

# CLUB



# TALK

A Quarterly Publication of the MX-5 Club of NSW

# HAPPY

# 5TH

# ANNIVERSARY

1995 Winter / Spring Edition

PO Box 267 North Sydney, NSW 2059

Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW Inc.



THE FOUNDATION MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE 5TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

# The President's Report

What a busy time it has been over the last five months. Day and weekends social runs, including that magnificent 90 car breakfast run in conjunction with the MG Car Club, the joint activity with the Queensland club at Coffs Harbour during Easter, a Motorkhana and a theatre party etc etc have kept us all on the go. It was good to see these events so well attended - if you didn't make it to at least one of them you missed out on lots of enjoyment.

There will be plenty more happening between now and Christmas, including what should be a wonderful weekend run overnighting on the South Coast, the annual Concourse, a Motorkhana, a training day at Wakefield Park, a breakfast run and the Presentation Dinner.

Ruth and I have spent three weekends in Canberra during the last three months getting all the preliminary details sorted out for Natmeet 96. It is shaping up to be a real winner with what we believe is a good balance between runs, social, sporting, sightseeing activities, with the euphoria of competition brought about by being together with other MX-5 drivers.

Hope to see you at one of our events in the coming three months.

*Peter Simpson*

## CAPTAIN'S REPORT

It's heartening that the shortest day has now passed and we are on the down hill to the sunshine....and MX-5 days. Much has happened over the last few months and the time has just flown by.

On our regular scene we have been having the usual Sunday runs which are still being attended by 25-30 cars each time. Let's keep this up as I am sure that everyone still gets a buzz out of being in a convoy of MX's. The Motorkhanas have been a little down on numbers but we are working on a different venue and ways to get more people involved in the day. Weekend extravaganzas have continued. Our first one was to Port Stephens and the next one, which promises to be a beauty, will be to the Jamberoo Park and the South Coast. There are separate reports on most of these events so I won't bore you with any more details.

Out of the ordinary we have had the Easter weekend journey to Coffs Harbour to meet with the Queensland club; a day at Eastern Creek with the MR2 club to raise money for canteen; and still to come is our day at Wakefield Park.

It is also pleasing to see many new members coming to our events. Keep it up.

On a personal note...I have resigned from APP Travel after a short stint of 13 years! To be fair on my new employer I will not be taking any Club phone calls at work, so if you need to contact me please leave a message on the answering machine at home.

Thought for this report: let's wave to other MX drivers...

Happy motoring.  
**George Russ**

# 5TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Seventy MX-5ers, including nine foundation members, attended our 5th Anniversary party on the 18th June at Vicarys Winery at Luddenham - the location of our inaugural meeting on the 24th June 1990.

After a convoy from North Ryde to Luddenham via Dural, the Hawkesbury Reaches and Richmond, the cars were assembled by colour, and drivers and passengers then moved into the warmth of the Winery where the social committee had been busy decorating the hall. Captain George Russ welcomed everyone during a wine tasting. A two course country roast dinner followed along with a few formalities.

George introduced the nine foundation members present and after a stirring rendition of "HAPPY BIRTHDAY", I had the honour of cutting the special birthday cake.

Bob Hall, our illustrious member and one who played such an important role in the original design of the MX-5, addressed the gathering in his own inimitable way and was then asked to draw the major raffle prize - two tickets for the Mazda box at the 12 Hour Race at Eastern Creek. It was won by Tony Buon.

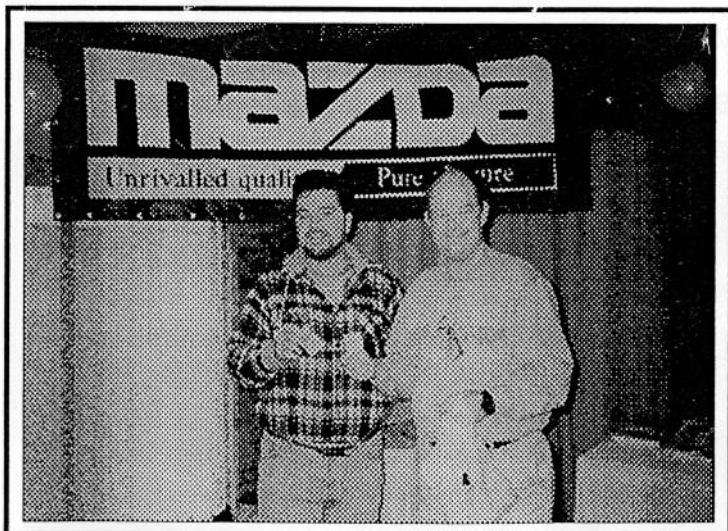
Mazda, through Steve Rowland and Mike Quist, were very supportive to us, donating not only the 12 Hour Race ticket prize but also some caps, shirts and socks. In all we were able to offer over thirty prizes so there were lots of winners. Second prize was a year's subscription to Australian Sports & Classic Cars. It was won by Dave Perrin. Tim Vaughan from Australian Sports & Classic Cars joined us for our birthday celebrations and bought along the MX-5 which had taken part in the recent Targa Tasmania.

A day to remember was enjoyed by all - I wonder how many of us will be around for the 10th Birthday!

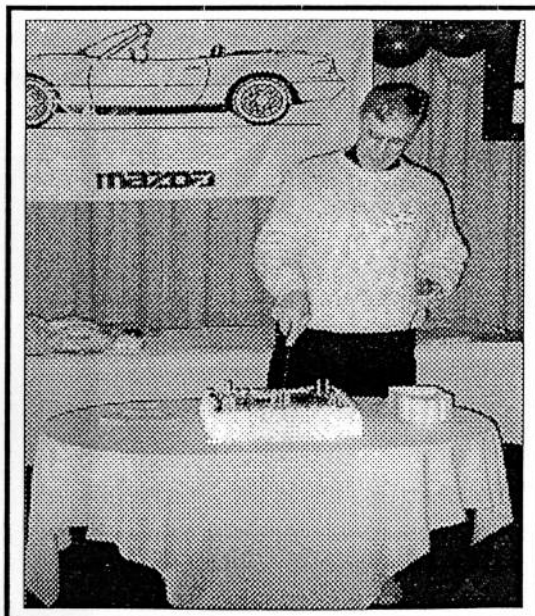
Special thanks to Mazda for all their assistance, to Ron and Anne Lyons who reminded us of the anniversary and organised the convoy, and to George Russ who put his usual extra amount of effort into organising the whole event. Thanks also to Ruth Simpson, Colleen Russ and Trudy McCutcheon, Bryan & Paula Wu and Jean Cook for helping to make it such a successful day.

PETER SIMPSON.

Bob Hall (R) Presents Tony Buon with the ticket for 2  
in the Mazda box at the 12 Hour Race



President Peter Simpson cuts the 5th  
Birthday Cake





# CONTACT ACROSS THE PACIFIC

On a recent business trip to the USA, I thought it would be a good idea to make contact with a Miata Club.

As I was going to be in Chicago for a week, the Windy City Chapter was the obvious choice and with the assistance of the Miata Club of America I was given the name of the president - Dan Baker.

After contacting Dan I was delighted to find that they were having a general meeting on the Tuesday night (two hours after I arrived in Chicago from Sydney) and they were involved in an Autocross event the following Sunday. Dan also faxed me a copy of Windy City's latest magazine so I had a better idea what the club was all about.

In fact, it turned out to be amazingly similar to our own - similar number of members, same proportion of events between day runs, weekend runs, sporting and social events. I guess the biggest difference is that they can enjoy their Miata for 7-8 months a year - many of the members just garage their car in winter.

I was collected at my hotel by Dan's wife Valerie, taken to the general meeting and immediately made to feel like I was one of the family. I guess MX-5 owners - or at least club members - are much the same around the world!

Dan gave me the chance to speak about our club activities and also to do a promotion for Natmeet, which resulted in a couple of enquires from Windy City-ites interested in making the trip down under.

The following Sunday was a real hoot. The Autocross event was in the car park of one of the horse racing tracks and was attended by about 120 cars of all types, including about 15 Miatas. Unfortunately it was a wet and cold day which made it a bit uncomfortable for humans and very interesting for the cars.

The Autocross course was about 1 kilometre long, boomerang shaped, and consisted of some low speed manoeuvres and a high speed run through slaloms and curves.

It was basically a second gear event with speeds reaching 50 - 55 m.p.h.

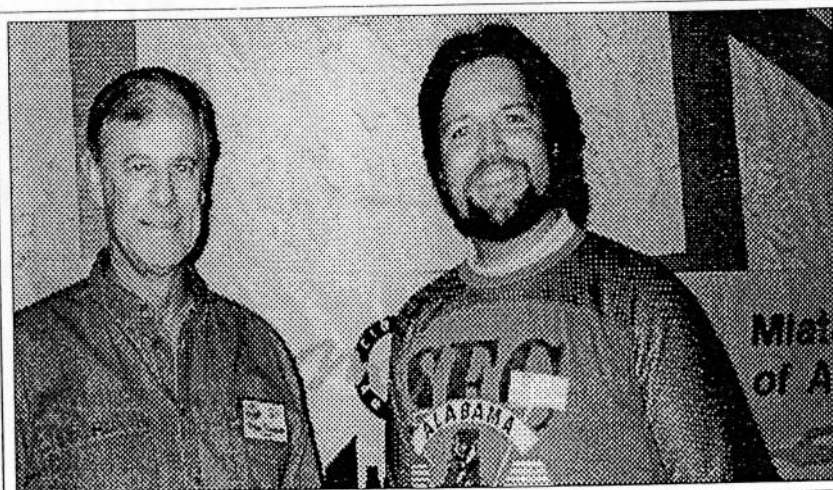
The Miatas performed well and left most of the US muscle cars for dead. However, the BMW M3, Ford Probes, various Porsches and a Nissan 200SX were all outperforming the Miatas.

I felt very privileged to be part of the chapter for a week and we have resolved to continue to keep in touch with each other.

If anyone else is going overseas, I would urge you to try to make contact with a local MX-5 club- it will be a rewarding experience.

## PETER SIMPSON

Peter Simpson with Dan Baker  
president of the Windy City  
(Chicago) Miata Club.



# NATMEET '96

We have had a very good response to our call for attendance at Natmeet 96 in Canberra. Over thirty cars have already registered and discussions with other State Presidents give an indication that at least another 25 cars will come along.

The basic events programme is now in place giving four planned days of activities, runs, social and sporting events. It is interesting to note that most of our Adelaide Natmeet Attendees who are still club members have registered for Canberra.

This will be one of the highlights of your time in the club, so if you haven't registered yet please do so a.s.a.p. as spaces are limited. If you want any more information please contact Peter Simpson. Those of you who have registered will be contacted in October with more detailed information.

## MIATA MERLOT

What a stunner - just released as a limited version in the USA (see specifications which follow). I had a chance to look it over with a co-operative dealer. The rich burgundy colour of the car, matched with a lovely tan leather upholstery and hood make this the best looking of the lot and in high demand (I guess my personal attraction is strong because it reminds me of my old burgundy MGB!). It has all the standard 1800 features (including dual air bag and power steering), together with a few other specials such as 'low back' seats, 15 inch BBS wheels, cruise control, ABS brakes and the 'Torsen' limited slip diff

I don't know if it is scheduled for release in Australia, or how much it would cost, but with the current value of the yen it's likely to finish up more expensive than the new MGF. What A hard Decision for a buyer to make - that is once you've won lotto!

*Peter Simpson*

## SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

We have had 320 members join the club since its inception and 151 of those members are still with us.

Of the 139 cars in the club -

72 are Red  
30 are White  
5 are Laguna Blue  
8 are Original Blue  
9 are Green  
6 are Black  
4 are Yellow  
4 are Silver  
1 is Terry Blue

# SPORT CARS ARE FOR FUN

If you are lucky enough to own a performance car such as an MX-5, you will probably have more than a passing curiosity or interest in knowing just where the limits of your car lie, how well it compares to other vehicles, and also in discovering your own limits as a driver. If you have never pondered over such matters, or have no interest in finding out any of the above, then read no further.

We all know of the MX-5's legendary ability to offer an elegant, desirable and reliable form of transportation. However, for those of us who have a genuine interest in the Miata "Sportscar" (defined in the concise Macquarie Dictionary as 'A high powered car with rakish lines, designed for competition, usually a two seater'), there are several ways that the owner can experience the exhilaration of his/her car at or near the limit, and under safe as possible conditions - on a purpose-built stretch of track as opposed to a public road. If you have not already found out and you have an occasional spare Sunday, why not have a go at one or more of the following activities; driver training days; private practice days; motorkhanas; super sprints; hill climbs; rallying (road and off-road); or track racing. Herein follows a brief explanation of each type of event.

Driver training and racing tuition : there are 14 racing tuition and advanced driving courses presently available in Australia, according to Glass's Guide. Within the Sydney area, the best known is Ian Luff's Advanced Driving Australia (Phone: 02 820 2030); also, refer to Drivecraft (David Thomas - Phone: 02 988 3391); Peter

Finlay's Nationwide (Phone: 02 873 1773); and the Advanced Drivers Training Inc. (Phone:

046 28 2015). The latter is a non-profit organisation and is run by a group of experienced, professional and enthusiastic drivers with many years accumulated experience on the track and road. One day courses are usually priced at around \$100-00. Courses run by the other schools start at around \$195-00 for the day.

Private Practice Days: For those who just want to have access to a racetrack, to discover themselves, the limits of their car, several of the race track operators open their circuits to the public - usually for one day each month - for private practice. An example of this is Eastern Creek Raceway (P.O. Box 6066, Delivery Centre, Blacktown, N.S.W., 2148 - Phone: 02 672-1000). The promoters of eastern creek hold private practice one day per month (usually a Friday) at a cost of \$100-00 per driver. All that is required is a current drivers license and a CAMS approved crash helmet. The track opens at 9:00 am and closes at 5:00 pm. Access is available throughout the day, and it is possible to drive around the circuit at one's own pace. An instructor will be at hand to offer advice (such as corner apexes, gear changes and braking points), for a fee of around \$20-00 per 15 minutes of instruction.

Motorkhanas: You need to look no further than our own club. These events are perhaps the most accessible to the enthusiast. Often looked down upon by "would be Peter Brocks" and those who have never entered a motorkhana as irrelevant to motor sport, this type of event is actually one of the most accurate and demanding test possible of driver skill. Unlike track events, where a lack of talent may be often compensated by horsepower, the motorkhana is perhaps the ultimate test of control of driver over car (or in some cases, car over driver!) Additionally, if you are concerned about wear and tear that may be caused on the race track, then the motorkhana



is for you. It is unlikely that you will ever get out of first (or reverse) gear for most tests: maximum speed reached will probably not exceed 30 kph at any time, so the likelihood of causing damage to your car or yourself is minimal. If you have never participated in any form of motorsport, then you should at least try one motorkhana at some time during your ownership of your MX-5, which after all was purpose-designed and built for such motorsport activities. One thing is for sure - no matter who you are, you will finish the day as a better and more competent driver, with a more thorough understanding of the limits of adhesion of your vehicle and yourself. In an emergency situation, the experience gained, may just give you the slight advantage needed to keep your MX-5 under your control, and in one piece ! By the way - they also happen to be a lot of fun ! (seriously folks, think about entering the next event organised by the club)

**Supersprints:** Australian motorsport enthusiasts are well catered for in and around Sydney, at both the amateur as well as the professional levels. There are many events held each weekend at tracks in the Greater Sydney area. These are organised through car clubs which mostly are affiliated with CAMS (like our own club).

The most popular form of event is the supersprint (or "lap dash") where two cars are allowed out onto the circuit for two to three laps at a time, not necessarily to race against each other, but rather to try and set the fastest time for one complete lap. The laps are timed individually, usually with a "flying start" or a half warm-up, or can closely follow one another to the start line. Your competition is not necessarily the other vehicle on the circuit, rather it is the other vehicles in your class, and yourself (naturally, you want to beat your previous "personal best" time). In most supersprints, the MX-5 is classified 0-1600 cc

class, if your car is completely unmodified (with the possible exception of slightly wider or stickier tyres), then you will be placed into a "production" class along with other MX-5's, Honda Civics and early CRX's, Midgets and Sprites, Suzuki Swifts, Corollas and Pulsars (I am yet to see a Ford Capri at a club supersprint!). You will be very competitive in this company, and may well win your class - remember, the MX-5 was designed with performance and handling first in mind, unlike many other cars in your class. If, however your car is modified (ie: wider rims, extractors, engine modifications, etc.), then you will probably be placed into a 0-1600 cc. modified category, where you will find the competition far more competitive !

**Hill climbs:** A variant of the above is the hill climb. The hill climb takes place on a stretch of road (not necessarily a hill, incidentally), where you will be required to start at one point and finish at another, usually from a standing start. However, you are not paired off with another competitor, as with the supersprint. One of the most popular hillclimb circuits is Mt. Panorama, where you will be driving in the reverse direction to Brock, Johnson and company, and only through a small part of the circuit (1300 metres to be precise). As with supersprints, there is a New South Wales Championship held each year, over a number of hillclimb tracks ranging from Amaroo and Wakefield Park through to Parkes, Canberra, Newcastle, and even Grafton, so be prepared to travel if you wish to participate in the whole series. (The NSW Supersprint Championship concentrates only on the local tracks, plus Wakefield Park near Goulburn).

To participate in a supersprint or hillclimb, you will need the following equipment: a CAMS basic licence, an approved crash helmet, a fitted fire extinguisher, non flammable clothing, a battery marker, a set of numbers. Sounds

complicated, but it really is straightforward. The CAMS licence is available to anyone with a drivers' licence, and is usually (though not always) issued by the organiser of the supersprint on the day, for a cost of approximately \$22-00. Our own club issues such licences and they are valid for one year. The fire extinguisher must be a 0.9 kg extinguisher or larger, and have an appropriate Standards Association rating - these are readily available from most large hardware stores or from K-Mart, and cost between \$30 - \$45. They are easily fitted (mine is fastened to the floor behind the passengers seat - which is pushed forward about 10 cm's during racing). A CAMS approved crash helmet is available from most motorcycle or speed shops from about \$99-00. The helmet may be half-face or full-face (it is important that the helmet fits snugly on the head and is not loose, so borrowing a friends helmet is not always a good idea). "Non-flammable" clothing simply means not synthetic. Your arms and ankles must be covered, so a comfortable woollen sweater or cotton long sleeve shirt, plus gym boots or other similar flexible footwear are recommended. Finally, a battery marker and a set of numbers can be obtained from most speed shops (try Revolution Racegear, 4/191 Parramatta Road, Auburn, Phone: 648 4044 - ask for John Hephher). Alternative, some blue and white insulation tape (black with a light coloured car) can be used for marking the car with your race number (which will be issued to you on the day).

**Track Racing and Rallying :** Both racing and rallying will require a lot more dedication (and money) than the above events. For a start, you will need to fit a roll cage to your MX-5, plus front and rear tow points. Furthermore, you will need a CAMS General Competition licence which can only be gained following successful completion of a CAMS approved Driver Training day (refer to Ian Luff for further

details), preferably some prior track experience, and a medical check-up from a CAMS approved doctor. As of the time of writing this article, the MX-5 is in the process of being homologated by CAMS as a Marque Sportscar, which means that it will be eligible to race in a number of additional championships, including the Marque and Combined Sportscar championships. Other clubs participating in these championships include MG, Lotus, Aston Martin, Jaguar, Triumph and Morgan, so the competition is "pretty serious" as well as "pretty serious" fun !

Although I am unfamiliar with rallying, (a good reference here would be club member Iain Boyd - Phone 833 23476), I will make mention of the Dutton Grand Prix rally, which is more of a social rally, held over 5 days prior to the Grand Prix, and which encompasses a number of driving and speed tests, as well as some navigational sections on the way to the Grand Prix. Although entries for 1995 will have closed by the time you read this article, next year's event will be held in early March, and will run from Sydney to Melbourne, probably via Eastern Creek, Wakefield Park Canberra and Albury. An added bonus of participation is entry to the Grand Prix, plus the opportunity to do a few "fast laps" around the grand prix circuit on the day prior to the Grand Prix. The rally is always a lot of fun, not to be taken too seriously (unless you want to win !), and a great opportunity to meet with other sports and classic car enthusiasts. I hope to see you there ! For further details, contact John Blanden, the Rally Organiser (phone: 08 374 0444).

Finally, if you have any questions about any of the above activities, please give me a call. I would be happy to point you in the right direction to get you started in what is a truly exciting and satisfying form of competition.

by Ross Hutcherson.

Phone: work 02 267 4416



# OPERATION COFFS HARBOUR

## EASTER 1995

Another MX-5 Club first took place over the Easter break when members from the New South Wales and the Queensland clubs came together at Coffs Harbour for a couple of days of unabashed fun.

Tony Armstrong and Laura, Paula and Melissa Wu and Elaine and Colin Caldwell elected a very early start on Thursday, 13 April in order to avoid the Easter rush out of the city. This report is from Elaine and Colin.

First stop was breakfast at "The Oak" at Freemans Waterhole followed by a very pleasant run through the Hunter Valley culminating in scones at Scone with cappuccinos, of course!

Tony (who we'd elected tour leader) thought a walk in the middle of the day would be in order, and what better place to go than "Burning Mountain", a coal seam that has been burning for 2,000 years. Expectations were high after a 37km vertical hike to the summit. Reality bit when all we saw was slightly warm, sulphur crusted earth. So much for the supposed ninth wonder of the world... The effort was worth it, however, for the scenery (distant rolling hills) and vegetation (how quickly it changes when the temperature plummets) alone.

We arrived back at base camp exhausted and happy to find our MX-5s still in mint condition!

The drive through the Dorrigo mountain pass was rather treacherous in heavy rain and fog. A 4 wheel drive towing a boat, refusing to pull over to let us pass, did not help.

Our "digs" for the weekend was the Bosuns Inn which boasted very comfortable rooms and a friendly, helpful host whose name was Cathy.

### Good Friday *(Report by Paula and Melissa)*

The weather was decidedly unfriendly. Refusing to be daunted, the early arrivals breakfasted and headed for the Pet Porpoise Pool in time for the morning show. And what a show it was! One and a half hours of pure entertainment starring porpoises flying through hoops, juggling balls, twisting and turning, sea lions and seals joining us in the stands, showing us how to ride a skateboard, shake hands and pray and fairy penguins being even more adorable than usual.

Tina the seal kissed everyone, but took a particular shine to Paula! It was enough to make us almost forget about the rain.

Over lunch, Tony decided photographing Paula's car in front of the Big Banana was an opportunity not to be missed.

On the way back to the motel we came across the Queensland convoy who greeted us with much waving and tooting. Within half an hour the rest of the NSW contingent arrived and introductions and renewal of old acquaintances were going on everywhere.

A pre-dinner snack of fresh prawns washed down with beer and wine was organised for "happy hour" and everyone swapped stories of their trips so far. Then it was out into the rain again for a walk to the Raj Mahal and a warming Indian dinner. Tony gained instant attention when he arrived wearing a new fashion statement - a clear plastic shower cap!

Everyone had a great evening - the weather was not going to spoil our fun.

#### Easter Saturday *(Report by Elaine Caldwell)*

We woke up to the exciting news that Bryan and Kathy Wu were the proud parents of a baby son, born in the early hours of the morning.

We also woke up to an extra heavy downpour of rain and felt sure we'd made the right decision not to join the brave gang who left us to go white water rafting (see Tony Armstrong's report).

The water also resulted in the planned scenic boat ride being cancelled. Next to the tourist "must do" list was the Clogg Farm/Miniature Village. A fascinating demonstration showed us how cloggs were made and you could sample and wear a pair during the visit. It turned out to be a fun thing to do on a wet day.

We then visited the famous wharf and did some serious window shopping at the arts and crafts and antique shops. No-one spent too much. It's amazing the influence a small boat can have on even the most hardened shopperholics!

The group reassembled in the evening for a delightful dinner at the Fisher's Ketch seafood restaurant.

#### Easter Sunday *(Report by Sue and Sylvia)*

The sun shone, Sue snored and the Bananabenders laughed as seven Sydneysiders soaped, slopped and chamoised seven sparkling, smiling MX-5s.

At the starting line at 9.45am the count was Mariner Blue 1, Black 1, Malibu Gold 2, Silver and mud 1, White 3, White unwashed 1, Red 1, Red unwashed 4 and Ugly Duckling 1.

"And they're off" ... the hoods that is. A passing muscle bound cyclist spots Sylvia. "Can't afford a roof, love?", to which Sylvia replies: "Mate, it's still on layby".

The convoy moves off and we turn on the radio. The song? "A long and winding road that leads to....a rainforest". A rainforest? The top's down!!

Yes, indeed, 14km of winding road leading into Dorriggo was any MX-5 owner's delight. The wonders of the rainforest were appreciated by most, but some were seen heading: to the ladies (Elaine), to the cappuccino bar (Colin), to the shop (Maureen), to rock the skywalk (Darren) and to muster us up again (Henri).

Next stop was a magnificent view of Dangar Falls, the sight of which prompted a call of nature from a certain New South Welsh person and, wouldn't you know it, Sue has gone missing again....

Just where was the group heading next? Little did we know what surprises Henri had in store for us. First we played dodge-the-pothole, then go-slowly-on-the-gravel, then... oh no! ... surely they can't be serious ...mud, mud, mud! Not just a little mud, but enough to squelch through all the 70's hits now playing on the radio. "I will survive". "Burn, baby burn". "That's the way I like it". We did survive, but that's **not** the way we like it.

Fortunately, lunch at Ebor was a different story. The Ebor Hotel/Motel didn't look all that grand but host John and his cook turned out 30 of the most delicious honey smoked trout and salad lunches we could ask for - and all for \$9.50 a head. Don't miss it if you are ever up that way.

Now, where was Darren? Whether his low slung car spat the dummy at the muddy road or whether eyeballing the smoked trout on his luncheon plate was too much, or whether he was so enraptured by the lyrics of Pearl Jam that he missed the turn, we will never know. Darren travelled the same length of road three times and his car had not one speck of mud on it.

After viewing another wonderful waterfall we headed for home with the adrenalin junkies setting the pace. The wide range in age and interests of our companions reflected in the music wafting from the cars.

"We're simply the best...better than all the rest...better than anyone..." These lyrics must surely have been written to describe the road we were on from Ebor to Dorriggo.

Once we had regrouped in Dorriggo it was off to the Griffiths Lookout where we posed as a group with the cameras manned by another kind tourist.

"Oh, ye'll teek the hee road and e'll teek the low road, an e'll be in Scotland afore ye." This one courtesy of Jean, of course.

The majority of the group opted for the low road to the coastal strip and the Raleigh Winery (most easterly in Australia) where a red, a white and a creamy liqueur tantalised windblown palates. And on the last leg back, a lingering look at the coastal panorama - ocean, jetty, boats and the shoreline north and south of Coffs.

The highroaders skipped the winery in favour of the Bellingen craft workshops - a sensory smorgasbord! Sonorous chime, aromatic leather goods, colourful characters, polished and fragrant woods and a frothy sweet cup of coffee garnished with a wedge of orange almond torte. Hmmmmmm.



To the theme of Local Heroes the cars, full and heavy with new bought delights, rolled happily home.

Somewhat everyone managed to get rested, showered and changed by 7.00pm in time for dinner. This time our meal was at the end of a 20 minute drive through the hills to Upper Orara and the Ferndahl Mountain Inn where an authentic Swedish smorgasbord awaited us. Our brother and sister hosts, Jane and Adam (looking after the place while mum was in Sweden) were delightful people. They couldn't understand why we didn't clean the bowls right out but if they knew how much we'd eaten over the four days it would have been obvious. Unfortunately, no-one had a doggy bag for the leftovers.

We all managed to get down the mountain and through the fog in one piece and headed for a well earned sleep to ready ourselves for the long drive home the next day.

#### Easter Monday *(Report by Elaine Caldwell)*

We all woke up to a lovely blue sky (wouldn't you know....).

Dave rang to say he'd arrived safely in Sydney having done the trip in the early hours in record time, managing to miss the boys in blue.

Sylvia and Cherrie set off next at about 6.00am. They were very quiet preparing to go, but the sound of the engine starting got the rest of us up and out to check on our cars! With everything checking out OK Jean, Sue, Colin, Elaine and a few Queenslanders decided to have a dip in the ocean before heading for home.

Tony, Laura, Paula and Melissa headed for home at about 7.30am, this time taking the coast road and swearing against any midday hikes!

Sue and Jean were the last to leave and Colin and Elaine travelled north with the Queenslanders to visit friends.

A fabulous trip was had by everyone. We can't wait to get together next Easter, this time in Canberra for Natmeet.

# WHITE WATER WONDER

(OR HOW LONG CAN YOU STAY UNDERWATER AND LIVE TO TELL THE TALE?)

What happens when MX-5ers meet white water? Trouble - together with a lot of fun - if Tony Armstrong's account of rafting the Nymboida River out of Coffs Harbour is to be believed... (and we have no reason not to!!).

After the rain of Friday, we were not really looking forward to spending a cold, wet Saturday in the white water of the Nymboida River. The morning start was too early for a hot breakfast and it was cold and overcast, but a brisk drive to the bus depot brought some warmth back.

At the bus depot we had to sign a disclaimer against the risks that we were about to take. I noticed there were a lot of people on the bus called Mick Mouse and P. Keating and I made a note to introduce myself to these new members of the club whom I hadn't met.

The coach trip was over 1½ hours through some great countryside. The driver kept us on the edge of our seats, with great four wheel drifts on the muddy forest trails and lots of opposite lock, all on a 48-seater 18 tonne coach. We had to wait for about an hour in the middle of the forest for some smaller buses to take us down the river. This was a time for reflection on whether we were going to live through the day, and where could we find a private health insurance office to sign on.

Eventually the 20-seater buses arrived and took us down impossibly impassable muddy trails to the river. On the river bank were hundreds of people in silly costumes and crash helmets, all trying to look as if they went whitewater rafting every day of their lives. A continental breakfast was served up (more like a last supper) and a light drizzle started. To cheer us all up, a bus came down the track too fast, locked up all its wheels and slid into another bus. We were promptly told that this was "mad Phil", who was a great driver but who crashed constantly.

Eventually the order came to get together into informal groups next to a rubber raft (I cannot use the word "crew" to describe the motley collection of people that were milling around dressed in multi-coloured rubber underwear and life jackets). The six persons that collected around our boat had a combined age of 315 years, so I knew that we had a lot of experience - if not horsepower! Our captain, guide and bully arrived, (Captain Bligh), and you could tell that he was also experienced because he was the only one with prayer beads around his neck.

We were ordered to launch the trusty craft and to sit in designated positions. In retrospect, I don't think it was coincidence our captain made the guys sit up front and the girls sit around him at the back because when the girls fell over in the rapids they promptly fell on top of him.

We went through an intensive period of training on the flat calm water section. We found out that not only could you paddle forwards and backwards but, at the command from the captain, you could leap up and over to the other side of the boat, and be used as movable ballast. The commands for this were "OVER LEFT" or "OVER RIGHT", and on hearing this we must promptly launch ourselves to the appropriate side of the trusty craft. We were told that this was essential to the negotiation of the tight rapids, and I wished later that we had practised this technique more thoroughly! We were also told on pain or death that we must keep hold of our paddles at all costs. Floggings were to be given to those who put their paddles down or lost them.

There were three crew members from NSW and three from Queensland, including the Queensland President, Henry, who was our first mate and therefore sat up front in the seat that got all the spray. David (Queensland Secretary) was excused from emergency paddling duties and appointed bailer (chief water emptier), which he thought would be great. Tony (NSW) was appointed to the engine room and told to keep paddling. Laura (NSW) decided that her job was to keep the boat tidy and to dust it every few minutes.

The first rapids were a little frightening but great fun. We were already wet through. After a few minutes we decided this was going to be alright after all (wrong!) and after about 15 minutes we were all actually enjoying it. At this point, we went through a narrow rapid and got stuck. The commands of "OVER LEFT" went largely unheeded, and the boat started filling up as it tipped over. Eleanor decided that the water did look very inviting and she would like to go for a little swim whilst we sorted out what we were doing with the boat. David was bailing furiously, but because the raft was actually underwater it all seemed a little pointless. Nature smiled and decided to help by ejecting us from narrow rocks at high speed, and Tony was able to pull Eleanor back on-board. David found out that bailing was much harder than paddling.

During the post-mortem, we found out that two of the girls didn't know which was their "left" and which was their "right", so shouting over "OVER LEFT" was not going to produce the instinctive reaction the captain wanted. He promptly changed his commands to suit the circumstances of where the two up front were sitting, and the commands became "OVER HENRY" and "OVER TONY". (This idea was so good, and became so engraved in the crew's instinctive reactions that some weeks later in the middle of the night I shouted out "OVER TONY", and a sleeping Laura threw herself on top of me.)

After another ten minutes we were enjoying it again and started to marvel at the wonderful scenery. In the calm reaches between the rapids there was time to relax and admire this wonderful part of the world, which of course is inaccessible to all except the whitewater rafters. The sun came out a couple of times and the rain tried only once. We all pondered on the beauty of unspoiled nature.

We became confident enough to try a couple of specific manoeuvres while we went down some of the rapids, including a "helicopter spin" over one rapid that I thought was great, because I couldn't see where we were going, only where we had come from. David had by now bailed so much water out of the boat that he had personally diverted the course of the Nymboida River by a few metres.



There were a couple of spots where the rapids were too difficult for beginners and we had to walk around them while the boats were allowed to float down on long ropes. At one point, a couple of us leapt off cliffs and voluntarily went for a swim. We had a mobile lunch of oranges and Minties.

Approaching the fourth last rapid ("The Chicken Run") I think we had all decided it had been a great experience and we had enjoyed it, but that it was time for us to go home and get dry. Nature heard us and decided that we had no right to become blasé and promptly ordered a large rock to jump up from the bottom of the rapid and to turn the boat over. It was very difficult to do an "OVER HENRY" when you are two feet underwater. The next thing I was aware of was that two people were missing and I was conscious that they were under the over-turned boat. I recall ducking under the boat and seeing two bodies, and I can state that there is no truth to the Queensland rumour that David was just looking for somewhere quiet to light up a cigarette. Very quickly the force of the water took the boat and four of its crew over the rapids, and although most of them didn't want to go, they had no option. Laura was lying down, pinned down by the force of the water, unable to move. Tony was close by, before he was swept away to the next rock. Henry was standing up and appeared to be walking on the water.

Rescue arrived in the form of a crack formation of highly trained German tourists, who flashed their paddles in unison under the barked commands of their SS captain. They were very good and I wished I had been in their boat and very soon they had plucked Laura from doing her impression of a mermaid. (I didn't dare remind them that in German mythology a Lorelei was a siren who, by her signing, caused German sailors to wreck their boats on the rocks. What we had here was a Laura-lie).

Tony remembered that he had a throw-away camera in a plastic bag around his neck, so whilst all this drama was going on, the only thing to be done was to take a few pictures, before being rescued by the Germans. We all got down Chicken Rocks, most of us not even in a boat.

We all met up at the bottom, very bruised and with some blood splashing around. At this point we found Laura STILL HAD HOLD OF HER PADDLE!! Talk about blind obedience.

The last three rapids were taken with the autopilot on automatic and we staggered ashore, glad to be alive. There was a barbecue going under a tarpaulin in the rain and the smell of steak sandwiches was very inviting. Most people by now just wanted to get out of their wet clothes and nobody seemed to care too much about all the naked bodies that seemed to be everywhere.

After a hot cup of coffee we felt a little better and started to feel sorry for those souls who were camping overnight as part of a two-day rafting expedition.

We soon found out that theirs would probably be the more comfortable experience because there was only one bus to take us back to the coach. It was a 20-seater and there were over thirty of us.

When packed in, seated and standing, we discovered that driver was (you've guessed it!) "mad Phil". What followed was by far the most terrifying experience that I have ever had on the road. The moisture from 30 wet bodies meant the windows were constantly misted up. The steep climb out of the valley on a narrow muddy dirt road meant we were asked to jump up and down in unison to try and get traction on the wheels and to get up the hills "mad Phil" decided he had to drive at 100kph when going downwards. During this 30 kilometre trip, those in the back of the bus did over 38 kilometres, eight of them sideways.

Eventually we made the coach and after another two hours, the MX-5s. We all drove back to the motel at under 60kph, and some of us stopped off at the church to say "thank you". (Actually it was MacDonalds, but the intent was there).

From the tales told on the bus, our experiences seemed to be fairly typical of those on the other boats. A great experience....but we probably won't be quick to volunteer for another whitewater adventure for a few years to come.....

Written by Elaine Caldwell, Colin Caldwell, Tony Armstrong, Sue Forrest, Sylvia Tikellis  
 Edited by Ruth Simpson.

## MOTORKHANA #2 REPORT

By George Russ

Motorkhanas are still as much fun as ever, and there are enough reports elsewhere so I won't bore you with any more info..... just for the record, Speedy is still the fastest so we need some help to knock him off his perch and Lance is the taking shares in Dunlop! (Today's lowest true times were recorded by our mystery car driven by Miss MX)

Driver:	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5 Time	Total	Event Points	Series Points
Dave Perin	21.3	22.0	25.3	37.0	24.0	129.6	10	20
Chris Campbell	22.8	22.0	26.4	38.3	22.1	131.6	9	18
Peter Stanton	21.8	28.8	26.7	38.0	22.0	137.3	8	16
George Russ	23.1	28.7	26.8	38.8	22.4	139.8	7	14
Lance Willey	23.1	27.8	26.7	41.2	23.8	142.6	6	12
Peter Simpson	24.4	27.3	29.7	40.4	23.2	145.0	5	5
Terry Edgton		Did not compete in this round						5
Ruth Simpson	25.1	29.3	34.3	42.5	24.3	155.5	4	4
Sue Forrest		Did not compete in this round						4
Russell Wheatley 26.7	30.7	31.9	51.9	25.3	166.5	3	3	3
Jason Tsang		Did not compete in this round						2
Jean Cook		Did not compete in this round						
Miss MX	21.29	21.26	25.03	36.55	21.82	125.95		

# PORT STEPHENS RUN

## THE PORT STEPHENS RUN THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT TO PORT STEPHENS!

After a \$158.00 indiscretion (speeding ticket) a few kilometres south of the meeting point for one of our more conservative drivers we were off to a good start.

Although the weather was not all that kind to us at the beginning of the day, it slowly got worse.

Many of us had forgotten what a pleasant little run it is through the bends of the Pacific Highway down to the glorious Hawkesbury River. Unfortunately all good things must come to an end and we were forced to join the throng on the unexciting speedway north. We left the freeway and meandered down through Swansea and into Belmont for a lovely interlude for morning tea at the Squids Ink Restaurant before heading further north. Lunch was next in everyone's mind, as almost two hours had passed since morning tea, so we invaded the lovely Boomerang Riverside Cafe at Tea Gardens.

Although the rain was tumbling down we boarded the M.V. Tamboi Queen and headed upriver into the Myall Lakes system to catch a glimpse of the legendary dolphins that are said to abound in this area. We saw lots of feathered fauna, beautiful riverside "resorts" with jetties, and other small crafts many slightly in excess of the speed limits, but not a single sighting of the elusive dolphins until we were safely moored back at the wharf when we were treated to a display of aquarobics from several of our elusive marine mates. The Motto Farm Homestead in Raymond Terrace was our motel for the night where we were welcomed royally by our hosts.

The next morning was spent lazily discussing the days events prior to setting off to the charming little village of Morpeth for a little shopping and sightseeing.

An extremely interesting visit to the Richmond Vale Railway / Colliery Museum was the setting for the afternoon including a sooty ride on a train hauled by an old Kitson 2-8-2 tank locomotive dating back to 1908. This was followed by a guided tour (by the union delegate) of the old Richmond Main Colliery including its very own power station. A quick lunch of a genuine railway pie for a lot of us before heading south back to our homes and a hot shower.

George, Colleen, Steve and Melanie you've done another great job of organising a bunch of individuals to have a great weekend together.

Thanks again, on behalf of us all. **PAUL HEEKS.**

# MX & MG BREAKFAST RUN

There are no limits to the dedication of the members of the MX 5 club - but 5:00am on a Sunday morning was a test!

In the early misty hours, 180 people gathered at a tram museum at Loftus in an exotic array of sport machines, from 1943 roadsters to the latest MX-5 MG club members cocooned in layers of wool, watched enviously as 19 MX 5ers arrived with stereo's and heaters blasting.

The 6:30 start, became the 7:30 start as we all admired the cars and got to know the MG club members. The drive to Jamberoo saw dawn rise over lush valley's and hair-pin bends, the promise of a glorious day proved true !!!!

A glorious convoy of old and new moved their way through changing scenery; from sun flecked sea to picturesque Australian countryside. The MG's set a remarkable pace for their age, but - some MX 5ers found the overtaking lanes too tempting to resist !!!!

Bumper to bumper, we nudged our way into Jamberoo Lodge, taking over the paddocks. Breakfast was scrumptious and the staff were friendly, and created a warm happy atmosphere. A raffle for the Salvation Army was run and a staggering \$733 was raised (great effort) !! Happily someone from each won a prize.

1st prize - A weekend for two at Jamberoo Lodge.

2nd prize - A huge basket of Arnott's biscuits (will the winner fit into their sports car after consumption ??)

3rd prize - A nifty glove box torch.

After breakfast, the cameras clicked furiously and then the cars dispersed to explore the southern highlands. Seven MX 5ers climbed the exiting and steep, snake like roads through Kangaroo Valley - bound for home.

Thankyou to the MG club for the invitation and hopefully it will become annual event.

By Julianne Dalglish  
& Rosemary Crooks.



# WAKEFIELD PARK

## PRACTICE DAY

### Saturday 12 August

*By Colin Caldwell*

On a star twinkling morning Elaine, myself and REV-851, a wonderful red Mazda MX-5 in superb condition, left for Goulburn and Wakefield Park. As the sun rose we saw that it was an absolutely magnificent day. We arrived at the circuit at about 8.30am where we had the good fortune to meet 11 other MX-5s.

We expected Goulburn to be freezing but the weather was absolute perfection and very soon the tops were down. After a relaxed, fairly casual briefing the track was ours.

Whilst waiting for the Clerk of the Course to let us on, visions of Stirling Moss, Jean Behra, Alberto Ascari and Juan Manuel Fangio flashed across my mind. Of course, years of reading Autocar, Motor and every Australian car magazine provided visions to me plus my boyhood dreams of conquering the racing circuit.

The first couple of laps seemed tremendously fast (even though I had had some similar experiences at Mallala in South Australia) and seemed to be very slow against other MX-5s, and of the other cars from N1 Autosport.

Familiarity started to breed a little courage plus watching some of the incredibly brave people who were in front of me. The energy that the driving created was fantastic and I wanted more! I soon learnt that minimum use of the brakes and the gearbox plus an enormous amount of courage improved lap times. There was, however, one by product of this. I believe some of my spins in the pursuit of increased speeds were something to behold and I now believe that I spun more times than my friend "Spinner" Paul Heeks.

For every moment of practice that was available to us I was out there making mistakes but learning a tremendous amount. One had the feeling that I was thrashing my little car (particularly whilst spinning) but I felt perfectly confident it was capable of the harsh treatment.

In "Duels of the Morning" with other MX-5s down the straight I was terribly concerned why some people seemed to be pulling away from me (although not by much). At lunch I discovered the startling truth. I had the air conditioning switched on! After this major alteration the performance of my car improved dramatically and all of a sudden if I wasn't beating some of my contemporaries I was at least staying with them.

Several times I saw Peter & Ruth Simpson and Ron & Anne Lyons with their colourful helmets looking as though they were taking part in the Mille Miglia.

Lunch was devoured with gusto to restore some of the energy which was definitely needed for the afternoon session and the hill climbs. Apparently some of my most notable spins occurred in the afternoon. It was interesting to see the speed of the 200SXs from N1. The turbos obviously make a substantial difference and as far as I am concerned rear wheel drive or four wheel drive is the only way.

The hill climb was interesting and we saw times, except for the really talented members of the MX-5 Club, that were astonishingly similar from an MX-5 point of view. It was gratifying to see that even the sporty NSX Honda could spin (probably because he had his traction system disconnected).

The down side of the day was the fact that the tyres on my car, which were already fairly well worn, have just about had it. The elation, however, was definitely worth it! I really learned a great deal about the wonderful capabilities of an MX-5, especially in how they corner and how forgiving they are when you do something stupid.

It was really interesting how some corners that looked incredibly slow could be entered and left at a rate of knots that in the morning I thought were impossible.

As Wakefield Park is one of the days for Natmeet '96 I think we will have lots of delighted MX-5 owners who, like me, will learn a great deal and have a lot of fun learning the capabilities of the Mazda MX-5.

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## **SLICK 50**

**(NOT JUST ANOTHER ENGINE ADDITIVE)**

**IMPROVES PERFORMANCE REDUCES ENGINE WEAR AND PROTECTS AT START UP**

**By Terry Edgton**

How it works:-

Slick 50 does not try to improve the oil in your car like most engine additives do, it coats all the motors internal parts with a dry lubricant (called PTFE), which is the most slippery substance known to man besides ice on ice. PTFE bonds to your engine's internal parts, sustaining it's viscosity for approximately 40,000 KMS. Adding Slick 50 to your MX-5 about once every 12 months, will improve your engine's performance and life.

I have personally been using Slick 50 for about 3 years and it's unbelievable what a difference it has made to my engine especially when starting on those cold mornings (NO MORE BABY'S RATTLE SOUND IN THE MOTOR !!!)

If you have any more questions about Slick 50 or want to know where you get it (trade price of course!) don't hesitate to call me M( 04 111 91 005 ) H( 639 8206 )

Best Regards  
Terry

# EASTERN CREEK DAY

By George Russ

On invitation from the Toyota MR2 Club, seven MX-5s ventured to the confines of the fabulous Eastern Creek Raceway to do our bit for charity. The MR2 Club organised a day, on Saturday the 8th of July, with leading race/rally drivers teaching novices like me how to drive around the Eastern Creek circuit in order to raise money for the children's cancer organisation, *Canteen*.

Initially the cars were divided into groups and sent to three different sections of the circuit. At each point an instructor taught us how to negotiate that section of the track and then we were set loose. I am pleased to say that no-one actually spun off, but there were a few slides here and there. After owning my MX for nearly three years I am still learning its capabilities and it never fails to impress me. Days like this (and Wakefield) are a real bonus as you can find out so much about yourself and your car.

Anyway, back to the day.... after lapping the circuit for an hour or so by ourselves we had to collect our passengers. The real reason we were there (or so we told them!) was to do laps with the children who had cancer as our passengers. I have never met a such a bunch of positive kids and it was a real eye opener seeing the zest for life that some of them possessed. Some of them egged you on and almost pleaded for you to go faster but we were set strict limits when they were in the car. Can you imagine someone recovering from cancer only to be injured in a charity bash on a racetrack! We unloaded the kids at about 4pm and then did a few more cool down laps by ourselves before calling it quits.

Even though we were \$200 lighter for the day it was well worth it.

Thanks to the MR2 Club for the opportunity to drive on Eastern Creek and to meet a bunch of great kids.

## A LITTLE POEM ABOUT OUR FAVOURITE CAR !

THE OPEN ROAD REVEALS  
THE INTUITIVE GRACE OF THE SPORTS CAR,  
AS IT TRANSLATES WIND AND ASPHALT INTO A BALLET  
OF GLIDING MOVEMENT AND EFFORTLESS FOOTWORK.

TIME AND DISTANCE BECOME BARS OF A MUSICAL SCORE,  
THE EXHAUST NOTE PLOTTING A MELODY  
NOW HIGH, NOW LOW, NOW SURGING FORWARD,  
NOW FALLING FROM THE CRESCENDO WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT.

LIKE THE GOD WITH WINGED FEET, HERALD,  
GUIDE OF TRAVELERS, THE ROADSTER  
MAKES EVERY JOURNEY LYRIC AND UNFORGETTABLE.