, explore the mountains and gravel byways, repaying my decision to reclaim it.

Despite my return to motorbikes, I was still doing quite a bit in the MX5. In Autumn 2015 I undertook to lead a Club run through the Snowy and Victorian Alps to see the falling leaves in Bright. But a poorly timed engine problem with the 25 year-old "Blue Toy"

NA meant that I urgently needed a newer, more reliable MX5 to lead that run and any future longer away-runs. An intensive search discovered a very nice 2013 "upgrade" MX5 NC3 GT coupe (with an electric hardtop) to fill that role. My only reservation was that it had a "sports auto" gearbox. After a test drive, I decided I could live with the sequential

shift option using the gearstick. But I quickly found that I could double-downshift in the twisty bits much much faster on the paddles than with a manual gearbox or sequentially shifting with the gear stick. My wife thought the NC was a brilliant solution, so she now not only volunteered to come with me on runs but also initiated us going somewhere. And she also liked to



At Tyagarah – about to again fly a Tiger Moth



"Mr Bling" - the 2005 HD 1200 Sportster

- do her share of the driving in the twisty bits.

By late 2017, despite whilst motorcycling having a couple of close encounters and some falls involving a few broken bones, I had reached, still in reasonable repair, the ripe old age of 81 years and had almost completed 65 years of motorcycle riding. As well as now starting to cope with my arthritic hands and hips, I was compensating for somewhat slower reaction time by more carefully planning my cornering and etc. That is when I decided it was probably a good time to seriously review my motoring options.

Quit the motorcycles – while you are still in front!



High in the Snowy Mtns with "Die Hummel," das Letzte - my last BMW Sportster

The BMW R100 GS, and the Kawasaki W650 were found new homes in 2018 and the Honda NX250 stayed in the garage unused

I couldn't quite bring myself to face the ending of "the motorcycle years".

Of course, departure of the last of my touring motorcycles had caused a bad case of “machinery deprivation.” Again, fate kindly intervened, and an ex-motorcyclist friend had a sadly unused 2000 MX5 NB Limited Edition in his garage needing some TLC.

A rescue plan was agreed, and I duly arrived home with a nice maroon and tan MX5 - to a very dismayed wife, who exclaimed: “You don’t really need two MX5s!” That gave rise to a rather protracted explanation on my part of the difference in MX5 models - and how one should not confuse the physical aspect of “needs” with the emotional imperative of “wants”.

And, in an open MX5 one can still enjoy travelling the by-roads - even if I now was not on motorbikes. And it was almost the same colour my departed W650. What a fortuitous co-incidence! Most fortunately, my dearly beloved eventually understood the rationale of my logic (if not the “machinery deprivation” aspect) and the NB MX5 was soon back to its proper condition and providing “al fresco” fun. And with the heater functioning and windows up, unlike in the MGA Mk2, one could comfortably go in it anywhere, anytime, in any season, in good comfort and without fear of getting recurring pneumonia.

With the ‘bikes gone I could then, on any day, still enjoy the local mountain roads or drive to the South Coast in the MX5 NB for a seafood lunch. Or have an enjoyable driving holiday with my wife in the NC - and on nice days, do that with the top down and the wind blowing in what is left of my



The NC3 and my wife, Diana, MX5-ing in Noosaville 2015



The NB - off the beaten track

hair...Eventually, it is, of course, inevitable that an end comes to all good times.

The year of 2021 has brought health and reality checks and closure to yet another chapter of my life. Covid-closure and the encroachment of both age and arthritis have in the past few months forced me, most reluctantly, into sensible decisions. Whilst I could still enjoy short drives in my two MX5s, the NC was hardly being used and the NB was, without cruise control, proving pretty uncomfortable after

only about an hour or so on the road. And my arthritic hips meant that, after any reasonable time in those cars, I could hardly get out of either of the MXs, especially if the roof was up. After much agitation and procrastination, the logical decision was slowly, and very regretfully, reached.

We needed to consolidate our vehicle fleet - four cars between two “almost seniors” was a couple of cars too many. Both the MX5s and my 197kW Subaru Liberty GT should be sold. Since then, all those cars have been found

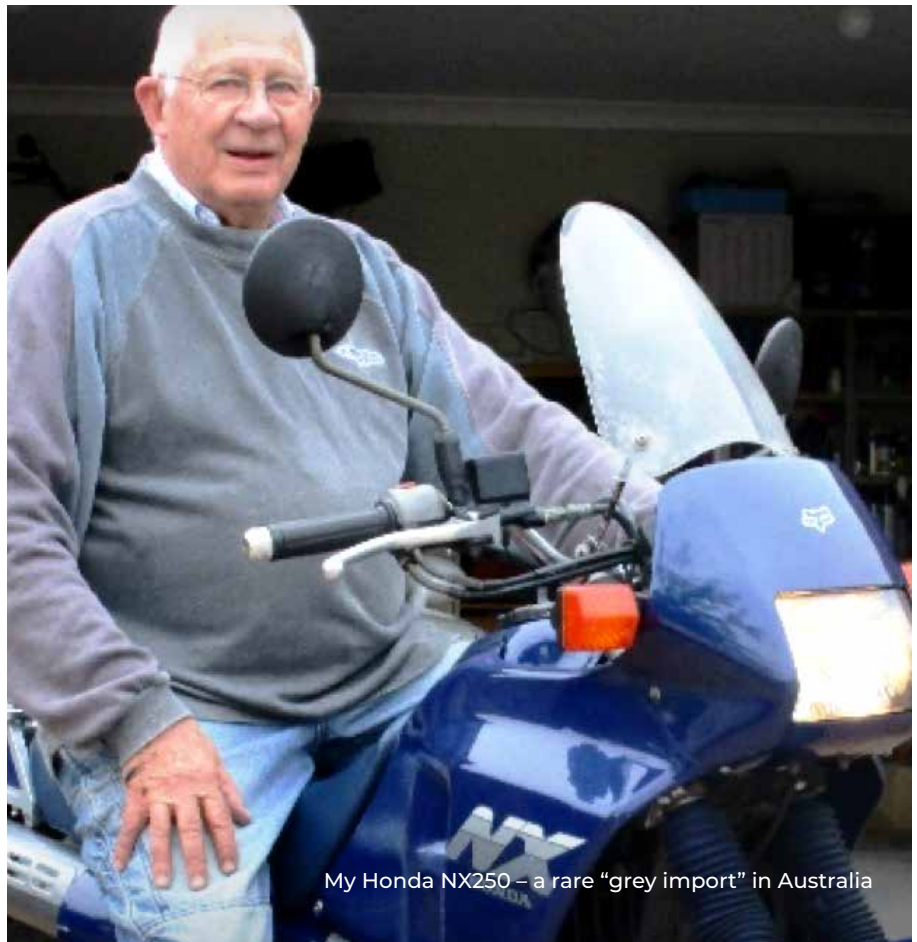
good homes with people who will respect them. And, happily, both MX5s have stayed within the NSW MX5 Club.

Having recently very reluctantly, but definitely graduated to “Geriatric” status, for me the motorcycle years are now definitely over.

But in the interim I have realised that, unlike those who, some six decades ago, were telling me to sell my motorcycle and “grow up and settle down,” we have only one life for the living. And you are never really old enough to have to grow up! There are always good alternatives to choose from, and I chose to have some 65 years of motorcycling and 16 years of fun in my various MX5s. And I finally faced reality when Covid-19 struck - I forced myself to sell the NX250 hiding in the garage.

I have really enjoyed the decade and a half of my MX5 years so, even at the age of eighty-five, I do not intend to resign from the MX5 Club and hope for some time yet to continue to provide input to planning our Canberra Chapter's runs. As I now do not have an MX5 to drive, I won't be part of the entourage of MX5s on any runs. But I do intend to tag along in my replacement - a rather nice C300 195kW MX-Benz.

If, like me, you don't give in too early to those who are suggesting you consider “growing up,” you too can almost have it all... Almost seven decades of great fun, with wind in the face (and/or hair) while seeing an amazing country in company with good friends, concurrently enjoying interesting machines.



My Honda NX250 – a rare “grey import” in Australia



The MX5s replacement
- C300 MX-Benz, rego YMX-05K - so I still “sort of fit in”

That chapter of my life really has been more than well worthwhile, You too can do it - and do it now, while you can!

Ken Keeling,
Canberra Chapter
September 2021



PRESIDENT; THE FIRST 25 DAYS

Words: G. Peter Battisson
Images: G. Peter Battisson



I want to thank the Members for allowing me the privilege of acting in the role of President of the Club, it is both an honour and humbling.

To the retiring Committee Members, my sincere thanks and appreciation for your commitment and dedication to the Club. I also thank the Committee Members who have decided to stay-on for another 2 year term. In doing so you ensure the smooth transition and running of the entire club.

Michael Soulos, your Club Captain, former BreakFast Club Coordinator and Committee Member for 13 years, still going strong.

Michael originally started the

Breakfast Club back in 2009, making it a most enjoyable way to drive your MX-5. Early morning, traffic free, in the country fresh air organising amazing runs over demanding roads; culminating in a sumptuous breakfast with friendly conversation amongst like-minded folk, enjoying their top-down sports cars. I certainly am thankful for Michael starting the group, it is so much fun. You should come on a run and find out for yourselves.

Ian Combes, the Motorsport Secretary on the Committee for 5 years. Ian's commitment and dedication to the Club is extraordinary. Where does he find time? He has supplied some of the best motorsport calendars the Club has ever seen. Overhauled the processes and revamped the competition, following on from his predecessors with distinction. Ian has against all odds despite the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be the ultimate organiser, supplying leadership to the other motorsport clubs in getting everything in place so that your motorsport could continue. Congratulations, Ian!

Ken and Maggie Liston, having already served on the Committee for 13+ years as Membership

Secretary. Ken and Maggie are staying on in an Ex-Officio role as Membership Assistants. What an amazing couple they are, so dedicated to our Club, tireless workers.

Bryan Shedden, with 11 years on the Committee; Life Member, President, Publications Officer, Website Coordinator, Membership Database Secretary and now Membership Secretary in the newly switched role. What else is there to say about Bryan? I would need to write a whole chapter, even then, would it all fit?

Gus Elias, Website Coordinator having served on the Committee for 3 years, is staying on in an Ex-Officio role as Website Coordinator. Thank you, Gus. You play a vital role in ensuring the website -our convenient pathway of Club information- is up to date for our Members.

I would also like to personally thank Kim Jacobs and Peter Barnwell; who as our Publication Officers, stepped up to the plate and rescued "Club Torque." Members will sadly remember the magazine went missing for 18+ months, to the chagrin of

everyone. Sadly, it has happened again, however Kerri Langworthy-Ward and I have managed to rescue it and I certainly hope you all enjoy the latest production. Kerri has done all of the design work and setting out of the magazine, an amazing effort; I have been involved with the editing, if there are any mistakes or omissions, please be gentle with us.

May I offer a warm welcome to the new Members of your Committee. Club Members that are prepared to give selflessly of their time are certainly rare. In the scheme of things an extraordinary effort and serious Club commitment. Please, when you see them, thank them personally. They all really do work endlessly on your behalf to make your membership the best time you can have. So, don't be afraid to put your hand up when they need help, you will also be helping yourself.

Since joining the Club on the 2nd of February 2010, having bought Jane, my first MX-5, a white NA6 with 196,835km's on the clock, the love affair of my life began. As with all love affairs, this one started with a flurry too.

On Valentine's Day, just 12 days after joining the Club, coming home in the pouring rain from my first Club track day, a drunk driver forced me off the road and sent me in Jane, careering through the Tea-tree covered median in the centre of the Hume Highway, near Sutton. I thought it was all over, somehow, Jane managed the impossible although sadly damaged, minor but extensive enough to depress me. Then, after an off duty police officer and others towed me out



-longer story- I got her home, battered, bruised, full of mud and Tea tree brush. It was not long before my brother Dave, of Carco and MX5 Solutions, the then Canberra Chapter sponsor, who I bought Jane from, convinced me to also sponsor the Club. Not wanting to rain on Dave's parade, I -through my business ACDC- instead, became a Major Sponsor of the Club, -previously providing Motorsport Officials with regalia and safety vests- and currently with my son Don, sponsor the Canberra Chapter after Dave retired to the south coast last October.

Not long after the "off-road experience" the Tasmania Trip with the Canberra Chapter was on; however, Jane was looking a little sad. After not getting Jane repaired and painted in time -she is still waiting today-, I decided to buy one that was advertised at a used car dealer in Canberra. My second MX-5, this time a red NA6 -I soon bought a factory hard-top for it too- with just 146,429Km's on the odometer. It looked good and went well. Red cars really do go faster.

I nicknamed it the "Blow-Fly," man alive, I could drive the wheels off it. On a Breakfast Club run on the Bylong Valley Way at the general store when we stopped for a coffee break; Patrick Bramston came storming up to me demanding to look under the bonnet, the look on his face when he opened it up and saw it was stock, is something I will never forget. I am sure he won't either, that day a special bond hit me about the Club, I hope you can feel that too.

To say owning an MX-5 is a disease with me that's close to the truth, 11 years later, I now own at least one of each generation, namely, NA, NB, NC, and my ND. I will not divulge how many MX-5's -you can never own too may- I have (a) because that might be seen as boasting, (b) because I don't want, she who must be obeyed to know. Suffice to say Don my eldest son keeps telling me, "Pop if you buy another one, I am going to get you committed. Why, doesn't he know? "I am already Committed."

As Members will be aware I have been on the Committee as the

BreakFast Club Coordinator for 6 years. I have taken you on many one day and multi day drives; providing you all with the time of your life, through and over the most demanding and extremely technically challenging roads within NSW and Victoria. It has been a fantastic time, a real blast. Who could ever forget the first drive down the "Bonang Highway?"

Over the past 6 years, I have regularly driven from Canberra to Sydney for the monthly Committee Meetings, after the meetings – sometimes 2 hours or longer- I then drove home, arriving at 2, 3 or 4am depending on how thick the fog was.

On BreakFast Club runs it is not unusual for me to get up at 1am, drive Canberra to Sydney, meet-up at 6am, then drive 3 plus hours further north, after a hearty breakfast and wonderful conversation, I would drive home to Canberra, often covering 900 to 1,350 Km's in a day. To say I love driving my MX-5's is a no brainer. Totally addicted.

Since becoming President on the 22nd of October 2021, much has been happening. More news about all that in our new "Newsletter" soon to be distributed. It will be called "**A Round Tuit**" I am sure all members will be pleased to find out all about it and benefit from the inclusions. The intention is to have it emailed to all members, 21 days after each Monthly Committee Meeting, giving an insight to the ongoing behind the scenes. All members will be encouraged to have an input into the inner workings of club operations.

This past week, I embarked on a whirlwind tour; Saturday 6th November: first Coffee and Lies in Canberra, then working on details for Zoom Meetings and other forms with Kerri, until late.

Sunday 7th November: a trip - only a 2 hour stop over - to Wakefield Park to collect another hardtop for my red NB -Don drove down to collect it from Gus, thanks mate - collecting the NMOTY from Bryan: then after chatting to some of the members, home again, it was still early Sunday. I get home and receive a phone call, the magazine is in trouble, nothing done, all material lost. I spent the rest of the day contacting all of the Convenors, getting copies of the runs that were lost convincing others to get me as much info ASAP.

Having done that, I contacted Kerri, your new Vice President, told her we were in trouble of not having a magazine again. In true "**Wonder Woman**" style she was on board, we decided to give it our best shot and deliver you this edition, produced in its entirety in just 9 working days - Kerri was also working on a massive submission to Cornell University in the States and was filming - record breaking to say the least.

Monday 8th November spent editing all of the runs in this edition, up to the wee small hours.

Tuesday 9th November: I drive up the coast to meet the South Coast Chapter and attend their monthly meeting, chat and share lunch that Anda and Brian kindly prepared for me. Whilst there, I gave them a run down on how I saw things happening going forward, they

were very enthusiastic and really pleased that I had visited. Home around 6pm. More work on club stuff till very late.

Wednesday 10th November, Club run and lunch with Canberra, more work with the magazine and in almost constant contact with Kerri.

Thursday 11th November left home 4:20am, drove up to the Hunter Chapter for their mid-week run. Had a wonderful time with them and stayed for their Dinner Meeting. Chris and John, the Hunter Convenors insisted I stay over night with them, it was wonderful hospitality.

Friday 12th November, drove to Port Macquarie to meet up with them and have a wonderful dinner at the Greek restaurant in town. Overnight there then back home to Canberra on Sunday.

Monday, today, spent the entire day editing and proofreading the magazine, going cross-eyed. If there are any errors, please be kind.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, I am heading up north to meet outlying members and have a coffee and a chat too. I expect to be away for a few days, then home for a well earned rest. I am really keen to meet you all and hope we can have a successful summer in our 5's.

G Peter Battisson

President

NO SHEEP ON THE DAM RUN

1 May 2021

Words: Hella Underwood
Images: Adele Weatherall

After having to change the date yet again and thus having a couple of cars drop out due to earlier commitments on our new date, and then another couple of cars drop out due to last minute family commitment changes, our group of 3 cars set off from Haywards Bay for our midweek run to Berrima.

Is this a new club record for the smallest number of cars on a run? I might add another 2 cars were meeting us at our final destination, Warragamba dam.

So off we went on an absolutely beautiful autumn's day, arriving at Berrima for our fabulous byo morning tea. Jan Gibson provided a basketful of still warm homemade scones with jam and cream and if that wasn't enough, a delicious

passionfruit and lemon slice. Also on offer was carrot cake and cheese and crackers. We had a lovely chat with a local and her gorgeous pooch who told us about a local walk we could do on another run.

After we had our fill of delicious treats, we headed off to Warragamba dam where we met some of our RPM friends. Even though we were still full from our morning tea, we enjoyed our lunch and then Jan brought out more

scones and slice. It didn't take much arm twisting for us to finish off the slice and all of the scones. We then walked down to the visitor centre to take in the view and go in the visitor centre. A great run and day which proved small numbers of cars and people can still have a great MX5 time together.

P.S. the 3 cars that left Haywards Bay were 2 Abarth 124 spiders and one Ford Mustang. Lucky our RPM members had MX5's



THE 'NASHO' RUN

2021

Words and images: Bryan Hicks

There were seven cars parked at McDonalds all waiting for their owners to make a dash on their first run after lockdown and weren't we all itching to get started. All clean and polished ready to eat up the roads going south through the Royal National Park, a trip we have done many times before.

This was different, we had been locked up in our homes for months. What is it like to feel the breeze in your hair and taste lunch at a venue cooked by someone else and served up in surroundings different to your own home. The drive down was uneventful but gorgeous. To be driving along through dappled sunlight in your favourite car.

A bit of freeway and we arrived at the Shellharbour Club where we lined up for the inevitable photos. The only downer was having to wear these dastardly masks when not eating or drinking. It's amazing how long it can take to drink an endless glass of water.

We all had a wonderful time.

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BASTILLE DAY BASH

19 July 2021

Words: Chris Fondum and Dace Abolins
Images : Anda Clayton

The South Coast Chapter's Bastille Day Bash began at the Clyde River village of Nelligen and ended at the historic town of Bungendore. The aim: to celebrate France's national day at the French restaurant, Le Tres Bon.

While we had grander plans, Covid restrictions meant that when the day arrived our bastille storming party comprised only two couples – our most venerable convenors, Anda and Brian Clayton plus your humble correspondents.

The drive up the Clyde along the Kings Highway from Nelligen to Braidwood is a great stretch of road for MX-5s if slow traffic is avoided. We were lucky to have the Nelligen bridgeworks traffic attendants clear the road so we could really enjoy the drive up the mountain in our zappy little cars.

The 2019/2020 bushfires were particularly fierce on the Clyde so it was reassuring to see how much the bush with its lush understory of Bangalow Palms was restoring itself. A cold fierce wind blew as we whisked past the fields and bush at the top of the mountain,

through Braidwood and on to our destination. Hot drinks at Bungendore refreshed us, before we booked into a local hotel and prepared for dinner. Evenings in Bungendore in July are always cold, but the temperature and atmosphere inside Le Tre Bon was warm and welcoming: the champagne cocktails were perfect, and the food and wine that followed was wonderful. Tartine de rilette, then creamy cauliflower, potato and leek soup – a dish dedicated to the favourite Mistress of Louis XV – followed by beef cheeks en daube and finally Kugelhopf d'Alsace. Yum!

To add to the ambience a piano accordion player entertained us throughout the evening, with our co-host, Chef Christophe Gregoire, making a speech to mark the occasion. It only remained for the accordionist to play La Marseillaise while Chef Christophe made appropriately symbolic body gestures, in lieu of any audible singing (banned because of Covid). We had a very pleasant breakfast next morning at The Gathering, a café almost next door to our hotel. Their coffee, eggs, toast & muesli were very tasty, and fuelled our small group as we said our goodbyes and headed home.



GOONOO GOONOO STATION

27 June 2021

Words: Jim McDonnell
Images : Wayne Lang



It was a cold and sunny morning that we met at 8.00am at the closed Rivermark Café in Port Macquarie – so no early morning coffees for us. Jill and Peter took the lead in their Kia Celts followed by Pam and Allen, John and Susan, Margaret and Murray, Peter and Kieran off up the motorway to Kempsey to pick up Michael and Gail, Wayne and Cathy. Then off to Macksville to pick up Mick and Chris.

Driving up the motorway to the Old Butter Factory in Bellingen meeting up with Robert and Rhonda for morning tea and a chat. Off we went through Bellingen to Ebor Falls. Sunny morning, hills so green and trees shimmering in the cool air. Over the Bellingen River, past Thora General Store then along the windy road through the Dorrigo Mountains.

At the Dorrigo roundabout the soldier statue has been re-erected after a vehicle smash knocked it over. We stopped at the Ebor Falls which are flowing again, but we couldn't stand on the damaged viewing platform. Next stop was

lunch at the Armidale Bowling Club. On our way again through the countryside passing the Thunderbolts Rock which is 80 km from Tamworth and finally meeting up with Kevin and Jen arriving at Goonoo Goonoo (pronounced Gunoo Goonoo) and meaning 'running water over rocks in times of drought' – at 4.30pm. Our rooms were in the Shearers Quarters all modernised very warm and comfortable. For dinner, a small group of us dined at the Glass House, the renowned restaurant. Delicious food, great wines and company. Other people in our group went into Tamworth to Thai and Italian restaurants or to use the opportunity to visit family.

We all met for breakfast in the Glass House with the sun shining through the huge windows looking over the property. Then we were off to Nundle where the week before the whole town had been covered with snow. In Nundle we had morning tea at the Nundle café and then walked around to the Nundle Knitting Mill. There we had a guided tour of the operations of this more than 100 year old mill. Rick, the owner, took us through the entire process from the sourcing of the wool from

sheep in Tasmania to carding the wool, spinning, hanking, dyeing and winding to beautiful balls and hanks of wool in a myriad of colours and sizes. Even the techno minded people in the group enjoyed the tour!!

We then went shopping in the wool shop, lots of beautiful woollen items to buy. From Nundle we drove to the Arc-en-Ciel Trout Farm for lunch. Arc-en-Ciel is French for "Rainbow" – hence the Rainbow Trout Farm.

Snow, snow and snow throughout the countryside on the way there. Lots of trees damaged by the weight of the snow falling on them. After we had lunch in the wood fired warm restaurant Russell the owner took us on a tour of the fish farming operations from the

sperm and baby fish tanks and then on the 500m walk down the hill to the tanks where the fish grow to mature age. Afterwards, at maturity, they are put through the smoking process. Very cold, snow on the hillsides as some of us walked back up the hill – while some others decided to get a ride back up the hill! Then we took the drive back to Goonoo Goonoo, some in our group stopping to build a snowman and throw snowballs!!

For dinner we all went to Carmen's Italian Restaurant, recommended from those of us who went there the previous night.

In the morning we all met again in the Glass House for breakfast and farewells, all of us then going in different directions as we headed home.

A fabulous couple of days and all our thanks to Allen & Greg (unfortunately Greg & Jane were unable to attend) for their organisation of this great drive.



TAKE 2 - MAZDAS AT MOGO

27 June 2021

Words: Kerry Warner
Images : Anda Claydon

Finally, a sunny, non-lockdown day, we're off to the Zoo. With three cars meeting at Milton (2 ND and 1 NC) we had a slow drive to Batemans Bay thanks to the many road works on the Princes Highway.

but what a great little gem, well worth the visit.

From here we drove to Mogo and had a delightful lunch at Grumpy and Sweethearts followed by a little retail therapy.

Another wonderful day out.



A coffee stop at the Mossy Point Boat Ramp Café overlooking the clear blue waters of the Tomaga River. A short drive to Mogo where, for those who had not been before, a wonderful little Zoo opened up before us.

We couldn't drive our cars around the Zoo so not much to report from an MX5 experience



BYABARRA TO COMBOYNE

2 June 2021

Words: John Little
Images : Greg Cox

Five cars arrived at the Donut for the run to Comboyne. The Leader was early to everyone's surprise, blaming his co-pilot's absence for his on time arrival. Allen and Oli had some confusion getting back in their cars due to both ND's being the same highly polished Soul Red.

First stop was at Bardi's Café, Timbertown, Wauchope where Allen upheld the egg & bacon roll tradition, John is falling behind for this year's E & B award.

The run out to Comboyne is always enjoyable for MX5's with the road fairly good after the recent major

flood event. Sections of the road were not yet repaired due to major landslides and were closed to one lane.

Mick had a friendly conversation with himself on ch13, made a lot of sense to him.

A phone call from Byabarra Café caused a major debate on lunch venues as they had to close due to a major power outage. It was finally decided that Sheathers on High at Wauchope was the go and although very busy was a great venue. Only disappointment was for John in missing the Seafood Chowder.

Enjoyable day with great friends, thanks to Greg for the run.



ROUND 1 MOTORKHANA

2 June 2021

Words and images: Ian Combes

It's been a long time between drinks, but the first MX-5 Club motorkhana for 2021 is on in 2 weeks' time.

Entries are only sitting at 20 odd, so we need quite a few more! Must be a few more people than

that who have been hanging out for a motorkhana surely.

This year we have a half-price entry for juniors so we're hoping to see a few more out there this year. We had a good showing in the junior ranks last year, so let's get a few more out there this time!

ILLAWARRA CHAPTER

NINTH BIRTHDAY

25 May 2021

Words: Jeff and Pam Rowe

Images: Barry Pope, Adele Weatherall, Senia Gaunson

How good is it when you get invited to a birthday party?

The excitement about who you'll see there, usually some family and friends you may not have seen for some time, then there's buying the

gift and getting dressed up in all your finery so you look your best and of course the food.

The Illawarra Chapter celebrated its 9th birthday on the 5th of May. Many members celebrated this day at a chapter dinner meeting

on the 6th of May. Popular chapter member Jennifer Keenahan baked a cake. Those there ate it in next to no time. Thank you, Jennifer you'll surely be asked to make more cakes, in the future.

The invite to the official chapter



party was put on the club events web page by the chapter run coordinator, Adele Weatherall. With the date set, 22nd May, the meeting place for a short run arranged and the time this was all to start advertised, 40 members met anxiously awaiting instructions from Adele as to the route we were to take to our lunch venue.

Adele led us all out, about 24 cars, for a short 5 minute drive. We crossed a busy road with a stop sign resulting in a few members losing sight of the car in front so missing the left hand turn we made on the way. Result: - 2 lost members. Many phone calls later and with the use of Google Maps James Mate and Phil Reid joined us with smiles all over their faces. The first thing that everyone

commented on was the view from the venue.

Situated up on the escarpment with a panoramic view over a large part of the Illawarra and a few feral deer thrown in, it is a beautiful place. We are lucky that Adele knew about it. The weather was perfect for sitting inside or on a large veranda that ran around the side of the building so we could take advantage of the sun and view.

Due to COVID there were so many members who had not been to an event for 12 to 18 months. No family members but lots of catching up with club friends. That is the wonderful thing about our club, you can join an event, after some time away, and be welcomed back like you were only there yesterday. Lots of catching up about families, health issues, politics and our cars.

What about the food you ask? It was a spit roast with beef, hot ham and chicken. Of course, all the trimmings came with it along with dessert for those who could fit it in. Some wine was drunk, with the other MX-5 drivers having water or coffee. Due to some behind the scenes negotiations this was a club subsidised event which was enjoyed by all members present. Thank you to those who took part in the back room discussions. There were no presents brought to this party but most members came in their chapter finery. As you can see in the photos it was a sea of RED.

You can't have a party without some speeches.

Kerry Smith thanked Adele for organizing the day then Adele thanked others for their continued involvement in the running of the chapter. At Adele's request Bryan Shedden then gave a brief and interesting history of the Illawarra Chapter. How, where and why it was formed. Members who have held positions. Peter Feutrill was the first convenor and chose the Chapter Regalia Colour, RED. Thanks Pete.

This turned out to be a great party at a top venue with everyone having an enjoyable time talking, laughing and eating. Thank you to all who played a part in organizing the day and those who came to help make it so enjoyable.

And where were Jan, Garry, Hella and Mark our Illawarra Chapter stalwarts? This is where, hope they didn't try to drive there in their MX-5s!

NA vs NC

Words and images: Bryan Hicks

We all know our cars well, some of us are aware of the remarkable things our own model displays, but how much do we know about the models we don't own?

Some of us have had multiple examples of these great cars but few have owned all four models and know the good and bad.

I have an NA and have had 2 NC's of various ages. Both are great cars in their own right but have different strengths and weaknesses.

Here is a bit of my interpretation of what I like and dislike about both cars.

The NA -

This is an impressive car to drive. From a tall persons position, I love the seat height and was astounded that a 6' 3" person could be so comfortable in such a small car. It seems so strange that you so often see big people in small cars and short folk in these large four wheel drives. My wife calls our Mazda 6 a ship.

The pop up headlights are a delight and the handling unbeaten but the power is not what you would expect from a sports car. Powerful enough but a turbo would definitely be an improvement.

The steering is much lighter than the NC. I have taken the footrest out and now can straighten my

left leg, impressive. This car does not have cup holders which is a real pain these days with take away coffee necessary. I purchased a double cup holder in plastic, which I am trying to find a place to mount. I finally realised I can slip it on the door card as mine has an elasticised bag in the door. I also built my own wind deflector and mounted it to the bar behind the seats. It is very effective. I have also discovered that the NA has a shelf behind the seats where one can put extra baggage, the NC has no space there at all.

The car has aircon and electric mirrors but the aircon is not as effective as the NC. I have had problems with the handbrake as most of you with NA's will know.

It jams on when the car is parked for a week or so. The reason mine jammed was because the brake calliper piston corroded on the outside near the seal, so the piston would not retract after the handbrake was released.

New piston and seals did not sort it so I replaced both callipers. They cost \$1500 each from Mazda (who don't have stock) or you can get them from Mazda Mania for about \$250 each. I opted for the latter and got red ones, which are installed and work great

The old girl has also sprung a leak in the main seal between the engine and gearbox, so that has been done too. The old girl is now 27 but still strong with 250k on the clock.

The NC-

She's a beauty in black and driving her is really different in so many ways. The gearbox is tight and impressive. Some of us with NC's complain that when cold, the gears are stiff going from first to second and this is quite common. This car is much more sophisticated than the NA. You get all the bells and whistles that the NA doesn't have. I have added some mods for comfort, unlike most people who like to go faster. I can't go faster because of the speed limits, so I added a 7" touch screen which has blue tooth and Apple Carplay.

I kept the Bose amp and speakers. I also lowered my seat with a very inexpensive bracket at the back of the seat runner which gives me another inch or so height. I also have seat height adjustment, which

you don't get in the earlier models. Mine is a 2014 NC, so it also has the stronger crankshaft so it will redline at 7500 rpm.

Another addition I have added to my NC is the special chip which enables me to open and close the hard top when I am driving at less than 40km/hr. This can also be done whilst in gear. The other cool thing is that I don't have to hold the button down.

The steering is also heavier than the NA which is amazing since both cars have power steering





THE 'NURBUSH' RING

23 May 2021

Words: Stephen Lord
Images: Stock

Picture a cold, dark early morning on the old Pacific Highway at Mt Colah McDonalds. Five intrepid souls and their beloved machines had gathered to face a challenge too good to pass up.

Ahead of us lay the long stretch of tarmac known as the M1 Motorway, with our holy grail being a once treacherous section of road known as the Buladelah Bends. Now untouched by mainstream traffic, it remains as one of those exhilarating thoroughfares cherished by MX5'ers.

Yet how were we to know that the fun would begin so soon? Brett's nifty traffic app alerted us to a major obstacle on the M1 near Cowan, causing us to take the road less travelled once again via Brooklyn and Mooney Mooney before joining the main route past the Hawkesbury towards the Hunter.

Our run leader Brad then piloted us towards Maitland, with the local

terrain shrouded in fog, keeping us all firmly on task. Turning off the New England Highway, we ploughed our way north through the mist, passing localities such as Bolwarra, Mindaribba and Tocal, before reaching our quaint breakfast destination of Paterson. The bacon & egg rolls washed down by local coffee warmed us against the late autumnal chill, and we took the opportunity to walk around this charming hamlet, which bisects the main northern railway line.

The Nurbushring beckoned, however, and we saddled up with full bellies to continue our quest. Hilldale, Wallarobba, Wirragulla and Tabbil Creek flashed by before we reached Dungog, which was still asleep. Next came a tight, windy section through Stroud Hill and Nooroo before reaching The Bucketts Way north of Stroud. Onward to Booral, where we turned onto the road that would take us to the Pacific Highway at Buladelah. This stretch via Girvan was a hoot, with tight, narrow bends and teeth-rattling sections of pavement.

We were there!

We re-fueled in Buladelah township, then just kilometers north, was the signpost we had been waiting for – Wootton Way – also known as the Nurbushring. Without any further ado, we mounted our steeds and charged into the fray. The curves vary in intensity. Sometimes the camber assists, often it does not. Add to this the presence of oily sap from the roadside eucalypts on the surface, and one has the ingredients for a seat-of-the-pants thrill ride. As expected, our cars were up to the task, with 2nd and 3rd gear getting a good workout as we negotiated the twists and turns. From memory, the “fun part” is around 18km, but it seems to flash by in an instant.

We came to rest in a clearing flanked by deciduous trees displaying red, yellow and every shade in between. The views over the undulating countryside were beautiful, and we took the opportunity to line up our vehicles for an autumnal photo shoot. A radical consensus arose – rather

than head home from there, we would return to Buladelah via the same route (there is never too much of a good thing) and stop at the Plough Inn for lunch and a cleansing ale.

It proved to be an excellent choice. The meals were hearty, the beer was cold, and the conversation stimulating, in typical Breakfast Club style. It set us up well for the orthodox journey home.

The Nurbushring had not disappointed, and thanks to our Run Leader Brad, fun as the destination.



BREAKFAST CLUB

WILD WEST BREAKFAST

20 June 2021

Words: Brett Hardey
Images: Stock/Andrew Lord

Who remembers doing things “just because”? Just because you want to, just because you can, just because you had time and just because the opportunity was there. What about just because it was the opposite to what we considered the norm or what we expected?

The Breakfast Club embarked on one of our scheduled calendar runs

for 2021 and ticked off all of these “just because” boxes.

Where better to head on a weekend that had top temperatures not even cracking the double-digit mark, than Oberon? Known for its bitterly cold winters and its ability to create a small snow field close to Sydney, Oberon is a beautiful, clean country town only two hours out of Sydney. But as we found out on our club run, it's also home to great driving roads and just

because we could, we rolled back the roof, donned the gloves and beanies and headed off over the mountains to take a left hand turn at Coxs River Rd and head out to Maroo for our first waypoint stop.

What a surprise that turned out to be, an absolutely fantastic stretch of road. No potholes, a great surface and beautiful bends, all the ingredients needed to serve up fun in an MX-5. The wonderful thing about an MX-5 is its ability to allow you to drive to the best of

your ability. It can also make you think that “your” ability is the best. Either way, it is a great driving car and it’s on roads like this that you really appreciate owning one.

With Jenolan Caves Rd closed for repairs, we took the route through Duckmaloi to Oberon. We ate a beautiful breakfast with fantastic service at the Long Arm Farm Café. This is a great spot to stop if you are ever passing through or spending the day in Oberon. The staff are very friendly and create a great atmosphere, you never know, you may find yourself sitting next to a friendly local. The Café also sells homemade cakes and a choice of chutney, jams and relishes which are great to take home for the pantry or to give as a gift. I’m sure it won’t be the last visit by the BreakFast Club to the Long Arm Farm Café.

The unique feature with a BreakFast Club run, is you can create your own ending. Just like one of the story books from when we were kids, everyone can choose how they want it to end. Some members have busy plans for the rest of the day and choose a more direct route home that takes the least amount out of their day.

Others decide to linger longer at our breakfast location and have a look around. Myself, I chose to take the long way home, “just because I could.” With another club member I drove back through Black Springs and Taralga down to Goulburn.

Passing through Taralga, we passed another group of car enthusiasts enjoying the great weather. This time they were of the Porsche variety, various models and variants were on show and for

anyone that dreams of owning one like I do, it was a great sight. But a car lover is a car lover no matter what the badge says, and we all get out in our toys whenever we can to enjoy the twists and turns and open roads. Some owners do it on their own, others do it with a co-driver, and like us, others do it in a club.

But no matter what, we all do it sometimes “Just Because We Can”



THE WEDNESDAY PUB RUN

23 August 2021

Words: Steven Wakeling
Images: Rod & Maryanne Nicholas

Although the ACT was not in lockdown the ACT Government had asked residents not to leave the ACT unless absolutely necessary. Due to this request, I had not been on a run for some time. I decided to try to organise a run just within the ACT with the destination being the only real Pub in the ACT.

I managed to put together a run of two and a half hours that started in the north, went along the eastern boundary to the south and then out to the western boundary and back up to the north – a large loop that took in highway and winding scenic country backroads.

The run started with six cars and eight members at a café in Nicholls. We left at 10am and collected another three cars and four members at Hume. From Hume we headed out through Tharwa and stopped at the Cotter dam for a break. The dam was

generating a thunder as it strongly overflowed.

From the Cotter we proceeded along winding country roads to Uriarra and then back to civilisation at Denman Prospect through Belconnen and up to the George Harcourt Inn at Nicholls. We arrived at 12:28pm. The table was booked for 12:30pm. I'm not boasting here about precision timing!

Meals at the Pub are always huge, and members felt they were excellent value. An enjoyable time was had by all.

I was planning to do this run on the second Wednesday of each month but the next day the ACT was put into lockdown due to our first active Covid-19 case in over 12 months.

So, I just managed to get a run in and looking forward to when I can do the run again.



DAM, THIS IS GORGEOUS

16 JULY 2021

Words: Sharon Legovich
Images: David Gazzard



take off, all moving at the same time. So good it was noted over the radio!! That felt great!

We drove some nice relaxed open curves and some tight testing corners and travelled on some of the prettiest roads that I've been on (still being new to this club). Bumble Hill Road was the nicest and we passed some gorgeous homes along the way too.



On a beautiful sunny & chilly winter morning, we started with a casual meet up at Toronto Lions Park Boat Ramp. A group of about twelve cars turning out with a variety of NA, NB, NC & ND's, with a ring-in Z3.



At least it blended in with the top down.

We headed off toward Cessnock at an easy pace, with a couple of regroup points, one at Toronto and one at Wyong Creek. The first one wasn't so smooth when we took off but boy did, we nail the next one . . . absolutely smashed the smooth

Driving into the Mangrove Creek Dam Picnic spot was lovely. It has such a beautiful view and a hugely enjoyable place to have a chat with fellow members and have lunch. All the members mingled and enjoyed the sunshine (although no one removed their jackets!), and of course members looked over the two new NAs of the group

From there we all made our own way home splitting into two groups many of us continuing along George Downes Drive to Wollombi, enjoying the rest of the day. What a wonderful morning and afternoon it was, and it was great to spend time with some new faces.

CLUB REGALIA

Dressing the part

Words: Christine Cameron
Images : John Purcell, Bryan Shedden

With the easing of lockdown restrictions, it is great to see our social runs and motorsport events starting up again. But with summer fast approaching, all those winter jackets, scarves & beanies you had laid out in readiness for winter events need packing away again and summer regalia is definitely the way to go.

Is your summer regalia in need of an update? If the answer is yes, then have a look at the cool new sun-shirts the club has on offer. These shirts are 160gsm 60% cotton 40% poly with micro mesh panels, moisture wicking, & UV protection and are available in short or long sleeve in either white or navy with contrast details.

They are excellent value at \$27 for short sleeve and \$30 for long sleeve, both sporting the NSW MX-5 Club logo. Check out the main regalia web page for sizing details and ordering information.

A must-have item to add to your summer wear to give you extra sun

protection for top-down drives and resting between motorsport runs is a bucket hat. These are available in Chapter colour from your Chapter Regalia Officer or Convenor and come embroidered with your Chapter logo. See your chapter regalia page for more information.

Another great summer regalia item is the long-sleeved chambray shirt, embroidered with the NSW MX-5 Club logo. These have proven to be especially popular with ladies who wear them unbuttoned over t-shirts on social drives and can vouch that on overnight trips, they are wash-N-wear.



Guys also love them as a dressier choice for events which include a social activity. Sizing details and ordering information is available on the main regalia web page.

If you are looking for an easy-wear item with good sun protection, you cannot go past the long-sleeved cotton tees in black or white or the cotton marle choice in grey.

These tees come embroidered with the NSW MX-5 Club logo and are excellent value at \$20.

And do not forget to also have a look at your Chapter regalia page. Our members love wearing their Chapter polos on outings, as you can see in this photo from Illawarra Chapter.

I am looking forward to seeing you and your car on a run sometime soon. Come in your regalia and I will do the same!

Cheers, Chris



4FC Mens Chambray
Available in sizes S to 5XL



4LSL Ladies Chambray
Available in sizes 8 to 24





NORTH TO QUEENSLAND

2021

Words: Kerry Redfern, Barry Luttrell
 Images : David Gazzard, Chris Cameron

Almost unbelievably, Covid gave us the opportunity via a gap in border closures to cross into Queensland to do our 11-day run north. As David said that night, he did not realize there were so many different roads and ways to get to Port Macquarie, our first night's destination. All went according to plan except the closure of the North Brother Lookout Road, so onto our Motel a little earlier than planned and then to the Pub for dinner

Day 2 and we headed to Coffs Harbour along the coast through Crescent Head and South-West rocks rather than via the lovely bends of the Oxley Hwy as it closed due to land slips. It was also co-pilots' day and figuring that the usual drivers were hopeless at navigating, a simpler route was in order. But choosing the Belmore River Left Bank Road turned out to be an unexpected driver's challenge, being a continuous chicane through an endless sea of potholes!

Morning tea at Monument Point and then onto Urunga for lunch before rolling into Coffs Harbour and a stroll to the Bowling Club for dinner.

Off to Tweed Heads via the back roads. Out of Coffs Harbour via the scenic Coramba Rd through hinterland villages and on to Grafton and morning tea at Lawrence Park on the River. Our group of cars was a hit with some locals who came over to chat and take photographs. Lunch was at Lismore shopping centre, each of us at our café of choice. Change of run leader with Rob giving us an insight to the area he had lived in, had loved and where he drove the school bus.

The scenery on both sides of the road was magnificent and the view from where Rob lived was unbelievable. Some fun MX5 roads and great scenery then afternoon tea at the Clarrie Hall Dam



Picnic area. Then we proceeded though the Tweed Valley to our destination. That was another memorable moment. The motel boss had not told the staff about our booking, but with patience, time, and John's guidance we finally all got booked into our rooms.

After a day to relax in Tweed Heads it was on to Ipswich joined by some Queensland club members in their immaculate MX5's. John invited them to lead for the day and split us into two groups. We set off on the motorway and quickly reached the backroads and on to Wunburra Lookout with great views towards the coast. Morning tea was at the Dancing Waters Carpark at Springbrook National Park and lunch at Tamborine Mountain then we headed though Beaudesert to overnight at Ipswich.



Today Ipswich to Monkland (Gympie) - so many great roads bringing so much enjoyment, and with a new group of Queenslanders leading the way. Leaving Ipswich, we drove the backroads to Wivenhoe Outlook with spectacular views from the mountains to the coast. Passing several waterfalls, we took the Mount Glorious Road to morning tea at Dayboro. Then a 96km drive brought us to the Glass House Mountains Lookout then the Glass House Mountains Café for lunch with views to die for.

With some of the Queenslanders staying with us overnight, we headed out this time to Toowoomba. Leaving Monkland, we travelled via the Mary Valley Way to Maleny (a pretty little English-style village) for morning tea where we all sampled Nick's

looong 1kg Kenilworth doughnut.

We then progressed to Kilcoy for lunch at various cafés and reassembled at the tourist information centre. We then travelled to Shiels Lookout with views over Wivenhoe Dam and then onto Esk for afternoon tea and finally into Toowoomba and our accommodation.

Another free day with a small group local tour led by Col and David (Queensland MX5 members) to the beautiful Japanese Gardens, through the Darling Downs for lunch at Nobbys and return via Gatton and Highlands.

Time now to start heading home so it is off to Lismore for the night but before leaving John gave us our morning briefing and also gave us a warning - he said he did not want cars making it difficult for the run leaders to get out of the carpark to lead the group out, so do not start your engines until the run leaders were in position. WELL! Andy & Vicky got caught. As penance were made tail end Charlie for the day! We had a very cold clear run to Warwick which is a lovely town and had morning tea in the Rotary Park. Following the NSW border along Spring Creek Road, we stopped at Daggs Falls/Lookout, what a funny name for a waterfall, then onto the Queen Mary Falls. John once again ordered our lunch in advance and all went smoothly, then after lunch we walked to the falls and back, then proceeded to Lismore via Mount Lindsay Hwy, Summerland Way and the Bruxner Hwy.

Penultimate day and it is off to Armidale and one of the longest

days so far. Following the Bruxner Hwy to Tenterfield stopping at Jubilee Park for morning tea. Leaving Tenterfield we progressed down the New England Hwy through Boliva, Deep Water and Dundee to Glen Innes (home of the Gallic Standing Stones). A turn west onto the Gwydir Hwy took us to Inverell passing wind farms on the ridges, then through Swanvale and lunch at the Byron Street cafes in Inverell. After lunch we gathered at the National Transport Museum for a tour of their excellent collection of cars, trucks and motorcycles (well worth a look if you happen to be in the area). Leaving Inverell, we continued South on the Tingha / Bundarra road (a good quality secondary

road) through Bundarra, Abington, Yarrowyck then on to Armidale to our accommodation.

Our last day of the trip and it is to end at Heatherbrae where the group will split up and each head home. It was a cool 5 degrees when we set off, the first part of the trip made more interesting with Jenny & Barry sharing stories about their school and family background in the Armidale area. Jenny did warn us that temperature would drop lower than 5 degrees when we got to the "pines" - and she was correct - on my screen it showed as "1 degree". After a morning tea stop at Walcha we proceeded down Thunderbolt's way where a car coming the other way crossed

onto our side of the road nearly hitting Andy & Vicki. It was only Vicki's quick reaction that saved a head-on, but the encounter did leave their car stranded briefly sitting sideways in the middle of the road. After an impromptu stop at a picnic area beside the Manning River to settle everyone's nerves, it was on through Gloucester to Heatherbrae for lunch at the Pie Shop and farewells.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along on the expedition for making it so much fun.



DUBBO ZOOFARI

14-16 May 2021



Leaving Hall with eight MX5s, onto the Barton Highway and heading toward Murrumbateman where James and Giulia joined the congo line. It wasn't long thereafter we slipped into Boorowa for morning tea at the local bakery, at which time Ian and Carmel (RPM Chapter) joined us to complete our procession of ten MX5s.

Next stop for lunch was at the 174 years old, hot-air balloon capital of Australia, full of colonial history, Canowindra. A 'light' lunch at Finn's Store and a quick stroll of the main street (and a couple of the traditional purchases) before heading to Dubbo via the Mitchell

Highway with a 'pit stop' at Cameron Park, Wellington. While some were 'concerned' about the media generated mice plague stories, thankfully only a couple of lifeless mice were seen over the entire weekend. They must have been further afield.

Arriving at Dubbo in the latter part of the day, settling into the Cattleman's Motor Inn, Friday evening was 'free time.' Some found a pleasant Thai restaurant across the road while others wandered a little further to a local watering hole for some very good pub food and the occasional drink. Saturday saw all 20 of us spend the day at the Western Plains Zoo. Some drove the circuit while others strolled around. Entertaining us (among others) were some of the old favourites, namely hippos, rhinos, lions, apes, monkeys, elephants and of course the meerkats. Steve volunteered as tour guide, doing an excellent job in only seeing the followers disorientated twice.

Saturday evening saw all 20 enjoy a great A La Carte dinner at the Cattleman's Restaurant. The restaurant also served as a great

vantage point to watch the Dubbo Show fireworks – a great piece of planning or fluke?

Sunday morning saw us all visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service Visitors Centre (RFDS) and become immersed in the RFDS live operations across Australia on giant control screens. We were also fortunate enough to watch and listen to some extraordinary stories told by those who lived them plus also be entertained with some very interesting touchscreen interactions.

Many thanks to Michelle who gave us an enthusiastic and thorough overview. The RFDS experience is well worth it and certainly cements just how necessary the RFDS is to communities throughout Australia.

After RFDS all safely found their way back to Canberra albeit on varying roads, some back over the same track, some via Yeoval and others detouring via Orange.

Words: Ian Bottcher

Images : Robyn Bottcher and Stephen Yong

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

31 October 2021

Words: Bryan Shedden

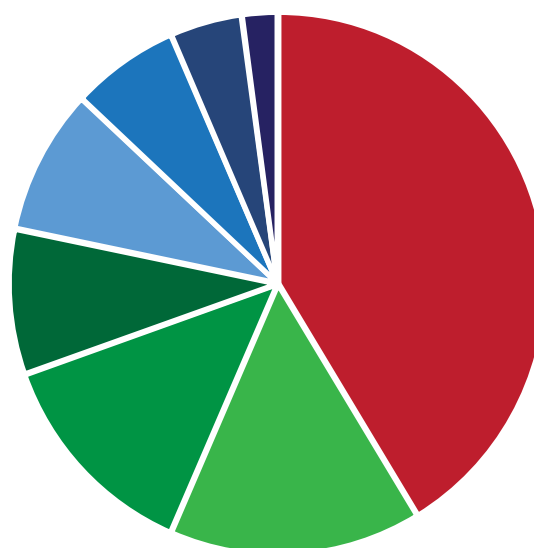
Stats : Bryan Shedden

Current Members -1093 (748 memberships)

New members - 46

New members per chapter:

- Sydney = 19
- Canberra = 7
- Hunter = 6
- Mid North Coast = 4
- South Coast = 4
- Illawarra = 3,
- RPM = 2
- Other region = 1 (Riverina)



Please welcome our new (and returning) members:

Mirella Canziani	Canberra	Jennene Crowney	Mid North Coast	Alisa Boyd-Wells	Sydney
Penny Costello	Canberra	Valerie Escott	Mid North Coast	Chung Cheng	Sydney
Andrew Hingston	Canberra	K. Langworthy-Ward	Mid North Coast	James Gillham	Sydney
Gerard Kelly	Canberra	John Ragen	Mid North Coast	Michelle Healey	Sydney
Rick Meir	Canberra	Chris Hogan	other region	Nick Healey	Sydney
Tina Meir	Canberra	Sarah Thompson	RPM	Ian Hung	Sydney
John Rice	Canberra	James Vella	RPM	Laura Jarvis	Sydney
Eugenia Dunlevie	Hunter	Dewi Brewitt	South Coast	Susan Kehoe	Sydney
Michael Dunlevie	Hunter	Neil Brewitt	South Coast	Librayanti Kooyman	Sydney
Andrew Felfoldi	Hunter	Bob Olde	South Coast	Jayden Kriss	Sydney
Bruce "Fleet" Fleeting	Hunter	Karen Olde	South Coast	Tony Lentini	Sydney
Paul Nichols	Hunter	Alex Air	Sydney	Wales Lin	Sydney
Steve Preston	Hunter	Matthew Allen	Sydney	Joshua McLean	Sydney
Leann Hudson	Illawarra	Glen Barker	Sydney	Andrew Wells	Sydney
Dennis Scott	Illawarra	Dante Boyd	Sydney		
Matt Syll	Illawarra	Jonathan Boyd	Sydney		

LET'S TALK 2-WAY RADIOS

Words: Chris Wyatt
Images : Stock footage

One of the things I most enjoy about belonging to the MX-5 club is the socialisation. Friends getting together to talk and enjoy each other's company. Then we go on a run together and isolate ourselves in our car. Thankfully, the uptake of 2-way radios is starting to grow in some of the chapters. They not only bring us together they also help if anyone has a problem or gets side-tracked.

As the first in what I hope will be a series of articles about anything MX-5, I thought we might cover some of the basics.

Some people believe, that because you can't use a mobile phone in a car, that also applies to a 2-way or CB radio. Whilst I am not a professional in this field, I can only quote my research of NSW Government legislation. Section 300 of the legislation specifically excludes these radios from the mobile phone rules.

However, there are always the coverall sections that say if using any

device causes you to drive dangerously you can be charged, like driving in thongs.

What is a 2-way? Well in simplistic terms it is a device that uses the radio spectrum to allow two people to talk to each other over a distance. The actual technology has been developing steadily ever since World War 2 with that development growing so fast it has recently morphed into modern day mobile phone. As development has passed there has been higher and higher demand over the limited radio spectrum, so now we are using the International standard UHF (ultra-high frequency) band. The device we are talking about, as a '2-way', could more correctly be called a "1 way at a time" (simplex). Using digital technology has allowed us to cram 80 channels into a very small bandwidth.

Now that I have got all the historical stuff out of the way, what's in it for us? Well, it means that if we want to talk to each other, everyone needs to have a radio, a UHF CB RADIO. (There are others that look the same so make sure that is what you get) There are effectively two forms "installed" and "hand-held." Most new ones of both forms

will have an 80-channel capacity. I'll explain that later. The main concern when you are buying any radio is the power output. Whilst installed radios are usually 5 watt the handheld can be anything from 0.1w thru to 5w. The power rating controls the range. Because UHF travels better in a line of sight, the range quoted by the manufacturer is fairly useless on a winding and hilly country road. If you can afford it the higher the power the better. **HANDHELD.** As it sounds these are a very compact radio with everything fitting in the palm of your hand including the battery microphone, aerial and all controls. Depending on its condition the battery will usually last a full day. One of the few problems are because of the compact nature the aerial cannot be made highly efficient. For someone who does not use the radio regularly they can prove to be quite suitable. You just need to remember to charge them before the run or at least keep your charge cable in the car.

INSTALLED. These units are more of a commercial style of unit designed to be (semi) permanently installed although I have seen some very ingenious temporary installations in many MX-5s.

Radio Channels

Channel 1	Repeater Channel
Channel 2	Repeater Channel
Channel 3	Repeater Channel
Channel 4	Repeater Channel
Channel 5	Emergency Repeater Output
Channel 6	Repeater Channel
Channel 7	Repeater Channel
Channel 8	Repeater Channel
Channel 9	General Chat Channel
Channel 10	4WD Clubs or Convoys and Nat. Parks.
Channel 11	Call Channel
Channel 12	General Chat Channel
Channel 13	General Chat Channel
Channel 14	General Chat Channel
Channel 15	General Chat Channel
Channel 16	General Chat Channel
Channel 17	General Chat Channel
Channel 18	Caravanners and Campers Convoy Channel
Channel 19	General Chat Channel
Channel 20	General Chat Channel
Channel 21	General Chat Channel
Channel 22	Telemetry and Telecommand Only (No Voice or Data)
Channel 23	Telemetry and Telecommand Only (No Voice or Data)
Channel 24	General Chat Channel
Channel 25	General Chat Channel
Channel 26	General Chat Channel
Channel 27	General Chat Channel
Channel 28	General Chat Channel
Channel 29	Road Safety Channel Pacific Hwy S ydney to Bris.
Channel 30	General Chat Channel
Channel 31	Repeater Input
Channel 32	Repeater Input
Channel 33	Repeater Input
Channel 34	Repeater Input
Channel 35	Emergency Repeater Input
Channel 36	Repeater Input
Channel 37	Repeater Input
Channel 38	Repeater Input
Channel 39	General Chat Channel
Channel 40	Road Safety Channel Australia Wide

Channel 41	Repeater Channel
Channel 42	Repeater Channel
Channel 43	Repeater Channel
Channel 44	Repeater Channel
Channel 45	Repeater Channel
Channel 46	Repeater Channel
Channel 47	Repeater Channel
Channel 48	Repeater Channel
Channel 49	General Chat Channel
Channel 50	General Chat Channel
Channel 51	General Chat Channel
Channel 52	General Chat Channel
Channel 53	General Chat Channel
Channel 54	General Chat Channel
Channel 55	General Chat Channel
Channel 56	General Chat Channel
Channel 57	General Chat Channel
Channel 58	General Chat Channel
Channel 59	General Chat Channel
Channel 60	General Chat Channel
Channel 61	Reserved due to bandwidth of data channels 22 & 23
Channel 62	Reserved due to bandwidth of data channels 22 & 23
Channel 63	Reserved due to bandwidth of data channels 22 & 23
Channel 64	General Chat Channel
Channel 65	General Chat Channel
Channel 66	General Chat Channel
Channel 67	General Chat Channel
Channel 68	General Chat Channel
Channel 69	General Chat Channel
Channel 70	General Chat Channel
Channel 71	Repeater Input
Channel 72	Repeater Input
Channel 73	Repeater Input
Channel 74	Repeater Input
Channel 75	Repeater Input
Channel 76	Repeater Input
Channel 77	Repeater Input
Channel 78	Repeater Input
Channel 79	General Chat Channel
Channel 80	General Chat Channel

They need to be wired into the electrical system of the car and fitted with a separate aerial. The prices of these units tend to be similar to a 5w handheld but the aerial and installation being extra. Again, there are two types of installed units, either with the controls on the face of the radio or with them on the microphone. The latter tends to make them more suitable for MX5s due to the small amount of space taken and the ability to be mounted under the seat. Another accessory that might make them easier to mount is a remote speaker.

I will cover aerial types and installation techniques in a later article, As promised, Let's talk about channels. I have attached a list of channel allocations. This list has been developed over the years to help all users including us. You

will notice it has special channels for all sorts of things, for our use, it is better to stick to the general chat channels as we don't want to interfere with other users. There are several repeater channels, but they are limited to specific areas and are unsuited to our use as we are driving past.

Within the first 40 channels there are only 17 "general chat". When the system was first developed there were, only 40 channels, and these were quickly jammed with small businesses using them 24/7 for inter vehicle talk. Such things as road works and agricultural use. When the system was expanded to 80 the allowed 23 general channels were not as heavily used as most of the businesses already had 40 channel radios already installed. Many of these businesses also installed high power transmitters

making them heard over wider areas. About twelve months ago I suggested changing the club channel from 13 to 65 and that seems to have reduced the cross chat. We then found a couple of members had 40 channel units but were able to loan them club handhelds. Just as a closing item for this edition let's talk about procedure.

As I mentioned earlier the way we use this system is "one person at a time" technically, simplex. What it means is that we may have ten people trying to talk at one time it can become quite garbled to the receivers and just like at a table the closest person tends to be the only one heard. This is quite normal and tends to sort itself out however just take note that if, when you release your press to talk you can hear someone else talking you may not have been heard. The other thing to mention is to be careful not to press and hold the button accidentally, we have heard some interesting conversations over the years, and no one can contact you to let you know.

Enough fun for this quarter. Next time we can talk about squelch, ground plains and cell call.

Talk soon. Chris.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY ARMIDALE

9-11 July 2021

Words: Jillian McDonell

Images: Wayne Lang

On a cool overcast Friday morning Peter & Jill in their pretend MX5 (Kia Seltos) led the group of Allen and Pam, Jane and Greg, Murray and Margaret (in real MX5's) as they left the "Donut" in Port Macquarie at 7.00am to head up the freeway to Kempsey. From drizzle to rain we picked up Wayne and Cathy and drove through the rain to The Old Butter Factory at Bellingen for morning tea meeting up with Robert and Rhonda.

Out of Bellingen and into the foggy hills and green countryside towards Dorrigo.

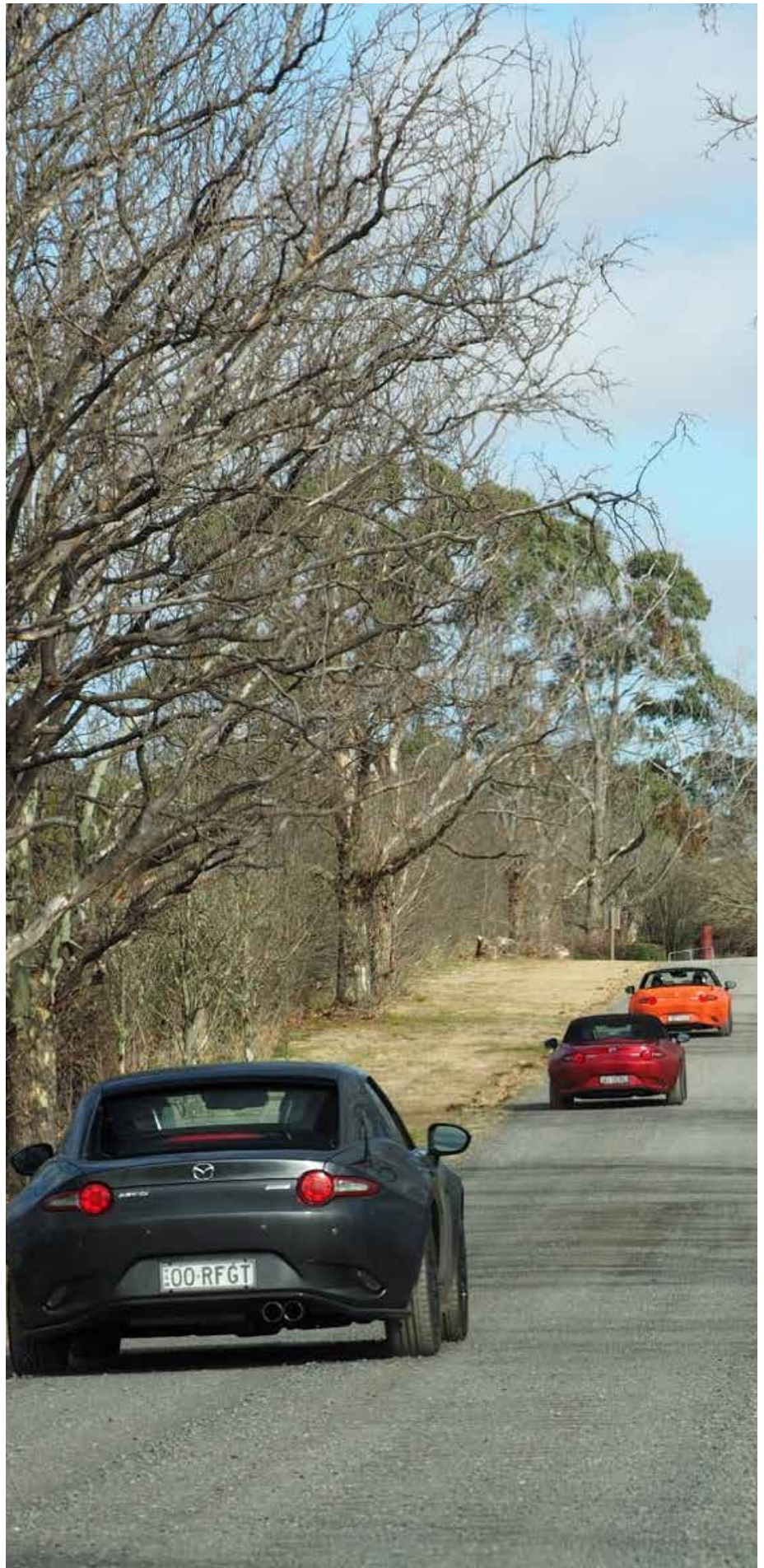


Driving through some heavy fog slowed us down but cleared up by the Armidale turn off. We visited the Wollomombi Falls looking spectacular after the recent falls of good rains and then on to the Wollomombi General Store where we met Kevin and Jen for a pre ordered lunch around the “furnace.” Wollomombi’s population was 112 in the 2016 Census.

The village of Wollomombi comprises the general store, several houses, sports a ground and a community hall. St John’s Presbyterian Church, which was built in 1926 is an original timber building, and still stands in the village.

We then took the 15 minute drive to the old mining town of Hillgrove to the Hillgrove Museum. Hillgrove was one of the major gold fields in New South Wales, with a recorded production of over 15,000 kg of gold. The town of Hillgrove was established in 1884 and grew rapidly during the 1880s and 1890s due to the expanding production of the mining companies. At its peak in about 1898, the town’s population was close to 3,000. It now has a population of about 95.

The museum is in the old three-roomed schoolhouse containing mining and agricultural equipment, old domestic items which are reminders of past domestic life. Old photographs, memorabilia, newspaper stories and art works kept us absorbed for some time.



BATEMANS BAY MUSEUM

9-11 July 2021

Words: Bill Short
Images: Anda Clayton

Rose, Geoff, Anda and Brian from South Coast met Jan and Bill from Illawarra at the Milton Heritage Bakery for coffee and cake. And “Heritage” sets the theme for the trip.

Coffee duly consumed and we set off for Batemans Bay to meet Jon and Mal from South Coast together with Annie & Lawrie from Wagga who are members of the Canberra Chapter. Woohoo, a three Chapter event!

Batemans Bay has evolved as a result of periods of timber cutting and milling (the first major industry of the area), gold prospecting, farming and now aged care.

First stop is the Old Courthouse Museum which is situated on a large block close to bushland and next to the Water Gardens. The Old Courthouse was built in 1905.

We had a guided tour of the Museum which now comprises several connected buildings, including the Courthouse, the former Nelligen one-room School House, the Police Station and Residence and a collection of outbuildings containing antique machinery and tools associated

with the local timber, farming and fishing industries.

The local history of the Batemans Bay area is on display with examples and exhibits of the early days of European settlement, Aboriginal heritage, medicine, education, crime and punishment, industry, military history and domestic arrangements.

Tour over and it is off to JJ's at the Marina, a seafood restaurant overlooking the harbour, for lunch where we all ordered something different. Rose & Jan ordered milk tea in a pot which was duly served. Excuse me, but could we have our milk? Oh dear, the milk was in the tea pot with a tea bag in it!!! Yes Rose & Jan were served tea made with water and milk on the side.

A pleasant drive on a sunny day with quite a few police on patrol and not too many hold ups due to roadworks.



CHERRY TREE HILL WINERY

30 June 2021

Words: Robyn Simms
Images: Robert Simms

Nine cars met at Haywards Bay and had a leisurely trip up Macquarie Pass, through Robertson for a coffee stop at Fitzroy Falls Reservoir. As everyone had travelled with their car roofs up, we were all taken by surprise by the freezing conditions at the reservoir. The trip from the reservoir took us through some beautiful country with properties sporting

picturesque gardens and precision cut hedges.

The owner of Cherry Hill Winery welcomed us warmly and we all enjoyed a pleasant lunch. The food, ranging from lasagne, gourmet meat pies to charcuterie boards all arrived promptly and was delicious. There was a varied range of wines, all of top quality.

A day enjoyed by all and another reason not to let inclement weather stop a good run.

Three dozen bottles of wine in the boot of an MX-5 doesn't affect the handling either.





CANBERRA CAPERS

9-11 July 2021

Words: Bill Short

Images: Bill Short and Anda Clayton

Some time ago, proposed run to a play in Canberra was posted. Need a quick response though because tickets to the play were selling fast and there was only limited available seating. There was an option for anyone not going to the play to do their own thing whilst the play was on and join in on the other run activities.

Initially, a disappointing six people registered for the run. Anda & Brian from South Coast together with Jan & Bill from Illawarra were to travel to Canberra to join Annemie & Peter from Canberra

for dinner and the play, George Orwell's Animal House which was to be performed at the Canberra Playhouse Theatre.

Only four travellers so why take two cars when we can be social in one vehicle? And that is what we arranged well before the event! Even packed a Backgammon set which didn't get used.

Thursday 6th, set off from Milton. Hey it was raining! Travelled down the Princes Highway and took a right turn just before Batemans Bay to go over Clyde Mountain and on to Braidwood. Still raining and lots of it! Excellent choice not to take our MX-5 as we were travelling above the spray coming off the other vehicles.

Morning tea at the Braidwood Bakery. Wait! The rain is breaking up. Could be a bit of sun there. Creeks and rivers are flowing swiftly.

On to the National War Memorial. No run sheet for this trip but didn't need one because we had two GPS things plus verbal directions from previous memory happening.

Lunch at Poppies and then to the National War Memorial where we spent quite a few hours where we played a game of where is (insert name of anyone on the run) and reflecting on the past. Brian found his Great Uncle's name on the First World War listing on the Wall of Remembrance. Jan had a cousin listed in the Vietnam section but did not know about it at the time.

Will look next time she is there. We travelled via a “scenic” route from the War Memorial to our accommodation at The Avenue Hotel, mainly because Brian did not trust the directions from the Sat Nav and Bill was sceptical of Brian’s directions. We got there eventually, overshot the entrance, and then reversed back onto the footpath to temporarily park out of the traffic whilst our “management” booked us in. Then off the footpath and into the Hotel parking for the night.

A brief rest and off again on foot to Lemongrass Thai Restaurant where we catch up with Annemie & Peter. 6:00 pm booking so we can get to the show on time. A Faulty Towers episode - waiter can’t find our table to give us menus & table water. Eventually food ordered & then need to make enquiries due to time constraints and no food. The Waitress does not know what is on the plate and has to repeatedly check. Rush to eat and to the theatre.

Just make it through the doors as the final call bells were ringing at the Playhouse in the Canberra Theatre Centre. A contemporary performance with an original interpretation of Animal Farm is being performed by a cast of five actors. Great show! Coffee & ice cream at Maccas on the way back to the Hotel.

Day Two starts with a sunny morning and a hearty breakfast at Rye Cafe & Bar. Then off to the National Art Gallery for the Botticelli to Van Gogh exhibition. Priority entry thanks to the package hotel deal. Bill was more familiar with the Van Gogh painting “Starry Night” than the

featured “Sunflowers” thanks to the Dr Who episode “Vincent and the Doctor.” Get to play another game of where is (insert name of anyone on the run). Anda won this game – three of us were inside the exhibition waiting for Anda and she was outside at the gift shop and could not get back in.

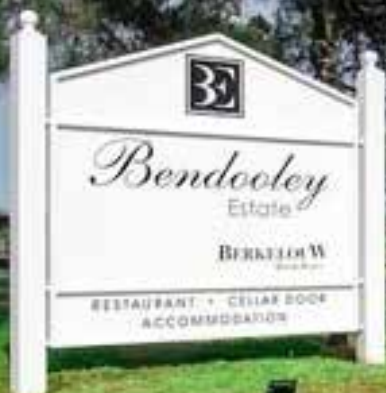
Coffee at the outdoor café after the exhibition and then on to the Old Parliament House for a very good, and well worth, guided tour. Tour finishes and time for lunch. It’s 1:30pm! Let’s lunch at Bungendore. Phone ahead to a café and advised that the kitchen closes at 2pm but they will wait for us. Arrive at 2:03pm and told that the kitchen had closed. Looked like they had packed up well before 2pm from the state of the kitchen. On to the Braidwood bakery for

a lunch/afternoon tea and then an uneventful drive home along the Kings Highway to Batemans Bay and up the Princes Highway to Milton to drop off Anda & Brian. Finally, on to Wollongong.

This was a two day run with four people in one vehicle and no MX-5. It felt like a longer run than it actually was, worked extremely well. The event was much more social than it would have been if we were in two separate cars and we would do it again this way if there were only four to six participants.

Thanks, Anda and Brian for organising our trip.





BURN TO BENDOOLEY

13 June 2021

Words: Brian Clayton
Images: Anda Clayton

With a forecast for heavy rain and even snow, six intrepid travellers gathered at Tomerong for the highlands. While the coast was experiencing sunshine and a mild 11 degrees, the early topic of conversation was the -4 degrees at Bowral. So, it was tops up, heaters on and away we went.

The drive up to Kangaroo Valley was uneventful and a warm coffee was a welcome bonus. On again and up Barrengarry Mountain, through Moss Vale and on to Bendooley Winery. Light rain was falling and it was cool, to say the least, but inside was a welcoming fire and toasty warmth.

In the middle of a bookshop, there was plenty to amuse the avid readers while we waited for our two Sydney members to arrive. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances they were unable to join us for lunch, however, lunch was more than enjoyable.

Great food, lovely conversation, with the after dinner treat of a bit of book browsing. As the table filled with the discoveries from the bookshelves, the time approached to pay the bill, pay for the books and wend our way home. The path home took us through Bowral, Robertson, Jamberoo Mountain, Kiama, a wonderful drive even in drizzly conditions. Thank you, Geoff and Rose, for a great outing. The consensus is we will put this on our annual agenda.



'BLACKBIRD'

15 August 2021

Words and images:: 'Blackbird' as told to Bryan Hicks

Blackbird authors this story; he is a Mazda MX5 NC who is very charismatic and aware of his surroundings.

My name is Blackbird, and I am a well looked after Mazda MX5 NC who likes to please his master by behaving well on the road and looking out for his master's wellbeing. I love to go fast, designed that way too. I love the corners and am very capable of adhering to them like I am on rails. I love driving through the Royal National Park with enough corners, the road is so smooth. I sit at home so much during the week that I really enjoy getting my machinery working smoothly. Last Saturday, we headed off from Heathcote and zipped into

the National Park at Waterfall, I immediately came across a slow "P-Plater" in a disgusting little bubble of a car. Thank goodness he turned left at the T-Junction; we went right. Not so lucky though, because there was another "P-Plater" in front. He was different, he put his pedal to the metal, and we went along quite briskly. Coming out of the park at Bald Hill, we went straight up towards Simbio Wildlife Park then on to the Old Princes Hwy where we could go 100KPH.

We got to Kiama without incident, although we constantly stopped to wait for my friend. He is a white NA, and he smokes a little, so is really slow. He has done high mileage and coughs a fair bit. His master is also incredibly old and

does not want to his car driven into the dead corner. All seven of us parked next to a takeaway shop and my master and all of the other ten people had a party under the gazebo in the park. I could hear them from where I and all the other cars parked in the rain. Not much but just enough to get us dirty. We had to wait for hours for them to return. We heard them say they were going to have coffee at one of their houses up the mountain where there were wonderful views of the lake.

I'm back in the garage, waiting for the next event. I am still waiting for cleaning though.

Yours Truly, Blackbird

COFFS TO NAMBUCCA

21 April 2021

Words and images: Wayne Lang

On an extremely miserable morning at around 9:00 am, Allen, Pam, Susan, John and Greg departed Port Macquarie and headed North up the Pacific Highway on their way to Coffs Harbour in the pouring rain, top definitely up.

Around half an hour later, they picked up Cath and me at the top of the Kempsey off ramp. The rain never eased for the remainder of our drive to our morning tea destination of "The Boat Shed" at Nambucca Heads.

There we met up with our run organisers, Rhonda and Rob Partridge and new members Chris and Mick from Macksville.

We tucked into some scones and a nice cuppa each before deciding to set off to Coffs Harbour via Bonnaville and Sawtell.

Before doing so, we bid farewell to Susan and John who needed to head home for a prior engagement.

We travelled along some of the old Pacific Highway in the unrelenting

rain before reaching Coffs, where we headed down to the jetty to our luncheon destination at "The Coffs Harbour Yacht Club".

As Cath and I were driving into the parking area, I hit a "bollard" that was sticking up in the middle of the driveway, I just didn't see it. Luckily there didn't seem to be any damage caused.

Our group then hurried inside out of the inclement weather to find our table. Then everyone ordered their lunches and grabbed a beverage of choice and started mingling. Around this time, Roby and Peter arrived to join us.

We had a lovely afternoon catching up with each other. The lunches were very nice and the conversation was plentiful. It's always great catching up with the members of this formidable chapter of the club.

To conclude, I'd like to offer a huge welcome to our newest members Chris and Mick and hope you can both join us on many more runs in the future.



DAM, DAM, DAM

17 March 2021

Words: Rod Nicholas
Images: Stock and Rod Nicholas

The weather forecast was not promising. That's not normally a big problem, a picnic run is not much fun the rain. Besides, this run was going to tackle some of the region's best twisty roads, and the last thing we needed was water and debris on the roads.

Not that we were going to be doing anything extreme, but extra care was the order of the day. A few sprinkles as we headed out sparkled on the windscreen, but otherwise all looked good.

Having plotted a run that would take us to three of Canberra's water storage dams, I couldn't resist the temptation to chuck another dam in. Our meet point was the lookout at Scrivener Dam, which was only just large enough for the thirteen cars and 20 members who started from here (we were picking up another car and river at our first stop). Scrivener Dam was built in the early '60s and holds back the Molonglo River to form Lake Burley Griffin. The concrete gravity dam is 33 metres high and 319 metres,

was built with 55,000 cubic metres of concrete, and holds back 33 million cubic metres of water with a surface area of 664 hectares (seven square kms).

We would be visiting Googong, Corin and Cotter dams on what proved to be an easy-going drive in the country of a little less than 200kms. First up was Googong Dam, just the other side of Queanbeyan. Googong is a major component of Canberra's water supply (the largest), and when we visited was a smidgen under full. Googong is 66 metres high and is 417 metres wide. It holds some 818 million cubic metres of water and has a surface area of 696 hectares, not much more than LBG. After the mandatory photos, accompanied by a bit of drizzle, I briefed the gang on the next leg and we set off.

We zoom-zoomed out towards Burra and on to Corin Dam, way up in the hills in Namadgi National Park. The drive out was a delight, especially once we got past the southern edges of Canberra and headed out along the Tidbinbilla Road, with its sweeping curves and gorgeous rural views. Taking advantage of the lack of traffic, I decided to pull into Gibraltar

Falls on the way up to the dam. Unfortunately, about half of the group seemed to have missed that part of the briefing and I watched as they swept past the turnoff. Most realised they had missed something and turned back but a couple kept going. They had to end up at the dam – there was nowhere else to go – so I took the decision to peek at the falls and catch up with them later. There was plenty of water spilling over the rocks in what I think is one of Canberra's oft-overlooked attractions. And the visit here was a first for several of the group (including a some who had been in Canberra for donkey's years) so the stop was most worthwhile.

After ten minutes or so, we all fired up the excitement machines and headed off to the dam. The Corin Road was in excellent condition and an absolute delight to travel. As expected, we had it to ourselves, which was one reason I'd planned this as a mid-week run. It can be a rewarding drive. Our lost (no, no lost, just temporarily geographically displaced) friends were waiting for us at the dam carpark (hooray!), which was big enough for us. I've been out here several times and the place is



always quiet – another hidden gem. (It's a good spot to start some delightful bushwalks, and there are well-kept toilet facilities and picnic tables.)

Corin is 74 metres high and 282 metres wide and was chockers, which Icon Water tells us is about 2.5 times the volume of Lake Burley Griffin. Taking full advantage of the absence of any other vehicles, we lined the cars up two abreast along the dam wall as photos were snapped and tales were told. I will not tire of seeing a zoom of MX-5s (surely the collective noun for MX-5s is a 'zoom').

We left Corin and retraced our steps back to Tidbinbilla Road for a short ride to Tidbinbilla for a picnic in the grounds of the

information centre. Chairs (and tables) and assorted goodies were extracted from car boots and everyone enjoyed a good old chin-wag as we recounted the beauty of our run so far. Some wandered in the info centre for coffee, drinks, snacks and ice-creams.

Some while later, and enjoying the intermittent sunshine, we saddled up and headed off to our last stop at the Cotter Dam. Originally built in 1915 to a height of 18 metres, in 1951 the dam wall height was raised to 31 metres, but that was not going to meet the needs of Canberra for long. In 2013 another dam was built a little downstream of the original, this time to a height of 83 metres. This increased the capacity of the Cotter by some 2000%.

The Cotter was also chockers. Wandering and photographing as usual, we found we were by no means talked out and enjoyed a leisurely end-of-run rest before heading off home.

Our run presented a rare opportunity to see our water supply at 100 percent capacity, while enjoying the company of friends, the joy of our MX-5s and the beauty of our countryside. (Had we taken the run a week later, we would have viewed the even rarer sight of water cascading in almost unimaginable rivers over the dam walls.)

Not a bad way to spend a Wednesday, eh?





MOTORSPORT DRIVER TRAINING DAY No.1

17 June 2021

Words and images: Ian Combes

Regrettably, we had to postpone our Driver Training days while COVID-19 concerns were high.

Whilst COVID-19 has not gone away, things have settled down enough that we can now restart our Driver Training days. More particularly, we can now have passengers in cars again, so we can offer first timers the benefit of in-car advice and coaching from some of our experienced Club drivers.

The Club has booked two Driver Training days in 2021 - 11th July and 31st October. The 11th of July Driver Training day has been open for a little while now.

Numbers are still very low, so we are keen to attract more participants to the event, especially first timers and beginners.

If you are interested in track days, but don't know where to start - well, this is the event for you! This is a low-key, fun day where you can get a feel for what it is like driving on a real circuit in a safe and controlled environment.

You will have access to more experienced drivers who will be extremely happy to give you some advice and pointers in your car out on the circuit.

Get involved you won't regret it!
<http://nsw.mx5.com.au/events/club-driver-training-day17>

MOTORSPORT MX-5 CLUB TRACK DAY ROUND 3

26 April 2021

Words and images: Ian Combes

Two weeks to go for entries for our next Club track day (round 3) on the 17th of May. This is the traditional Monday Club track day following the Club's NSW Supersprint round on the Sunday (16th May).

This Monday track day is always an enjoyable day for those who can make it - lots of laps are

guaranteed as the field size is usually considerably smaller than our usual Sunday Club track days. You can expect lots of runs.

If you want an even better value day out, you can volunteer to help out on the Sunday track day. If you volunteer for a full day role, your Monday track day is half the normal entry fee.

There's still a few opportunities.

Anyway, have a look at your calendar and pencil on Monday the 17th - you won't regret it!

<http://nsw.mx5.com.au/events/club-track-day-round-31>





MOTORSPORT CLUB TRACK DAY ROUND 4

30 June 2021

Words and images: Ian Combes

As you know, we were forced to postpone the track day that was scheduled for the 27th of June, due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown.

The current lockdown is due to finish on the 9th of July. Indications are that it won't be extended. So, we've made the decision to reschedule the 27th of June track day for the 11th of July. If you did enter for the 27th of June, we will be in touch.

If you are happy to compete on the 11th of July, you don't need to do anything (except complete the usual paperwork) - your entry will be moved over for you.

If you don't want to do the 11th of July, then you need to let us know. We will re-open the event (for the 11th of July) on Thursday, and leave it open for another week. So, if you didn't enter for the 27th, but want to enter for the 11th, you will be able to.

If you entered for the Driver Training day, we would find another date for this event. However, if you were keen to do something on the 11th, let us know - if there enough takers, we will slot you into a first timers group on the 11th. No in-car advisors though, sorry.

Cross your fingers that things improve over the next week and a bit. Hopefully, we will get to

run the event on the 11th of July, but anything could happen in that time.

We need to make a call next week. <https://nsw.mx5.com.au/events/club-track-day-round-42>

Is that about a bonnet length?





MOTORSPORT CLUB MOTORSPORT ON HOLD

28 July 2021

Words and images: Ian Combes

Most people will have seen Wednesday's announcement - another month in the garage. Even before that, the chances of us running the 21st and 22nd August were virtually non-existent anyway.

The Victorian 6 Hour Relay at Phillip Island scheduled for this weekend has also been cancelled by the organising committee. This announcement was made yesterday via their website and Facebook page. Our competing club members had already cancelled as the travel restrictions would have prevented them from getting into Victoria.

Not that I want to rub more salt into the wound, but September is also cancelled for MX-5 Club motorsport. We only had 2 events in September - the 5th at Pheasant Wood and the 25th at SMSP. Well, the 5th is so close to August, we'll call it August (it was originally a replacement Driver Training day but could have turned into a track day). The SMSP Amaroo event has a number of problems, most particularly the need for flag marshals. Clearly that is simply not going to happen in the current climate.

That means that the next possible event is 31st October - so sad to say, but that's 3 months in the garage...

There is a NSW Supersprint in October and the Alfa 12 hour at Winton as well, so we'll see what happens with these.

In September, there is an MRA round and a SMSP North NSW Supersprint, which must be on thin ice at the moment.

That's 12 events in total (7 of ours) that have been cancelled by this delta strain outbreak, with another two that must be doubtful.

TILL NEXT TIME...
SAFE TRAVELS MX-5-ers

