

club

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

TORQUE

• NE TURBO? • TYRE ADVICE • FOOTROT FLATS FANG • NEWCASTLE LOOP



summer 2020/21

Print Post Publication: I00006993

Summer Cover Competition

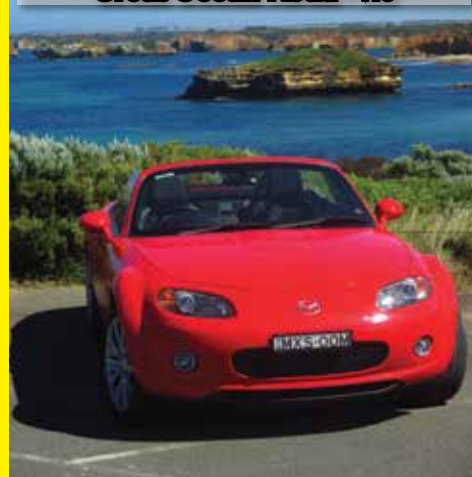
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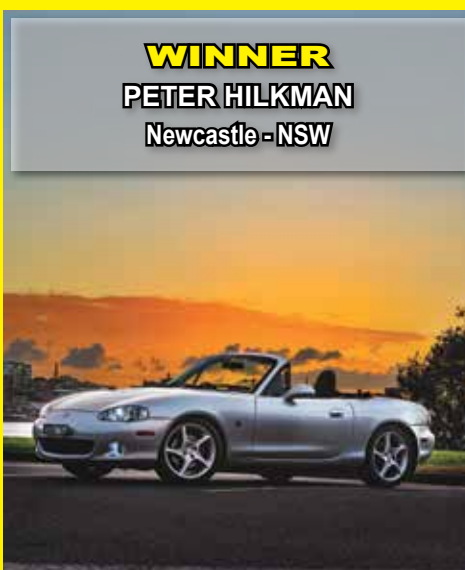
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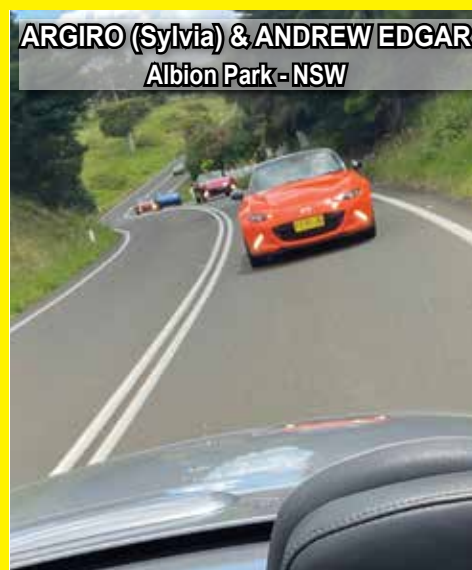
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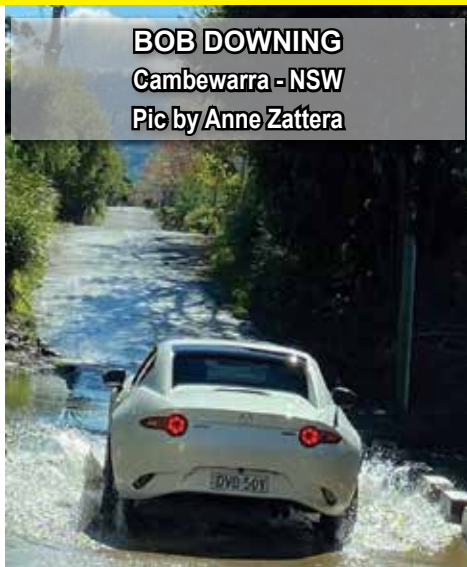
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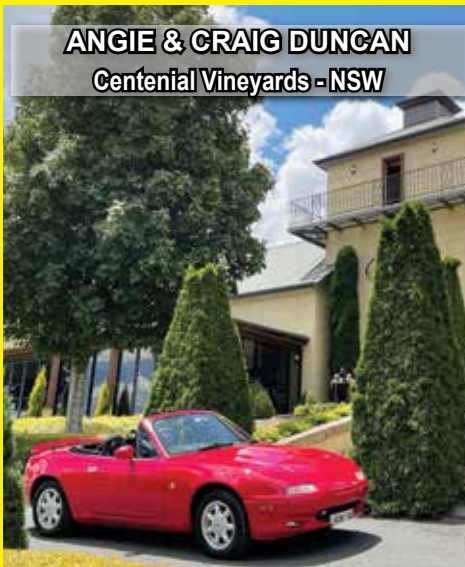
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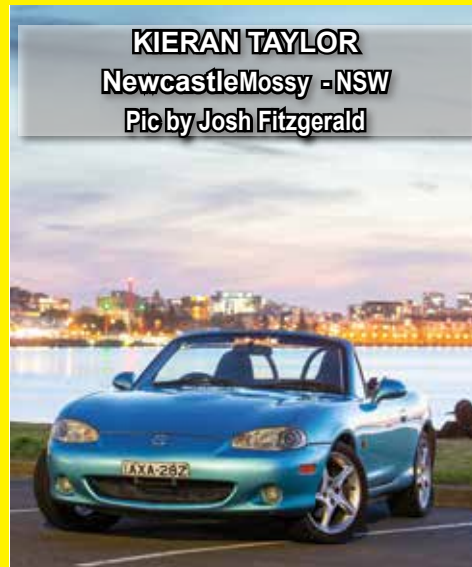
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Centennial Vineyards - NSW



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Pic by Josh Fitzgerald



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CONTENTS

President's Report	04
Committee List.....	04
Membership Report	05
Editorial.....	06
Flying Squad	07
Lunch at Gosford	08
Five Hills Run	09
A Berry Mountain Adventure	10 & 11
Coast To Mountains	12 & 13
Run With It	14
Sliq Run Up The Putty.....	15
Challenge Bathurst	16 & 17
Christmas/Presentations Canberra	18
Beautiful Boydtown.....	19
Big Block NC	20 & 21
Christmas/Presentations Hunter.....	22
Sydney Chapter MOTY	23
Club Track Day Round 1	24
Wakefield 300 Team Report	25
Pizza Evening	26
Would They Dare	27
Winding Way to Wollombi	28 & 29
Tiptoe to Tuross	30 & 31
Tyre Talk	32 & 33
Smoke & Mirrors	34
Cobweb Clearer	35
Newcastle Evening Loop	36 & 37
Loopy Lunch Run.....	38
Party Time.....	39
Pub Lunch at Araluen.....	40
Footrot Flats Fang.....	41, 42 & 43
Sponsor Page	44

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Autumn Cover Competition

Entries are now open for the cover competition of the Autumn edition of Club Torque and can be submitted to:
publications@mx5.com.au Entries close 15th May 2021.

Please include the location and send portrait photos to suit the orientation of the page.

President's Report



A Summer Like No Other

Well, we have just come through an interesting summer with a lot of rain, some sun, and continual changes on what we could do due to COVID rules. Despite all of this we managed to get out of the house and enjoy our cars as a club.

I would like to thank all the people that have organized events for our members through these "interesting" times. It has been difficult to organize events, but we have been able to meet our members needs and I thank all those involved in making this possible.

The end of the year is a time when we look to present our Member Of The Year awards (MOTY). Due to the current situation and the distances involved it has taken some time for me to have the awards presented.

I would like to congratulate Rod Nicholas (Canberra) on winning Member Of The Year (MOTY) for the club and Bill & Jan Short (Illawarra) for winning New Member Of The year (NMOTY) for the club and the runners up Brigid & Ron Gallop (RPM) MOTY and Peter & Annemie Wilson (Canberra) for NMOTY.

We had a convenor's conference early in March to discuss the club events going forward for the rest of the year. This has been delayed from our normal timing due to COVID, buy with the lifting of restrictions we ran the event. This allowed the convenors, and their teams, to get together and not only to set runs but to discuss what is happening in their areas and see what is happening in other areas of the club.

The motor sports section of the club has developed an extensive calendar covering track days, motorkhana and super sprints. Due to COVID we are unable to run driver training at this time but will keep monitoring the requirements and if possible, look to starting these up again.

NatMeet has been postponed until 2022. As this is a postponement the majority of the events that have been developed will be carried over. Due to various personal requirements the committee that set up NatMeet 2021 have retired. I would like to thank Peter and Jill Feutrell, George & Jen Boyko and Elaine & David Gazzard for their work and dedication in planning and setting up this event in such a way that the next committee can take it up and run with it.

Due to the retirements, I am looking for volunteers to help run NatMeet in 2022. Due to the work already done this will be more of a management and facilitation role as opposed to a full development role so please contact me if you are interested in taking this on.

Are Mazda MX-5's an asset? The current COVID situation has had some interesting effects, one being the increase in value of our cars. I've been watching the marketplace, I have seen saleable car prices rising at least 20%. Does this mean our cars are now seen as an asset or as I look at it a great car to have an enjoy? Only time will tell.

Hope to see you on the road.

Keith Monaghan

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We've had 58 new members join since the Spring edition of the magazine was published.

A warm welcome to the MX-5 Club of NSW.
New members are encouraged to contact their Chapter Convenors
for local events and to visit our website - nsw.mx5.com.au for the
full range of social, technical and sporting events.

Canberra Welcomes 5 New Members

Lynn Gill
Luke Goodwin
Mia Goodwin

Vinny Mamo
Adrian Meijer

Hunter Welcomes 7 New Members

Ann Brady
Robert Edgar
Carol Edmonds
Steve Edmonds

Lorraine Hellens
Adam Morris
Deakin Nolan

Mid North Coast Welcomes 2 New Members

Sue Creech
Olaf Gaetcke

As at 3 March 2021
**CURRENT
MEMBERSHIP
1090**

RPM Welcomes 5 New Member

Shannon Austin
Thomas Cripps
Holly Shields

Matthew Stanley
Michael Willis

South Coast Welcomes 2 New Member

Michael Brooke
Jackilyn Kennedy

Illawarra Welcomes 9 New Members

John Farmer
Marina Farmer
Isabelle Harding
Ray McGhie

Zachary Prior
Jacinta Sheridan
Luke Sheridan
Kyle Testa
Gwen Weir

Sydney Welcomes 28 New Members

Kevin Bolton
Richard Chuck
Edward Chun
Steven Clare
David Concepcion
Maria Concepcion
Steve Connolly
Adrian Dimarco
Carol Drechsler
Stephen Goozee

Deen Hameed
Samuel Herstigg
Craig Hosken
Tiffany Hosken
Alexander King
John Lambeth
Suraj Makkar
Richard Nicholls
Johnson Ning
Georgina Reed

Kyle Robinson
Barb Sargeant
Chris Sargeant
Allison Schubert
Ian Spinks
Hayden Watson
Manooki Wijayanayake
Patrick Wynne

Membership Renewals - if you are having any difficulties logging into the Membership portal to
process your renewal, please contact Bryan Shedden on 0422 340 010
and he will happily assist in resolving any issues.

It rarely takes more than a few minutes and then you are good to go for another year.

MX-5 FLYING SQUAD

SYDNEY CHAPTER
Words • Bryan Hicks
Pics • Sydney Chapter
Sunday • January 17, 2021

In case you thought otherwise, I have other interests outside MX-5s. The plan was to have a run to my Radio Controlled Flying Club which is only a 20 minute drive from the start at Menai McDonalds. We had a coffee while we waited for 6 cars to arrive. The weather wasn't kind and the rain was coming

down in sheets so we decide to wait for it to clear... to no avail. Eventually our run group decided to go to Menai Club and park underground and do car talk for a while. Not a bad thing to do for committed MX-5ers like us. Soon it was apparent that a comfort stop was required.

I decided to take everyone to my house where we could wait for the rain to stop and eventually it did so it was off to the flying club. Nobody was there so no flying was happening. We drove our cars onto the astro turf runway which was nice and squelchy. The group laid out the cars in rows, patterns

and circles and took these photos while the rain held off just for us. After that we all headed off on a run to Big Daddy's Burgers which was fantastic. Then the rain came down again as we sat and ate our lunch accompanied by more car talk.





LUNCH AT GOSFORD

RPM CHAPTER

Words • Jacqui Quester

Pics • Ron Quester

Sunday • November 29, 2020

It appears that a return to normal activities after the Covid restrictions may take a little longer than we anticipated.

Although the number of participants for this run was disappointing, that did not dampen the spirits of the hearty mob who came along.

Nine brave souls in five cars set out from McGrath Hill on a very hot morning. The extra brave even left their tops down.

We travelled through Hawkesbury to Berowra, where we crossed on the punt. The road was winding and steep and generally just the sort of road that our members enjoy.

We took a comfort/ rehydration break at Pie in the Sky and checked that

everyone was happy and enjoying the day.

Confirming that all was well, we proceeded onto the Old Pacific Highway which kept us on a shady backroad with lots of twists and turns.

It was good to arrive at the Central Coast Club and get a cold one down in air-conditioned comfort before settling down to a lovely lunch.

Even though it was hot, I feel that getting out in our little car and mixing with our mates was a very good thing.

We are pleased that we braved the day and left our home to have a lovely lunch with a few laughs and much chatter. No-one got sunburnt but everyone had a good day.

FIVE HILLS RUN

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Norm Barker

Pics • Norm Barker

• Bricet Kloren

Sunday • January 17, 2021

It was the reds v the rest as we set off on our annual Five Hills run around Canberra to start off the year.

The route was chosen because these five hills around the centre of Canberra are the only ones that have road access to the top, so they make for great sight-seeing.

And what a different atmosphere (literally) it was compared to last year, when smoke obscured all our views when we got to the top of the hills.

The reds, led by Bob took off first. This group of various model red MX-5s gained much attention on the way and one person asked if they had all been rented.

They first drove through to Mt Pleasant, possibly one of the best views of

Canberra but rarely visited as it's in the grounds of the Royal Military College Duntroon.

Next was Mt Ainslie with a short stop, then on to Black Mountain past the Telstra Tower and over to Dairy Hill in the Arboretum.

The group then headed across town to Red Hill lookout where there is a sizable carpark suitable for a car group photo.

Once completed, the convoy made its way to the final destination at Lennox Gardens by Lake Burley Griffin (behind the Hyatt Hotel).

The second group led by Norm, of multi-coloured MX-5s (very un-PC), visited the same hills in the reverse order, passing the Reds on Anzac Parade.

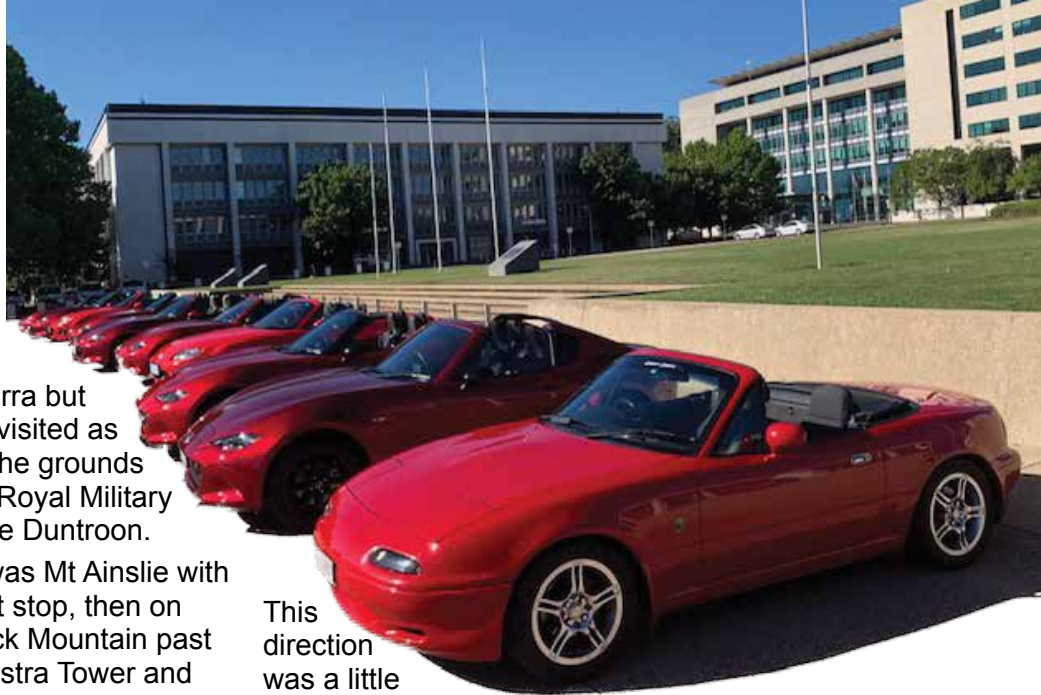
This direction was a little more challenging as there were more traffic lights and right hand turns but the group managed to keep together with only two regroupings necessary.

This group also stopped for car photo ops and to take in the views of the city which wasn't possible the previous year.

One other difference was the noticeably green and lush growth around the city after much welcomed rain over spring and early summer.

After a pleasant 90-minute run, enjoyed by all, we gathered on the green grass beside the lake for a picnic and to watch the sun go down.

This popular event is always well-attended and as usual everyone settled down to enjoy the company, have a chat and picnic together.





A BERRY MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE

After a brilliant day on the Wednesday, Thursday came up cold, dreary and misty...not ideal for a run up through Cambewarra finishing at Shoalhaven Heads.

At the appointed time 5 cars left from Tomerong and headed through Nowra towards our morning tea stop at Cambewarra Mountain.

As we travelled north the weather deteriorated and after turning off Kangaroo Valley Road to head up the mountain, so did the road with potholes abounding.

Arriving at the top we enjoyed a nice hot coffee, trying to admire the view of the south coast through the ever-thickening mist. Sufficiently replenished we left in the mist, which now enveloped the whole of the mountain top for our 2 runs over Berry Mountain and a drive through the Wattamolla Valley.

Before starting, Geoff had warned us of the potholes which we may meet along the way. Needless to say, there were many, varying in size from



10 Club Torque



SOUTH COAST CHAPTER

Words • Bob Downing

Pics • Anne Zattera

• Bob Downing

• Mark Mansell

• Andra Clayton

Date Thursday, December 10, 2020

saucer size to others almost the size of a small swimming pool, in which our cars would surely have drowned.

Onwards through the mist for our first run over Berry Mountain until we reached Berry.

A ride through the town and we headed out through Wattamolla Valley back towards Cambewarra.

The valley is very scenic and through the mist we were able to admire some of the beautiful views and the impressive properties.

Back onto Kangaroo Valley road for our second run over Berry Mountain, the mist had lifted, but the potholes weren't any better second time around.

After traversing Berry we found ourselves at the "Treat Factory" and what a treat it was.

With wallets duly lightened, and future calories to be devoured loaded in the cars, we headed off to Shoalhaven Heads for a late picnic lunch.

We selected a picnic shed looking out to the river, which



fortunately was protected from the worst of the wind.

The usual discussion and merry banter took place along with many photos being taken while we enjoyed our lunch and a selection of Rose and Jan's delicious biscuits.

All too soon it was time to say "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" to all and start to think about our adventures for 2021.

Thanks, Geoff and Rose for organising a great last day out for the year.



COAST TO MOUNTAINS

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • Jenny Luttrell • Barry Luttrell

Pics • Jenny Luttrell • Barry Luttrell

Date Saturday, December 12, 2020

Back in 2019 our "Coast to Mountains" run was disrupted by drought and bushfires that saw roads being closed and not reopening for months. Having been turned back at Gingers Creek on the Oxley Hwy we hoped to redo the run in 2020, but in reverse.

Fast forward to the same time in 2020 and we had to accommodate the changing COVID19 restrictions and predicted extreme weather conditions. So, our accommodation needed to manage up to 30 participants within COVID19 limits. Aston Hill Motel allocated us the rooms and also the use of their outdoor covered BBQ area for Saturday night dinner, which fitted nicely with Covid19 and the weather.

Saturday morning saw 25 participants in 14 cars leave Raymond Terrace Riverside Park to drive the back roads of the Hunter Valley via Clarencetown, Limeburners Creek and Booral stopping for morning tea at Wade Park Bulahdelah. The forecast extreme weather was holding off so all was good.

After morning tea, the convoy wound its way up Wootton Way (a nice twisty fun section of road), John having left earlier to video our cars coming up the hill. Turning at the end, we then did the road in reverse to our start point.

The spirited run over, it was a scenic drive along Lakes Way through Forster to the Taree Service Centre for lunch. Lunch over and with the bad weather still staying away we continued onto Ocean Drive via Kew, Laurieton and into Port Macquarie.

A visit to North Brother lookout provided the opportunity for a welcome leg stretch and to check out the magnificent views across the coast and lakes.

Dinner tonight was a BBQ at the motel



organised by Barry, Jenny, Chris and John (with help from Woolworths), and deliciously cooked by David G and David B. Our two Brian's (aka B1 and B2) led a rendition of various songs to accompany the evening and many stories were shared over drinks.

Sunday breakfast was at the Rivermark Café and included a surprise visit by some of the Mid North Coast Chapter members. After breakfast and in perfect weather conditions (for MX-5s), we progressed up the Oxley Hwy to Stockyard Creek for BYO morning tea. The Oxley Hwy is one of the last great drives in Australia and also attracts tours by international motorcyclists. The final section of the mountain took us to Apsley falls and views of the gorges of the Oxley Wild

Rivers National Park. Sadly, the falls were not running - this was after Jenny and Barry described the potential vista of falling water, sorry about that.

Lunch was at the Walcha Royal Café a step back in time and a glimpse of the historic Royal Hotel with typical country hospitality. The afternoon drive was down another great MX-5 road, Thunderbolt's Way, to Pioneer Lookout at the top of Gloucester Range taking in the valley views. Following Thunderbolt's Way, it was down to Billabong Park at Gloucester for afternoon tea. The run dispersed with participants saying goodbye and making their own way home.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the event a great success.



Run With It

Social runs are at the very heart of our Club. But how do you choose which run is right for you? We have considered our run distances and times, the technical challenges of the roads involved and the posted speed limits along the way and developed this grading system for all Club runs. Now you can just sit back and enjoy the drive.

EASY

Runs are casual runs of around 100kms to a breakfast or lunch venue and back. The route avoids 100km - 110km/hr roads as much as possible. Recommended for all drivers.

CRUISER

Runs are around 100 - 200kms to a lunch venue and back with at least one stop. The drive is mostly on 80km - 100km/hr roads and are suitable for all drivers.

LONG

Runs are between 150 - 250kms and feature a variety of terrains and road conditions with a meal and regular stops along the way. We recommend that you do at least 1 "C" run before a long run.

HARD

Runs are between 150 - 400kms with a mix of highways and some challenging roads. Hard runs are social with regular convenience, refreshment and sightseeing stops. Suited to confident MX-5 drivers.

CHALLENGING

Runs are technical runs of up to 600kms or more per day with few, if any, stops. Featuring early starts and twisty, demanding back country roads, challenging runs are for experienced drivers.

At all times, run participants must accept sole responsibility for safe and courteous conduct on the roads. Drivers must hold a current driver's license and vehicle registration, obey all road rules and drive with respect for the prevailing conditions.



SLIQ RUN UP THE PUTTY

BREAKFAST CLUB

Words • Andrew Lord

Pics • Stephen Lord

Date Sunday, January 24, 2020



Like many people, I find it hard to start things. Whether it be mowing the lawn, a new fitness regime or trying to feign interest in the American electoral system, I can be an expert procrastinator when I want to be. To combat this, I find that utilising an old habit or routine, often in the company of others is the perfect antidote to my sluggishness.

The Sliq Run is a perfect case in point. When there's still a strong taste of Christmas pudding and New Years champagne in your mouth and you've spent the last 6 weeks lamenting the

lack of constitution in Australia's middle order, it can be hard to find the motivation to jump back in the saddle.

It seems easier to float down to the beach or do a crossword than grab the keys to the car for another epic drive. However, the Putty Road has a funny way of dragging you from your sofa and into its mystique.

The Putty is one of those roads that contains enough familiarity to make you comfortable and draw you back but also enough challenge and excitement to test your mettle and keep you on your toes.

It was certainly no different in this instalment, with the flowing 4th and 5th gear corners providing a great contrast to the more technical canyon section with its tight corners and rock wall lined apertures. For me, it's a real iconic atmosphere to fly through this section, snaking next to the river with the sound of stainless steel exhausts warbling off the valley walls. The avenue into the Hunter proper is always majestic, with the craggy summits providing the perfect backdrop to the quaint homesteads with their orderly vineyards as

we snaked through Milbrodale and onto Broke.

As always with the BreakFast Club, a hearty breakfast was enjoyed with hearty conversation at a perennial favourite, Myrtle House.

Although a stinking hot day, we were well accommodated and the breakfast fare was of its usual high standard.

Before long we scattered off home, some through Wisemans, others back down the Putty, others still lingering in the Hunter Valley to sample some of the local delights. All in all, a great way to kick off the year – BreakFast Club style.



CHALLENGE BATHURST

26 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 2020

Words • Joe Kovacic

Mazda's mighty little MX-5 sports car stunned plenty of spectators and fellow competitors by taking first place in all four regularity classes; A, B, C, and D and a third place in Class B at the recent Challenge Bathurst 2020 at Mt Panorama.

Regularity is a time trial where drivers nominate a time they attempt to replicate over multiple

laps. Points are deducted for going slower and double points deducted for going faster than the nominated time. From all reports, it's a difficult motorsport discipline.

Congratulations to Top Gun regularity drivers, Stewart Temesvary, Glenn Thomas, John Karayannis and Luke Kovacic from the MX-5 Club of NSW.

There were only six MX-5s entered from the NSW Club out of a total field of 178 cars. But the stoic little two seaters proved to have the necessary mettle for the mountain with their combination of razor sharp handling, strong braking and good useable power.

The MX-5s were nowhere near the fastest cars

down the straight but were a force to be reckoned with through the corners and across the top of the mountain often reeling in huge advantages gained by the faster, more powerful competition.

Challenge Bathurst is a highly anticipated annual event promoted by Yeehah Events in conjunction with major sponsors GT Mechanica



and Bathurst Regional Council with help from an army of volunteers.

Naturally enough, members of the MX-5 Club of NSW look forward to this year's Challenge Bathurst Event with relish.





CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND CHAPTER PRESENTATIONS

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Rod Nicholas

Pics • Keith Monaghan • Rod Nicholas

Date Saturday, December 12, 2020

*With a ho ho ho
And a chink of glass
We'll end the year
With a touch of class.*

Canberra Chapter wrapped up 2020 with more than just a touch of class and a very enjoyable lunch at the Yowani Country Club, hosted by our Convenors Peter and Annemie Wilson.

The Plague had forced us to put some social gatherings and runs on the back-burner due to health restrictions. Despite this the year was far from a write-off. We got off to a good start before restrictions kept us at home. As restrictions eased alternative runs were plotted to make the most of what was allowed. We managed 22 runs and held eight of our Coffee and Lies meetings which is a great a commendable effort.

In celebration, we gathered at Yowani for lunch. Forty-seven members attended including Club President

Keith Monaghan who journeyed from Sydney to join us.

After a delicious lunch (well done Yowani) and a great deal of chatter we got on to the presentations part of the day. Convenor Peter thanked all those involved who took active roles in the 'administration' (Runs Committee, Website etc), Run Leaders, those who helped with social events, and (of course) all the wonderful members who joined runs, attend C&L and otherwise helped to make the Chapter such a joy to be part of. Peter welcomed our new members encouraging them to come back for more.

Our recent Convenor James Schiemer and Keith Monaghan outlined the process to determine the Member of the Year - points are awarded for participation in various club activities. Points are

tallied by the boffins in Sydney and hey presto, a name pops out of the system.

Congratulations:

- Rod Nicholas - **Canberra Chapter Member the Year**
- Peter and Annemie Wilson - **Canberra Chapter New Member the Year**
- Malcolm Fotheringham - **Canberra Chapter Motorsport Member of the Year**

President Keith took over to announce a couple of extra awards:

- Rod Nicholas - **Club Member the Year**
- Peter and Annemie Wilson - **Runners-up Club New Member of the Year.**

The real interest was in who would receive recognition and adulation as the Best-Dressed Lady and the Most Over-the-Top Gent's Outfit. By unanimous decision (of a fully independent member of the Yowani crew),

Joanne Blackburn was named the **Best-Dressed Lady of 2020**, and Martin Robertson the **Most Over-the-Top Gent**. Martin's socks were the pièce de resistance with their message of Christmas joy (that modesty – and good taste – prevents me from spelling out here).

"Lucky door" draws offered prizes aplenty including to our newbies, Frances and Lili.

Congratulations to all award recipients (and prize recipients).

Our Lunch and Presentations was a resounding success – plenty of laughs, plenty of talk, plenty of tucker and a roomful of great people.

All things considered it was a good year, hopefully 2021 will be brighter, better, happier. May you Zoom Zoom to your heart's content.



18 Club Torque



BEAUTIFUL BOYDTOWN

SOUTHCOST CHAPTER

Words • Brian Clayton

Pics • Anda Clayton • Dace Abolins • Brian Clayton

Date Thursday/Friday, February 11 - 12, 2021

February 11 dawned bright and clear and moderate late summer temperatures promised a great opportunity for top down MX-5 adventures.

Meeting at the Heritage Bakery, Milton, we found out Kerry's better half, Lesley, was a late withdrawal due to a family commitment. Kerry, could not pass up a beautiful morning run.

Along for the ride were Goldilock's children, Bill and Jan, riding in the trombone van.

Jan's hip problem objects to long range trips in low slung Goldilocks so Goldilocks stayed in the garage and the VW trombone van provided transportation.

After a great morning run in fabulous weather and only three interruptions due to bushfire related roadworks, we reached our morning coffee stop at Bodalla Cheese factory. Here we were joined by

Chris and Dace, intercepted on their way north from Narooma.

After coffee and some snacks, we farewelled Kerry and the six remaining adventurers headed south for some more pleasant motoring to Eden, our planned lunch stop. The usual lunch venue on the wharf is closed for renovations but highly recommended Ollie's in town provided an excellent alternative.

After lunch was a short trip to Boyd Town to see Boyd's Tower, built as a light house but used as a whale watch tower. Again, this is a recommended excursion but poor roads stopped us from visiting the old whaling station and Green Cape lighthouse.

So, it was back to our digs for the night - five-star cabins at the beach side caravan park with a walk on the beach, "Fivesies" on the cabin deck followed by a short walk to the Sea Horse Inn for dinner.

After a long day and a pleasant dinner, it was time to turn in.

Next morning brought light rain and overcast conditions but breakfast in Eden beckoned, followed by a visit to the Eden Whale Museum. Both are definitely worth a visit, even for a second or third time.

Mid-morning saw us on the road again, headed for Tilba Winery and lunch. Intermittent rain meant the top stayed closed but it did not deter us from another pleasant drive through beautiful South Coast scenery. Really, the Bega Valley was touched by God.

Lunch at Tilba Winery managed by lovely hostess, Carlie, was up to its usual high standard.

After lunch it was farewell and the trip home after a wonderful two-day South Coast excursion.

Uneventful driving but terrific interludes. Can't wait for the next.



BIG BLOCK NC

Words • Andrew Tate
Pics • Andrew Tate
MX-5 Club of Victoria

A 2.4L engine swap in my 2006 NC MX-5?

Some of you may remember a previous article I wrote about my "mildly" modified 2006 NC softtop which includes a GWR ceramic coated header, GWR Roadster Sport "Q" muffler, GWR progressive springs, Koni adjustable shocks, Whiteline sway bars, Dynotronics ECU tune using EcuTek.

As a continuation down that slippery slope of car mods I researched and began in early 2019, an engine swap from my original Mazda 2.0L engine to a custom Mazda 2.4L engine.

You may ask how do you get a Mazda 2.4L engine when they never made one? This will get technical but I will try to explain.

The engine in the NC MX-5 is a Mazda LF (2.0). This engine is part of the MZR family which are shared with Ford under the Duratec name.

It came in 4 different capacities of L8 (1.8), LF (2.0), L3 (2.3) and L5 (2.5) fitted to MX-5, Mazda3, Mazda6, CX-7 among others.

While the swap of the L5 (2.5) engine into the MX-5 is not uncommon my belief is that the long stroke design of the L5 (2.5) is not in keeping with free revving

character of the MX-5

The basis of the engine I have built is an L5 block and head with a L3 crank/rod combo. This results in a capacity of 2365cc (2.4L).

This is achieved using the L5 block bored .5mm oversize to 89.5mm which is 2mm larger than the bore of the LF/L3 engines at 87.5mm and the L3 crankshaft which has 94mm stroke which is shorter than the 100mm stroke used in the L5 but longer than the 83.1mm used in the L8/LF. The L3/L5 blocks are also 14mm taller than the L8/LF blocks.

Once I decided to head down the path of my build, I then went about acquiring the 2.5 engine core and component parts required.



Engine core

I have the good fortune to work for a major national engine reconditioning company for almost 37 years so I have ready access to engines, machining services from skilled tradespeople, technical knowledge and parts from both local and overseas suppliers.

I disassembled the old engine which was then cleaned and inspected. Machining work was completed which included engine block cleaned bored and honed, crankshaft cleaned, balanced and polished, connecting rods balanced, pistons balanced, full cylinder head recondition/repair, flywheel machined.



Engine block, pistons, crank & rods



Reco cylinder head



2.4 long engine

Over a period of 18 months I sourced the required parts and had all of the engine machining completed. After the rotating assembly was balanced the engine was then progressively assembled including fitting the engine accessories and finally completed in December 2020.



Long engine ready for installation

During the disaster of a year that was 2020 I was also very fortunate to acquire a wrecked 2012 NC2 MX-5 which provided me with many items which assisted me greatly with the engine build and swap.



Wrecked donor car

I used the NC2 gearbox, flywheel, oil pan, oil pick up, manifold in my engine swap. Fortunately the vehicle also came with Recaro seats, NC2 door

trims, radio and centre console, all of which I have installed in my car, from the wreck.

I was able to use a vehicle hoist at work to complete the engine swap the week after Christmas 2020.

The process to swap the engine required the complete removal of the front subframe including the engine, gearbox, suspension and associated system. I then removed the old 2.0 engine and gearbox from the subframe and swapped in the 2.4 and NC2 gearbox.



Engine and subframe removed from the car

The subframe was then reinstalled into the car including connecting and bleeding the clutch, filling

and bleeding the cooling system, connect and regas the A/C and then refit all of the other parts removed.



Engine and subframe being fitted to car

The first start of the engine brought a great sense of relief as it fired up first time admittedly a little rough as it has some reasonably aggressive cams.



Engine installed

Driving the car for the first time presented a great

sense of achievement and continues to as I have run-in the engine and progressively updated the ECU tune to suit. The actual swap took about 7 days but it was the culmination of 2 years of planning and work.

An engine swap in an NC is not a job I would want to attempt in my garage at home.

I plan to take the car to a dyno at some point to find out what it's making but my "butt dyno" tells me I have achieved what I hoped for, which is an NC MX-5 that I can truly call my own but does not lose any of what makes it an MX-5. It just has bit more of everything.

I am very happy with the current state of my unique NC MX-5.

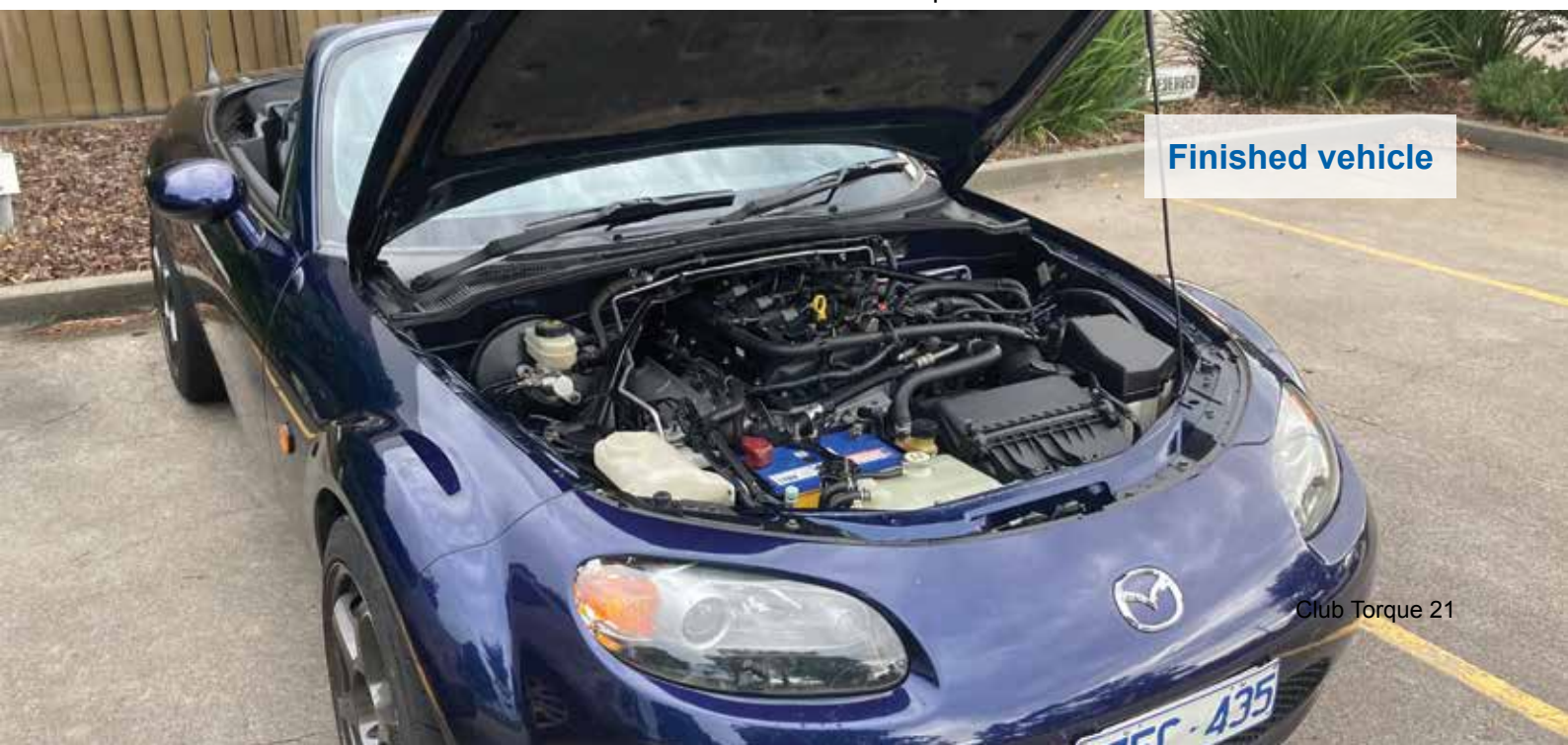
Some will ask was it worth it and how much did it cost?

If I was to attempt this without access to the resources I have available then it is quite possible for it to have cost 10k and I would not have attempted it.

I can tell you that I did not spend anywhere near that and it has been a challenging but ultimately satisfying project that has expanded my knowledge and understanding of NC MX-5 platform.

Parts Used:

- Forged Supertech Piston 11.1 Compression
- Forged H-Beam Connecting Rods with ARP bolts
- ARP Main Studs
- ARP Head Studs
- CL Performance Bearings
- AA Gaskets Full Gasket Set
- Reground Cams from Clive Cams
- New Timing Chain
- Guides
- Tensioner
- Valves
- VVT Gear
- Friction Washers
- PowerBond Harmonic Balancer
- Exedy HD Clutch Kit
- GMB Water Pump
- Bosch Fuel Injectors
- NGK Spark Plugs
- Driven Racing Oil Lubricants.



Finished vehicle

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AND CHAPTER PRESENTATIONS

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • John Purcell • Chris Cameron

Pics • David Gazzard

Date Sunday, December 6, 2020



While discussing the re-commencement of our Chapter monthly meetings at the Argenton Hotel, the Licensee mentioned Christmas Parties. With Covid-19 hanging over our heads we hadn't really considered organising one, but with this thought now in mind, we started planning for 30 members to attend.

We also realised restrictions would allow us to increase numbers in the venue to 40 if allowed. As the venue was totally autonomous from the hotel itself with its own bartender, covid-19 marshal and access we approached the Committee to grant us dispensation to increase our group size from 30 to 40 members on this specific occasion.

We would like to thank the Committee for agreeing to allow us to increase attendance as 40 members were very happy to come along on the night.

Tables were set with Christmas decorations and

even a Christmas tree in the corner to set the scene, and large TV screens on the walls playing videos of some of our past runs. Plenty of talk and catching up was the norm for all.

How do you get the attention of around 40 people talking non-stop?

You take out a trusty old bulb air horn, give it a couple of good honks and it sure gets everyone's attention.

As well as celebrating Christmas, it provided the opportunity to hand out 'thank-you' to all our volunteers in 2020.

With the party wrapping up about 8:30, nice and early to jump into our cars to start stage 2 of the evening - a Christmas lights run led by Malcolm and Jenny

It was a two hour drive around Argenton, Edgeworth, Cameron Park, Macquarie

Hills, Cardiff, Warners Bay, Jewells and Charlestown admiring a beautiful array of light displays.

The evening ended with milk shakes and coffee at Macca's Bennetts Green. Everyone agreed the run planning was great and that we saw the very best of the light shows around Newcastle.

Thank you to all who came along and made this event such great fun.

The Christmas party also gave us the opportunity to begin presenting our MOTY awards, with all three of these going to dual recipients.

The Hunter's New Member of the Year award went to Glenn Hawkins and Denise Birrell who had put their hand up to lead and organise a number of great runs during the year.

The Hunter's Member of the Year was a surprise as the

winners have been in the Hunter Chapter for many years.

This well-deserved award went to Barry and Jenny Luttrell. It's likely that their participation as members of different committees over the years exempted them, so all the more important that they have been recognised this year.

The Hunter's Motorsport member of the Year was a big surprise to the couple who received it. This award went to Peter Barnwell and Kim Jacobs.

On behalf of our Chapter members, we would like to congratulate all our winners and thank them for their commitment in a year that presented many new challenges.



SYDNEY CHAPTER MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

2020 MEMBER OF THE YEAR

JOHN ANDERSON



2020 NEW MEMBER
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MX-5 CLUB TRACK DAY ROUND 1

Words • Joe Kovacic

Pics • Rob Wilko

Sunday February 14, 2021

WAKEFIELD PARK



After rain the day before, a mild summer morning greeted the strong field of 68 enthusiastic Motorsport competitors to our first track day at Wakefield Park for the 2021 season.

Organised by our Race Secretary, Ian Combes,

this first motorsport event for the 2021 season followed a challenging Covid 19 affected season last year.

Also Clerk of Course, Ian Combes welcomed 7 nervous first time competitors.

Race proceedings

started at 9.30am with Group 1 cars going out first in fine and sunny conditions.

The first session was red flagged due to the Curran Brennan NA race car wheel coming off at turn 5. Congratulations and commiserations to Curran for the fastest lap time of 1.05.80.

We had a total of five run groups and managed to give everyone 6 sessions with up to 45 timed laps. Once again the track day was run under a new simplified class system with benchmark times adjusted for the 2021 season.

It is comprised of 6 Classes including, Standard, Clubman, Super Clubman,

Modified, Open and Non MX5 Classes.

Benchmark times are used to award points for places in your class. This system is a lot fairer for all competitors, resulting in any model MX-5 from NA through to ND capable of winning its class. No one driver managed to achieve any benchmark times at this event.

Thank you to all the club officials for putting on another successful MX-5 Club track day.

We look forward to the next Round 2 at Pheasant Wood Marulan on Sunday 21st March 2021.

1st place results are as follows

Name	Class	Time
Bryan Shedden	Standard	72.82sec
Jamie Martin	Clubman	74.08sec
Jamie Martin	Super Clubman	73.74sec
Malcolm Steel	Modified	70.13sec
Curran Brennan	Open	65.80sec
Jie Ren	Non MX-5	68.92sec
Les Patterson	Class RR2	1.58.25
Dave Alland	Class RR2	2.03.02
Luke Kovacic	Class TA1	1.45.08
Greg Bunn	Class TA1	1.58.94





WAKEFIELD 300 TEAM REPORT

Words • Joe Kovacic
Pics • Joe Kovacic

Saturday/Sunday February 20-21, 2021
WAKEFIELD PARK

Ten is the number of team people it takes to compete in the Wakefield 300 Motor Race Series.

The SB Auto sponsored Team Shazza of 2 drivers including owner/driver David Lawler and driver Luke Kovacic, chief mechanic Steven Brennan, 6 pit crew - Ian Combes, Gaynor Lawler, Joe Kovacic, Gus Elias, Tim Velingos and Russ Maxwell. Not forgetting the critical catering efforts of Sue Velingos and Nina.

David Lawler invited young gun Luke Kovacic to be his number one co-driver for the weekend.

Two practice and 2 qualifying sessions were run on Saturday.

Luke managed to qualify the Team Shazza 2.5lt NC MX-5, No 87 in 18th place on the starting grid with the fastest Class C lap of 1.08.40.

Team Herring Racing ran 2 cars with Todd Herring managing to qualify his Class A Turbo MX-5 into 2nd place on the grid with a Blistering lap of 1.03.35.

Tim Herring managed to qualify his Class B MX-5 into 1st place in class with a lap of 1.05.91.

Team Johnson qualified their Class C MX-5 into 6th place in class with a lap of 1.09.64.

Michael and Mitch Hall qualified the Carbotech Brakes MX-5 into 10th place for Class B with a lap of 1.08.25.

Finally Team Raceaway qualified their Class D MX-5 into 3rd Place with a 1.11.78 lap.

Sunday was race day for the Wakefield 300 Enduro. An early morning 15 minute practice session allowed Team Shazza driver Luke Kovacic to iron out any bugs in the car.

On returning to the pit garage, chief mechanic Steven discovered a fuel leak in the auxiliary tank which had to be removed and re-plumbed to run on the main fuel tank only.

This meant the team had to change the fuel pit stop strategy from 1 to 3 stops. This would impact the team later in the main race.

David Lawler went out next to compete in the 14 lap

Sprint Race finishing in 15th. More problems for "Shazza" with David having hard brake pedal problems. Our mechanic Steven had some more brake work to do.

Finally after practicing driver changes and fuel stop strategies, Luke Kovacic grided up "Shazza" in P18 out of a full field of 35 cars for race start at 13.30hrs.

The lights go green and Luke gets away to a good clean rolling start gaining 2 places after the first lap. Luke is leading Class C by 1 lap before pitting on Lap 40 for refuelling.

Luke is sent out again to get "Shazza" back into P1 in Class C, only to pit again on lap 73 due to low fuel.

The second pit stop is frantically performed with a driver change executed for David Lawler to take his baby Shazza out for the final stint.

The safety car enters the circuit after a racing incident on lap 103 and David takes the opportunity to refuel the car for the final pit stop. David manages to complete the race taking Team Shazza

to P2 in C Class.

What an action packed Wakefield 300.

Only 22 cars managed to finish the race.

Congratulations goes to race winner, The Herring Racing MX-5 car 77.

Drivers Todd Herring and Verne Johnson completed the 137 gruelling laps in a race record time of 2hrs 42mins and 50secs.

So, the mighty little MX-5 takes 1st place in Class A, 5th place in Class B, 2nd place in Class C and 1st place in Class D.

So after all the hard work over the last year a big pat on the back for Team Shazza for finishing the Wakefield 300, taking 2nd place on the podium for Class C.

A big thank you to the event organisers and sponsors for putting on such a great event.

All of Team Shazza is looking forward to the next 300km Endurance Race to be held at Sydney Motorsport Park in May 2021.





PIZZA EVENING

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Bricet Kloren Pics • Bricet Kloren

Date Thursday, January 21, 2021

Summer nights are special in Canberra. After the heat of the day, the cool of the evening is a special time for enjoying good food and a glass or two of good wine with good friends in a beautiful garden setting.

And so it was this weekday evening when 34 Canberra Chapter members enjoyed the sunset in the grounds of the Heritage listed Strathnairn Homestead.

We enjoyed cheese platters, mezze plates and fresh pizzas, all cooked in an outdoor wood fired pizza oven, while watching the sun set over the

Brindabellas and caught up with everyone's Christmas stories and tall tales of Covid avoidance.

It is always lovely to support a local business, but it feels even better when the business is a social enterprise helping migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds gain useful practical training.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience and went home well watered and fed.



WOULD THEY DARE?

Turbo Charging For New Model NE MX-5...

Words • Peter Barnwell

Nah, no chance.

Yeh, they can't NOT have a hero sports car...especially after 32 years.

The rumour mill is turning in relation to a possible replacement for the MX-5 ND which lobbed around 5 years ago. Model runs of production cars are generally around 6 years before a totally new model is notified, so the time is nigh for an MX-5 NE if Mazda choose to build one.

The ND has been a popular model that follows the tried and true MX-5 formula.

It may not be to everyone's taste in styling terms but the ND is a great car to drive and delivers sports car feel in spades.

Given that the world is trending towards electric propulsion with hybrids filling in as a stop-gap, are we likely to see the first hybrid MX-5?

No, not a chance is my tip.

Mazda has hybrid and electric technology available but that will be used in cars targeting buyers who think of cars as a moving transport box.

MX-5s are anything but. They are, by and large, bought and owned by enthusiasts who seek more from

their car than mere transport from A to B. MX-5 owners want to engage with their car, enjoy the pleasures of open top driving and the lithe reflexes of a taut chassis and responsive powertrain that literally talk to each other. No car under about \$80 grand comes close for roofless driver engagement. No not even that ancient Nissan 370Z drop top, heavy, pig of a thing.

Mazda wouldn't risk a mild hybrid or all-electric power in a possible NE.

It would destroy the soul of the car to have these sterile types of motive power, a step too far for the people who buy, drive and love MX-5s.

Which leaves two questions: What would an NE have under the bonnet and what would it look like?

The first answer is pretty easy especially if you look at what Mazda make right now.

They probably wouldn't go the 1.5-litre path but may focus on the naturally aspirated 2.0-litre lifted from the latest Mazda3

(essentially the same SkyActiv unit as ND) hopefully with a better gearbox and don't be surprised to see a 2.5-turbo in a top of the range model with up to 200kW and 450Nm.

Now that would be some MX-5 and is entirely possible given a 2.5-turbo Mazda3 is in the pipeline with 186kW and 420Nm albeit in all-wheel-drive and a 6-speed slush box.

If past history is any indication, a 2.5 turbo engine in MX-5 NE would be enhanced over Mazda3's 2.5 T possibly with a sequential 6-speed manual lifted from the current International MX-5 Cup cars.

Of course they'd drop all-wheel-drive and turn the engine around to face north/south as they have done in the past.

A new MX-5 NE would undoubtedly follow the proven light weight chassis formula and probably be

similar if not the same as the ND underneath, just as the NA and NB are similar underneath.

Perhaps Mazda might actually install adjustable suspension on the NE or make it an option and a cheaper race spec' bare-bones model would surely attract plenty of buyers.

A bi-modal exhaust would be good too and a big brake package.

You can put my name down for a race spec' 2.5T right now.

What would the NE look like?

My money is on a front like the latest, gorgeous Mazda3 and a rear end similar to the current ND tweaked for differentiation with cat eye tail lights instead of round units.

It would be a handsome bugger that's for sure.

We found this pic of what the NE might look like...

Pretty good eh?

Stay tuned.

Zoom Zoom...



WINDING WAY TO WOLL

SYDNEY CHAPTER

Words • Greg Unger

Pics • Greg Unger

Date Thursday, January 14, 2021



Eleven members in eight cars met at McDonalds Mt Colah for a 10:30am start to drive north along the Old Pacific Highway to Calga and then north through Peats Ridge and Bucketty. From there we cruised along the Great Northern Road heading to Wollombi.

It was a magic day and the weather couldn't have been better for having the roof down. I was toward the rear of the group and I could tell by the exhaust notes that everyone was having fun on the winding roads through the valleys and undulating

terrain. The scenery through the developed rural valleys and following along the Wollombi Brook is quite spectacular.

A bit over 1½ hours from our start we drove into the peaceful little village of Wollombi. Wow, it completely took my breath away, I didn't realise such a unique village as this was so close to Sydney.....I will allow the photos to do the talking.

We had an all-day menu to choose from for an excellent lunch in good company at Panino Caffe' Restaurant with the village boasting many other



WONDERFUL WOLLOMBI

venues to dine at. After lunch some of our members had to head home while some were able to take in the splendours of Wollombi such as the variety of building architecture and The Forge Wollombi collectable fine arts and vintage clothing centre. For those who wanted to drink in moderation, there is the Wollombi Tavern home of the infamous Dr Jurd's Jungle Juice.

At the end of my stroll, I couldn't resist the temptation to try one of the many flavoured ice creams at the General

Store. In there, the Wollombi Valley Raw and Natural Honey caught my eye.....the best honey I have ever tasted.

I have now done three runs with the Sydney Chapter members to the northern outskirts of Sydney and have not been disappointed, with the selection of venues and the organisation second to none. If you want to make good use of your MX-5, join in the runs and see new places.





TIPTOE TO TUROSS

SOUTH COAST CHAPTER

Words • Anne Zattera

Pics • Anne Zattera • Anda Clayton

Date Friday, November 20, 2020

The sun decided to shine on us for a change. Tops down, yeah. Our team of 6 meet at the usual starting point .. Heritage Bakery at Milton. The chatter and catching up starts immediately. We can't linger too long though as we need to get on the road to meet our final two at Corrigans Beach Reserve.

Then there were eight: Brian and Anda, Bill and Janice, Graeme and Anne, Dace and Chris.

Form a line and zoom, zoom along the stunning coastal road to Mossy Point Boatshed for their fabulous coffee. Thank you Bill for the delicious homemade

rock cakes – just like my Nonna used to make. Thank you, Janice, for supervising Bill in the kitchen. Bill promises to email his recipe.

The day is simply gorgeous. We watch the activity at the water: swimmers, young families, fishermen, oh, and the Reckless Retirees with their little cars. Cormorants are harassing the pelicans. The sound of cicadas.... Ah, this is a summer day in Australia. Where else would we want to be?

Topped up with caffeine and cake, we hit the road again to head south to our lunch destination. It doesn't matter



how many times we travel the coast road, it is always something special to experience. Through Moruya's busy shopping precinct, past the golf course and onto Tuross Head to the Pickled Octopus Restaurant. Perched on the lake, we can see the water glistening as we enter the restaurant. The view is simply stunning. Our first time in a long time where we have sat at a table and had menus brought to us. This Covid bug has seriously hindered our more recent dining experiences. But today we are spoiled. Almost back to normal.

Almost.

Out come our phones and we check-in with the Covid safe app while waiting for our cool drinks.

The meals are Thai inspired and there are a lot of seafood options. Decisions, decisions ... The waitress is friendly.

The cook pops her head out of the kitchen to check that we are happy with our meals. We smile at her and nod with our mouths full.

A young couple on a romantic date at a nearby table offer to take a photo of our group. We return the favour and take their photo. Memories are made of days like today.

We truly appreciate the important things – connecting with good friends over a delicious meal. Good health. Having the time to enjoy our little MX-5s on our beautiful south coast.

The bill arrives. What? It's time to leave? Where did the time fly? We slowly walk to our cars and take a last look at that view and we all vow that we will return to this lovely place.

See you all at our next run.



TYRE TALK

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • Andrew Digney

Pics • Andrew Digney

TYRES, IS 1.6 SECONDS WORTH \$440?

Just \$440 is the difference between the cost of a set of 195/50R15 Hankook RS4's and a set of 205/50R15 Bridgestone RE71RS's and 1.6 seconds is the difference in my PB at Wakefield at a recent club track day' From a 1.15.973 down to a 1.14.384, 1.589 seconds to be precise. Bridgestone RE71RS is a recent 200 tread wear tyre to hit the Australian market in what appears to be an international arms race for 200 tread wear tyre supremacy, driven primarily by many USA grassroots motorsports competitions stipulating 200 tread wear tyre limits. I chose 205's for two reasons.

First, an amendment to tyre width rules in the club's clubman classes allows for a one inch increase, which effectively means a

20mm increase due to tyre sizing standards and who doesn't want more grip.

Second, believe it or not, Bridgestone wants \$15 more per tyre for 195/50R15 RE71RS's.

On the track, almost instantly, I noted an improvement in grip, even when they were cold, they offer noticeable cold tyre performance over an RS4 from the get-go. I noted improved grip, particularly in turns 3, 8 and 9. Regularly at turn 3 I will lift a little or tap the brakes, dependent on turn 2 exit speed. For the first 3 sessions on the day, there was no lifting of the throttle or tapping of the brake at turn 3, full throttle was maintained until turn 4 on every lap. Turn 8 (the fishhook) had a 7km/h increase in speed compared to the RS4, going from a best recorded 66km/h for the RS4 to a best recorded 73km/h for the RE71RS, according to

Race Chrono. Some of that may have been from a slightly different cornering approach, turning in slightly earlier and using more of the track on the exit. It has only taken 19 visits and 767 laps to come to that realisation, so I cannot definitively say it was all from improved grip. For turn 9, it was the same as 3, almost always requiring a lift of the throttle but for the first 3 sessions, full throttle on every lap.

So why only the first 3 sessions out of 6 in total for the day?

The tyre's achilles heel is heat, with fantastic cold performance and grip, the trade-off is heat sensitivity. After lunch, on a warming November day, they became instantly greasy, even on the warm-up lap. The loss of grip, particularly in the rear tyres was noticeable. So, with a substantial improvement in my PB already in the bag, it was time

to slow down a little and enjoy the scenery, look in my rear-view mirror (hint, hint people) and let some other drivers press on in the afternoon heat. No point in additional wear to \$880 worth of tyres (approximate retail price), when I am hoping to get another season out of them. So, what does the future hold?

Of interest to all Stock and Clubman Class competitors, there are several new tyres coming to market. While performance 14 inch tyres have all but disappeared, it appears 15, 16 and 17 inch will all have many good options, with the trend moving towards asymmetric tread patterns rather than directional.

This means a tyre can be used in any position on the car but removes the option of rotating tyres on the rim if uneven wear occurs. It also means that a wheel



alignment relevant to your car's usage will be far more cost effective or alternatively, 2 sets of wheels and tyres will save you money in the long run, if track days are not your only thing. These asymmetric designs appear to offer 3 advantages, better dry grip, better wet grip, and it would appear less road noise.

So, it appears you can have your cake and eat it after all.

Bridgestone RE71RS – available now in 15", 16" and 17" sizes.

Yokohama A052 (direct RE71RS competitor) – available at Bob Jane T-Mart in similar sizes.

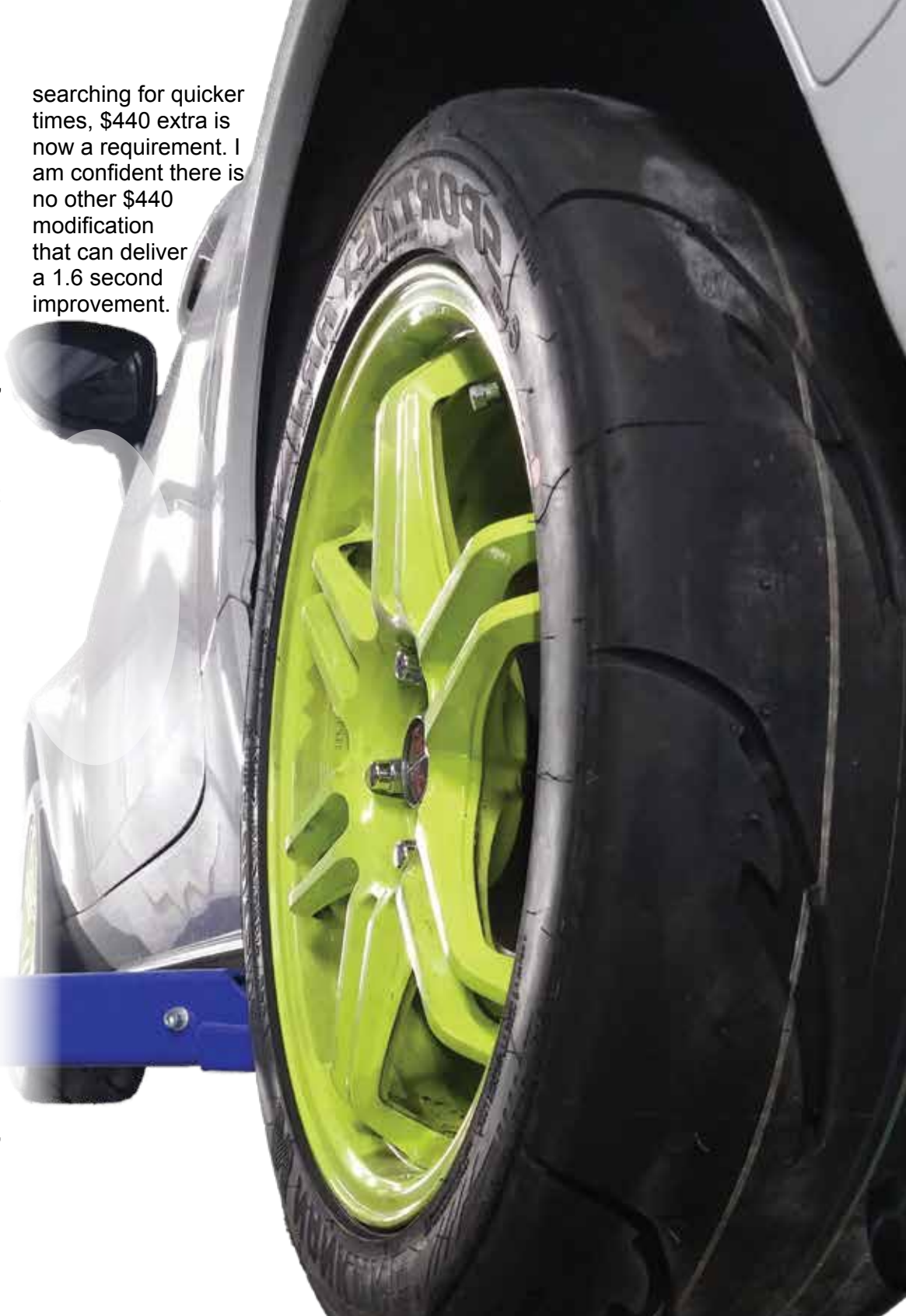
Hankook RS5 – likely release 2021, size availability not known, it did change between RS3 and RS4

Nankang CR-1 – likely release 2021, suitable size options may be minimal though.

Finally, is 1.6 seconds worth \$440?

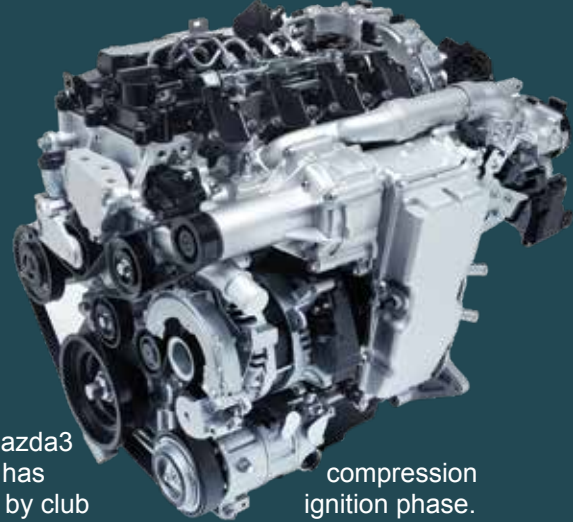
It really comes down to the individual. The RS4 is a great tyre, it offers good grip, predictability, and good wear at a competitive price, but it would appear in the blink of an eye, the game has moved on and if you are

searching for quicker times, \$440 extra is now a requirement. I am confident there is no other \$440 modification that can deliver a 1.6 second improvement.



Smoke and Mirrors?

Words • Peter Barnwell



Mazda is taking a measured path towards so called “sustainable” powertrains developing existing petrol engines along with, and in conjunction with hybrid, electric and other technology.

They offer petrol/electric hybrids already and will soon have a fully electric model on sale here but the same issues will likely apply to that car as to electric cars from other brands ... high price and inconvenience.

For example, how would you like stopping at Jugiong for an hour or more (if a charger is available) in your \$50-60,000+ electric boogaloo en-route to Melbourne from Sydney waiting for it to partially recharge so you can continue.

And that’s assuming your EV has a 500km range (commonly claimed, rarely substantiated in the real world).

This is opposed to swinging into a servo for 5-minutes to fill the small tank in your super economical hybrid petrol/electric, non plug-in vehicle.

You can only drink so many coffees in one go

before going a touch crazy and the longer you stop, the longer the trip takes.

Despite all the “forward talk,” as I call it, about stuff that isn’t fully resolved or isn’t here yet, recharge time remains an issue for electric cars as do the source of said electricity and where the battery materials come from.... often from developing countries with no environmental or safety regulations.

EV disciples incessantly chatter about fast rechargers, long distance, light weight batteries and the benefits of driving an EV but they remain an expensive acquired taste with most relevance to city dwellers. We aren’t really there yet on a number of levels.

And I don’t want to be the guinea pig.

I appreciate that something has to be done about climate change but it would be good, for once, not to jump too soon, and fully develop the right technology and supporting infrastructure then make it affordable.

Which brings me to Mazda and their Skyactiv – X M Hybrid engine.

It’s available at a premium

in the current Mazda3 and CX-30 and has been spoken of by club members as a possible engine for a potential MX-5 NE.

Mazda is making a big deal about this new engine as it features so called Spark Controlled Compression Ignition.

I thought that was interesting... using diesel technology in a petrol engine especially as diesel is renowned for generating high torque outputs at low engine speeds.

Digging a little deeper I became more excited as I found out the engine, available with manual or auto transmission, has a supercharger to boost efficiency as well as direct fuel injection going straight into the combustion chamber and a mild hybrid electric system.

This is driven by a 24 volt battery with regenerative function from deceleration and presumably braking.

Wow, it nearly blows your mind.

However, on digging even deeper, I realised the SCCI (compression ignition) system isn’t really what it purports to be as a spark from a spark plug is required to initiate the

compression ignition phase.

Not like a diesel at all that simply sucks in a mix of air and fuel, compresses it inside the combustion chamber whereupon it self ignites and generates power.

Have I lost you yet?

The Skyactiv-X M Hybrid is essentially a conventional spark ignition, petrol 2.0-litre most of the time that utilises a form of compression ignition with a small spark in cruise mode... with an electric assist motor.

It obviously has benefits in terms of fuel economy and with 132kW on tap, would deliver strong performance in a small car.

Emissions are said to be reduced too, especially in SPCC mode with a claimed 127 grams of CO2 per km.

Mazda’s SCCI system is similar to Toyota’s Hybrid Synergy Drive and makes a good stop-gap between petrol and electric powered vehicles.

Hope they don’t put it in an MX-5....keep it pure, keep it petrol.



COBWEB CLEARER

BREAKFAST CLUB

Words • Andrew Lord

Pics • Andrew Lord

Date Sunday, February 14, 2021

A perennial favourite 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 not for the faint of heart. Seemingly slippery at all times of the year, the narrow winding 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 (a must 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 trick on Saddleback Mountain isn't maintaining a fast pace on a challenging road, it's maintaining focus on a challenging road in the face of one of the most spectacular vistas you will see.

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 brekky at one of our sentimental favourites, The Garden.

After not visiting for a number of 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.



Newcastle E

HUNTER CAPTER

Words • John Purcell

Pics • John :Purcell

Date Sunday, February 14, 2021

(Or how to read a run sheet in the pitch black)

Last December our chapter had an afternoon run which culminated in a sunset BBQ. The run home at night with the roofs down gave me the idea of doing an evening run and this was the outcome.

The weather gave us a bit of a break as it rained on the morning of the

run but cleared sufficiently for the run to proceed that evening. So, our little group of 7 cars and 12 members met at Speers Point park for a picnic dinner and get together before we commenced the run. We set up behind one of the shelter sheds which kept us out of the southerly wind that was blowing directly up Lake Macquarie

and was quite cool.

At 7:00pm on the dot we left Speers Point to commence our run to Nobbys Beach carpark. The first run section took the group through the western suburbs of Newcastle before heading east, eventually following the harbour foreshore around to Nobbys Beach. We timed it just right to catch the sun setting



Evening Loop

over the city and gave Peter the opportunity to get photos of his car with the sunset and harbour vista behind it.

While we still had daylight, we followed the ocean foreshore around to Newcastle Beach and onto sections of the Supercar track before ending up at the spectacular Anzac Memorial walk for a view back over the

city. All views out to sea were hidden by distant rain squalls heading up the coast and of course that southerly wind again.

The final part of the run took us down toward Redhead and along the coast to Belmont before heading west again along the shore of Lake Macquarie. By this time it had become quite dark and

Chris my navigator raised the issue that she couldn't see the run sheet to determine where the next turn was.

This was also compounded by the fact that the corners weren't as obvious as they were in our daylight reccy and often it was hard to see if the car in front was one of the group or not and if you should follow it. The end result was that

we only lost 1 car when they missed a turn but they did catch up again as the run sheet at the next designated regroup point on the run sheet. Back to Chris' issue with the run sheet, yep, the old torch in the mobile phone trick – works every time.

Most of the group then concluded the run with coffees and ice-creams at Warners Bay Maccas.





Loopy

Lunch Run

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Peter Wilson • Annemie Wilson

Pics • Peter Wilson • Annemie Wilson

Date Tuesday, February 9, 2021

It was a slightly overcast morning as nine cars departed Gold Creek for the drive along Barton Highway to Yass.

We collected another car at Murrumbateman to make it an even ten and fifteen members plus a visitor named "Lulu".

Although, being a dog, Lulu is probably not eligible for membership.

It was ideal weather for touring with the top down, not too hot or cool.

There was little traffic on the run to Yass making it easy to keep the group together.

We found car parking in the main street of Yass then had coffee and snacks at the Roses Café.

After much discussion about the usual topics it was time to depart for the enjoyable part of the journey - the drive along Wee Jasper and Mountain Creek Roads.

We had the road almost to ourselves, with just the odd car here and there.

The road was in good condition considering the amount of rain over the previous few weeks and we

had an enjoyable drive down through many twisties to the Murrumbidgee River and across the Taemas Bridge.

As usual, there is a great photo opportunity at Taemas Bridge then there's the drive leaving Wee Jasper Road for Mountain Creek Road and Uriarra Recreation Reserve.

As per our last visit to the Reserve on a weekday, we had the picnic area to ourselves and found a suitable table with a view of the Murrumbidgee River.

Most came prepared to have a cold lunch, either a sandwich or a salad.

However, Barry decided it was time for a hot lunch.

Obviously, Barry spent minimal time as a Boy Scout because his attempts to light a fire underneath the BBQ plate were futile.

Better preparation is probably required next time.

After a couple of hours relaxing over lunch it was time to head home and arrive with just 150 kilometres on the trip meter.

Thanks to all on the run, it was an enjoyable day.





Party Time

SOUTH COAST CHAPTER

Words • Brian Clayton

Pics • Anda Clayton • Bill Short

Date Tuesday/Wednesday, December 1 - 2, 2020

After an extremely hot and windy weekend, Tuesday morning proved to be a lovely, warm, early summer morning, even if a little breezy.

We arrived at Lions Park, Burrill Lake, to set up our picnic lunch only to find that half of the party shed was occupied by a group from the caravan park who had got in early and grabbed half the tables.

This facility is vacant most of the year, just our luck that a group of tourists (lovely people actually) had discovered what a lovely place this is for a group picnic.

Undeterred we set up the remaining tables and two outside for our expected group of MX-5ers.

At the appointed time our group started to gather and we welcomed visitors from Sydney, Illawarra and Canberra chapters, great people who settled in well with our South Coast regulars.

Soon the call "a table" was made and the group commenced to demolish a typical Xmas spread

- prawns fresh from the ocean, sliced ham and turkey, smoked salmon with lime, dill and caper berries, beautifully prepared and presented salads.

After the main course came the inevitable speech and the convenors thanked the support our chapter had received from the Illawarra chapter at its foundation, in particular Jan and Gary Gibson, Wes and Lena Hill and Bryan Shedden.

They also noted that a number of members of Illawarra had continued to support the chapter by contributing to our events, none more that Jan and Bill Short, who were awarded honorary membership of the South coast chapter and presented with a survival pack to assist in their long-distance travel to future South Coast events.

Even "Rusty" the chapter mascot received a gift of a doggy toy.

The convenors thanked the many members of the chapter who had shown their support through

a very trying year, by attending the limited club events, taking photos and writing trip reports, and planning and leading runs. The trophy for Member Of The Year was awarded to Anne Zattera, a popular and enthusiastic member of our group.

Next on the agenda was dessert and time for more conversation.

Tragically, some idiot backed his ute across the road until progress was halted by our Canberra visitors' lovely ND. His fast departure from the scene only enabled us to capture the first part of his number plate but it is hoped this is enough for the authorities to take action.

Fully sated, the group started to disperse but lunch is never enough for the South Coast chapter and a number of us, with Sydney and Illawarra friends coming along, headed for Kioloa for an overnight stay in preparation for Brian's Big BBQ Breakfast.

Lunch ensured that no-one was particularly

hungry and the afternoon was spent with a beer, a glass of wine and some cheese and bickies.

A game of "Finska" was indulged in by some, providing much amusement to both participants and spectators.

Anda arrived with the leftover prawns (still on ice) and some salads for an evening snack, before the mozzies told us it was bed time.

Morning broke with cloudy and cool conditions but even the threat posed by a few rain drops did not deter the group from indulging in the bacon, eggs, chipolatas, mushrooms and roasted tomatoes, the usual fare of Brian's Big BBQ Breakfast, all washed down with fruit juice, coffee and tea.

And then it was time for final farewells and a solemn vow to do it again next year.

Thank you to all our friends for their help and assistance in making this a great Christmas party.



PUB LUNCH AT ARALUEN

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Rod Nicholas

Pics • Rod Nicholas • Maryanne Nicholas

Date Friday, January 29, 2021

It was a bit damp in the Valley

I had woken during the night to heavy rain, and the thought floated through my sleep-heavy mind that the twisting downhill run into Araluen would not be much fun in the wet.

The morning was grey and cloudy but a quick look at the rain radar on my weather app showed the worst of it had passed and moved on towards the coast.

Our Run Leader Col McNally was starting the day at Bungendore after a leisurely coffee at R&R's Diner.

The 'South Siders' would take the easy way to the Diner via Queanbeyan. For something different, I volunteered to lead 'North Siders,' such as myself, the long way (better known as 'the MX-5 way') down Mulligans Flat Road and Shingle Hill Way, joining up the Bungendore Road where it meets the Federal Highway. It was about 30 km longer, but that wasn't the point...

After arriving at our appointed meeting place at the correct time, my navigator and I were still waiting 10 minutes later.

My navigator quietly told me 'no one's coming'. So we set off, wondering whether we would be having a lonely lunch at the pub by ourselves. Meanwhile, the rain had decided to linger a little longer than I thought

was desirable.

Our little side excursion was a bit of a hoot. We had the quiet country roads almost to ourselves, if you don't count the odd wallaby grazing by the shoulder or the mob of roos just the other side of the fence. The extra kms went swiftly by and precisely at the right time we pulled into Bungendore, watched as some local in a 4x4 pinched the carpark I was waiting for, and headed a bit up the main drag to find a spot big enough for our small car. We splashed our way to the Diner, where we were warmly greeted by our friends, who had all decided that a little weather was no reason to put off a run.

Col briefed the group, now 15-strong (ten cars), during our recaffeination and we eventually headed off in a loose convoy to Braidwood. The destination there was the Car Model Shop where we would pick up another two couples, one each from the South Coast and Illawarra Chapters. It's always great to have members from our other Chapters join in on a run – the more the merrier but also an opportunity to catch up and mingle. Our Illawarra friends travelled from Nowra through Nerriga and on to Braidwood via the Nerriga Road. This road can best be described as a bush

track despite Google Maps saying otherwise. Still largely unsealed it is rough and nasty. The road from Nowra to Nerriga is pretty good, but the best choice is to turn off shortly after towards Tarago (along Oallen Road), and then head to Braidwood. They made it, which just shows that nothing much stops an MX-5.

A few cars kept on going through Braidwood and made the trip into Araluen – a short 25 km – in the intermittent rain. As you can tell from the photos, it was a touch ... damp. That made the last 10 km of twisting and winding road a little interesting. Fortunately, there was no flowing water across the track and no loose dirt or gravel swept onto the road, and while it was sensible to take extra care, no one was likely to come unstuck. A few of our cars, which had started early from Bungendore, were parked on the street with their drivers already settling in at the tables reserved for us in the Araluen Valley Hotel. We were twenty strong, in 13 cars - a great turnout for a wet day.

The tucker was good and plentiful (my T-bone only just fitted on the plate!) and the conversation was much the same. You'd think that after all this time together we'd be talked out, but clearly that wasn't the case. It bucketed for a bit while

we were eating but by the time everyone was ready to leave the rain had cleared and the roads were steaming. It was 'make your own way home', which in reality means most leave more or less together in an informal convoy. And so it was.

The run down to Araluen is plenty of fun, especially if conducted during the week to avoid the coast traffic.

The valley was beautiful after the recent rain, with broad swathes of verdant grass.

It's a near-perfect example of a valley in the heart of the Great Dividing Range with a road that tumbles down to a winding stream. Araluen was one of the most famous gold towns in NSW. Today it is little more than a few buildings, some historic ruins and a beautiful valley famed for its orchards.

The goldfields drew settlers (even if only temporary) and bushrangers. By 1851 there were 15,000 prospectors in the Araluen Valley, and by 1860 over 4,000 people were living there. The valley at this time had over 26 hotels, 20 butchers shops, churches, general stores, blacksmiths and bakers. There is little evidence of that now, but it is well worth a visit.

We will program another run down to the valley before the year is out. Stay tuned.



Footrot Flats Fang...

TRAVEL FEATURE

Words • Peter Barnwell

Pics • Kim Jacobs

The plan was to drink and drive in New Zealand - drink in some of the country's most spectacular scenery while driving on some of its most demanding sealed roads.... from the seat of an open top sports car.

Yep, a bucket list tick off, something you should do at least once before you die. If you don't like driving, don't bother.

We got hold of the best modern day sports car, an MX-5 GT RF to challenge ourselves and to directly engage with the environment.

It's not a winter drive because of the dreaded "black ice" but is fine any other season.

Though a 'fastback', the RF's roof opens almost completely to the elements apart from the

built in "roll bar" behind your head.

So, armed with the ideal tool for the job, we set off on a five day South Island jaunt that was essentially an anti-clockwise round trip out of Christchurch and back.

Our plan, to get road info' from motorcyclists goes out the window as soon as the roof is opened because we only need to follow our nose to find some seriously entertaining driver's roads and picture postcard vistas.

It's "oohs and aahs" all round only a few kays out, passing the stunning Castle Rock scenic attraction before heading across Canterbury Plain, an experience heightened by the perfume of spring in the air wafting into the cabin at every turn.





As we head west towards the winding, undulating Arthur's Pass and Hokitika that looks like it's straight out of the 1950s, imposing snow-capped mountains provide a majestic backdrop to the snaking road that fully taps our MX-5's capabilities.

This sensory overload through eyes, nose and the seat of our pants continues for a few hundred kilometres as we cut south toward an overnight stop at Franz Joseph Glacier and the obligatory glacier walk.

The feel in town is "ski resort," the beer's good and so are the digs and food.

Happy days.

Day two dawns pelting with rain, but we're not averse to

roof down driving in bad weather heading for Wanaka, our next overnigher.

Rounding up countless campervans, we're hooking down a wet and winding highway through deep cuttings and along rock ledges covered in vibrant green ferns, moss and lichen.

Hundreds of small waterfalls arc over the top of us swooshing past in the air pocket created by our forward motion.

Now that's something you don't get every day on your commute to work.

It's a never to be forgotten experience capped, if you're lucky, by the sight of Roaring Billy waterfall in all his gushing fury.

Tracking south east now we bisect Haast Pass, rounding vast inland lakes and endless yellow coloured, gorse-covered mountains. Enroute we're carving a convoluted passage past mystical Aoraki (Mt Cook) and the nearly as imposing Mt Aspiring and their adjacent national parks, sneezing as we go from the hay harvest taking place further along.

The run into Wanaka is what can be described as a "Ducati (motorbike) road" offering sets of wide sweeping bends you can really get your teeth into driving an MX-5.

We're eager to get out of the car and onto push bikes for a few hours pedalling.

Gorgeous Wanaka is another 'ski town' but a hoot year

round offering eye poppin' scenery from just about everywhere in town and numerous activities, great food, wine and a touristy buzz.

Watching the TV news at the start of day three before our run to Invercargill and Bluff at the bottom of NZ, a TV ad promotes fireworks on sale a couple of days before Guy Fawkes which the Kiwis celebrate for some reason.

Making a mental note to stop and buy a selection, the plan is for a nostalgic trip back decades when you could buy fireworks in Australia.....

So, taking B roads out of Wanaka, breakfast awaits at Cromwell, a major fruit growing centre. We bypass

Queenstown because of time constraints and it's a bit too far out of the way.

First stop is Clyde because there's a vintage car rally in full chug.

They love our car, we love theirs.... it's a mutual admiration society and half an hour spent in car banter.

Swinging into the garden centre on the outskirts of Cromwell, we relish arguably the best brekky in NZ... it's that good.

Fireworks are bought at Alexandra before a trundle through Gore stopping at little cafes and galleries along the way for coffee and cake.

Then into Invercargill for lunch after attending some 'artisan' markets.



After hitting the right note on food until now, lunch at Invercargil is forgettable and it's decided to press on further south.

The fishing /industrial town of Bluff is astonishing, like something out of a Coen brothers movie – down and out, rotting, seen better days, smelly, run down but oh so interesting. We go to the superb cliff-side restaurant perched around the headland and the town lookout is spectacular giving unimpeded views of Stewart Island only a few kays offshore.

Try to ignore the strategically misplaced aluminium smelter on the other side.

Bluff enjoys our fireworks display and we do too, giggling like kids with a new toy.

Trackin' north east at the start of day four on the meandering coastal road (of course) through towns like Tokanui, Owaka and Balclutha a small stream

is dotted with what looks like hundreds of outside 'dunnies' which are in fact trout fishing huts.

Those Kiwis....it must get really cold.

It's 10.00am before finding an open café for breakfast in Owaka.

Offsetting our hunger pangs is scenery to die for. It's "Footrot Flats" in real life complete with ultra-green pastures, symmetrical undulating hills and spectacular seascapes and landscapes.

We're in MX-5 heaven again as we zip along the smooth tarmac snicking through the manual gear change and revving it up, pushing tyre grip at every corner.

Rolling into Dunedin with high expectations we are not disappointed at the bay city spread out before us. It's easy to see why they call it the Edinburgh of the south.

Staying on-theme we jump on an open top double decker for a quick look-see around town marvelling at the Victorian architecture, alighting for a botanic gardens walk-around.

Our accommodation is at Larnach Castle on a peninsular overlooking Dunedin harbour.

The 'guest' rooms are converted stables which are luxurious and scrupulously positioned in the castle gardens offering views from both windows.

Signing up for the castle degustation feast, we tog up for what turns out to be a memorable culinary experience with multicultural company. Setting off really early the next day we head further east to the Albatross rookery but they aren't out yet.

The last day's run shapes as a fairly mundane cruise up the east coast through Timaru but a degustation participant suggests we divert inland to Fairlie past

Mt Hutt, through the town of Geraldine then the run back into Christchurch.

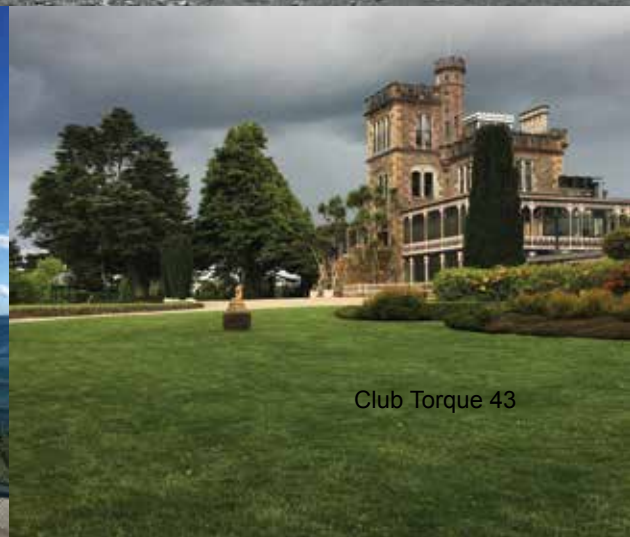
He is a motorcyclist and the chosen route delivers in spades offering rapid-fire changes to the landscape and scenery, challenging roads and the reward of pies from Fairlie Pie Shop... among the best you will ever taste.

We are dodging stupid birds similar to grouse that try to smack into the car, see a million sheep, avoid countless patches of cow poo strategically positioned at the apex of corners.

We hook along at a decent clip, eat great food, drink superb wine, and take a gazillion photographs.

The total distance is less than 2,000km and encompasses a wide range of sealed roads and stunning scenery, the best NZ has to offer for a driving enthusiast in an open top MX-5.

Don't miss it. Embrace the drive!





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