

CLUB TORQUE

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

AUTUMN 2012

NATMEET ROCKS

We came, we saw, we conquered



SPECIAL EDITION



Our Screen & Stage Stars invaded Canberra

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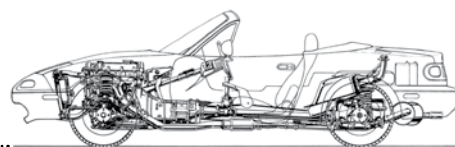
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Main Cover Image: The nation's best MX-5s were on display at Canberra's Patrick White Lawns during the NatMeet Concours d'Elegance. (Bryan Shedden)

CLUB TORQUE - AUTUMN 2012



From the Editor



Ahoy me hearties! Captain Jack Sparrow at your service – from the NatMeet fancy dress night.

NatMeet X! Wow! What a truly incredible event. Since joining the Club Committee 18 months ago, I've been watching from the sidelines as our NatMeet committee prepared for Easter 2012 in Canberra. The amount of thought and effort that goes into creating a 5-day extravaganza of such high standard for 129 attendees is just gobsmacking. I doff my pirate hat to Peter, Jill, Keith, Sue, Phil, Chez, Paul, Margaret and everyone else behind the scenes for a job extremely well done. Thankyou gentle sirs and fair ladies - particularly for scheduling the NatMeet Track Day on my birthday!

How on earth are the Queenslanders going to top this in two years time? I don't know, but Fiona and I will be at the Sunshine Coast to experience it. We had such a great time at our first NatMeet that we're already arranging our calendar for the next one.

Eagle eyes might have spotted that the red NA shown below is *not* my *Little Reddy*. Now there's a story. At the club track day in February, soon after completing my first run of the day, I managed to lose my car key. A frantic search was frustratingly unsuccessful – many thanks to all who helped. I eventually admitted defeat and sheepishly phoned my wife for help. Fiona groaned, loaded our 7yo son Alex into the Volvo (yes, Volvo – please stop laughing), and drove to Goulburn with the spare key. Sincere thankyou Number One goes to Fiona.

Meanwhile, I had an hour and a half to kill and no car to drive on the track. Then Phil Lea offered me *his* car – a standard NA6 so it was also eligible for the same class. Beauty! Slapped my numbers on his doors and off I went, treating it with the *utmost respect* as the photo below displays. Phil did request that I "have a go" so who am I to disappoint? Sincere thankyou Number Two goes to Phil.

Two days later, the key was discovered under the front seat of Eric Hardas' SE. I was Eric's instructor for the first-timer group and the key must have fallen from my pocket. We *did* search under there on the day, but it had tucked inside a little slot in the carpet. He had to *remove the seat* to get to it. Sincere thankyou Number Three goes to Eric for finding and returning my key!



Lesson learnt: carry a spare key.



Bryan Shedden #68



The President's Brief

• Words: Glenn Thomas

• Photos: Bryan Shedden, Peter Hilkmann

While this may seem a little premature, the AGM will soon be upon us. Why am I talking about this? This is a great time for you to take on a committee position to help shape the Club's future. We currently have a number of people who are looking at standing down at the end of this term; subsequently, we are investigating potentially reshaping some of the ways in which service is delivered. Maybe you would like to be involved in managing social events or runs; maybe you would like to help with the administration – remember that the Constitution requires half of the Executive to stand down at each AGM. You may have some alternate ideas that are not currently being explored by our Club – if so, please send me an e-mail.

Talking about things of the future, many of your committee members recently participated in the initial Strategic Planning workshop. The day delivered a clear understanding of exactly what is the Club's "reason for being" and what are the Club's values. A consensus was gained about the structure of the Mission and Vision Statements. In addition to this, significant in-roads were made into the development of components of the Business Plan. Anybody who witnessed this workshop would have been left with no doubt about the commitment and passion that all participants have for their

Club – great job well done! The final product should be on the streets soon.

A new tool introduced by your committee and successfully applied to the development of the Strategic Plans is the Committee Discussion Board. This web-based tool has been introduced to facilitate the evolution and recording of our Club's corporate knowledge. One example of this tool's use was the recent discussions that lead to a revision of the Club's subsidy and allowance policy. These discussions and the resultant policy are all readily accessible for easy reference by any Committee member at any time – now or in the future. This capacity to amass corporate knowledge is exceptionally important to your Club as this knowledge will not be lost as committee members come and go. Speaking of going; that is what my word limit has done so I'll look forward to seeing you at the next Club event.



Safe motoring. ■



NatMeet X Champions

National Champion

Individual Champion



MX-5 Club of NSW



Phil Mayo (Hunter Chapter)

Membership News

• Words: Keith Monaghan

A quick membership report this month.

Total Active members = 694

Financial = 584

Unfinancial = 110

My aim over the next month is to sort out the unfinancial listing and bring it up to date.

Our current membership count is 584

New Members

I would like to welcome the new members and I hope to meet you at one of our activities. ■

Ian Adams	Jill McDonnell
Vicki Adams	Peter McDonnell
Brendan Barr	Paul McElhinney
Paul Bicknell	Alison McKenzie
Matt Bright	John McNair
Ben Browning	Timothy O'Brien
Lynne Chambers	Christine O'Keefe
Russell Chambers	Graham Pfitzner
Rod Chell	Di Radcliffe
Pammy Clerici	Dinah Read
Andrew Cooper	Ian Read
Denise Cramp	Ian Roache
Rachel Crawford	Jennifer Roache
Leroy Day	Adam Rumjahn
Rosemary Dunning	Stephen Simpson
Jen Eastmead	David Smith
Tony Eastmead	Noeline Smith
Kristian Ferrer	Richard Smith
Scott Furman	Terry Smith
Richard Hambly	Kristen Stanton
Peter Horrobin	Chris Todd
Greg Johnson	Alexander Tribe
Wendy Johnson	David Tulloh
Michael Jones	Adriaan Winton
Selim Karaaslan	Shelly Wrigley
Melissa Keller	Yvonne Wrigley
James Manion	
Keith Manion	

STOP PRESS

• Words & Photos: Bryan Shedden

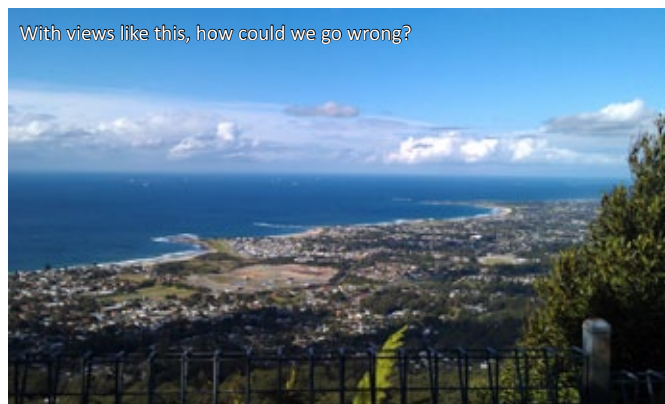
• Photos: Chris Flak

Illawarra Chapter?

Our club currently has two regional Chapters in Canberra and Hunter. The Canberra Chapter was started in 1996 after hosting NatMeet II, while the Hunter Chapter is a more recent creation, launched in 2006. Is it time for an Illawarra Chapter? As a resident of the region I was keen to find out.

And so on 5 May, a meeting of potential Illawarra Chapter members was held at the MX-5 Club Coffee & Lies venue, the **Cliffhanger Cafe** at Bulli Tops. With less than five days notice, Michael Soulos miraculously arranged a *Support Illawarra Chapter Run* from Heathcote to Bulli Tops, via Wilton and *Nan Tien Temple* at Unanderra – down and up the Illawarra escarpment with superb views to cap it off.

With views like this, how could we go wrong?



About 20 cars made the trip south, and they were joined by a dozen or so more at Unanderra. The **Cliffhanger Cafe** was overwhelmed! Then everyone gathered in the picnic area and heard about what an Illawarra Chapter would aim to deliver and what would be required to create it.

The level of interest was astonishing! 47 people signed a petition of support, and dozens more voiced their support via emails and forum posts at mx5cartalk. The majority were from the Illawarra, Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven, but many from southern and south-western Sydney were keen.

A 10-person sub-committee has been nominated and the next step is to identify and elect a Convenor. Then we're ready to present our case to the Club Committee for consideration. We're not there yet – but we're close! ■



NatMeet X - Committee Retrospective

• Words: Peter Feutrill • Photo: Peter Hilkmann

• 6-10 April 2012



As the Chair of the NatMeet Committee it gives me great pleasure to report that NatMeet X was a *HUGE* success!

The feedback that the Committee received during and post NatMeet tells us that we did a good job in providing an event that gave all attendees an opportunity to interact,

relax, participate, compete and generally just to enjoy themselves without having to think too hard about it. The success of NatMeet X was a reflection of the hard work put in over the last two years by a "tight" committee who were all highly motivated to deliver a great event.

We thought that the following worked really well:

- ✓ A small Committee who all took on key roles and were able to make decisions quickly.
- ✓ Members of the Committee had NatMeet experience.
- ✓ Everyone stayed at the one location where we held some functions to minimise travel.
- ✓ Organised buses for functions at other locations.
- ✓ The local chapter took responsibility for runs.
- ✓ The program provided some free time.
- ✓ The scoring system did not make people feel obliged to attend every activity.
- ✓ There was a mixture of competition and fun events.
- ✓ The decision to exclude R-spec tyres for the track day was fairer for interstate competitors.
- ✓ The track day was superbly organised by Mike and Zan.
- ✓ The dinner at the **Australian War Memorial** was our sensational signature event.
- ✓ The cost for drinks at most events was included.
- ✓ There were alternate events for those who were not interested in the motorsport day (the WOW bus tour).
- ✓ The **National Film & Sound Archive** was the perfect backdrop to our Stars of Stage & Screen fancy dress night and the participation was out of this world.
- ✓ The final evening was a celebration night shared with friends.

It is history that the weekend weather was perfect and we joked how the weather was the one thing we organised and the rest was pure luck! I think that the Queenslanders who are hosting NatMeet XI in 2014 were in awe of how high the bar was set. We had to laugh when Peter Phillips spoke on behalf of the Queensland Committee late on Monday evening and announced that it had just started to rain.

The theme that developed over the weekend was about the MX-5 "family". This was evident in stories where people had assisted others with their troubles, even lending them cars for the weekend. Pam Estreich's words about her granddaughter's battle with cancer touched everyone present and the committee was pleased to announce that the chosen charity for NatMeet X will be the **Westmead Children's Hospital**. As soon as we finalise the finances we are confident we will be able to make a healthy donation to this worthy cause.

Thanks to our sponsors particularly Mazda Australia who were just fantastic. They sent Mike Dawson, Business Development Manager NSW, as a representative to assist with presentations on Monday evening and Mike has since indicated how much he enjoyed the enthusiasm and the energy in the room. He has promised we will be the first to know when the ND model MX-5 is confirmed with front wheel drive, 800cc hybrid powertrain and CVT gearbox!

I would like to express my personal thanks to my friends on the Committee for their untiring work, particularly: Phil Ashton for all the concours and show & shine organisation and the overall point scoring system, Cheryl Ashton for functions, catering and the WOW bus tour, Keith Monaghan for signage, trophies and the contents of the welcome packs, and Paul Beerworth for the organisation of the runs and the local chapter helpers. Thanks also to our respective families for their support and understanding during the last two years.

NatMeet X has been such a part of our lives that it seems surreal that it is over. A lot of work – sure – but our reward has been sharing the success with our NatMeet "family".

See you at NatMeet XI – you've gotta be there! ■

NatMeet X was attended by 67 NSW & ACT members, most of whom appear in this shot at Concours



NatMeet X - Concours d'Elegance

• Words: Phil Ashton

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann

• 7 April 2012

The 10th NatMeet Concours d'Elegance was held on the **Patrick White Lawns** overlooking Lake Burley Griffin, on a beautifully fine Saturday morning. The threat of light rain posted by the Bureau of Meteorology a few days earlier failed to eventuate, thank goodness.

The previous day's hive of activity in the car park of ANU was there on display for all to see. Some couples spent almost all of Friday detailing and preparing for the event. Wheels were taken off to be cleaned on the inside, touch up paint dabbed on the odd stone chip picked up on the way to the event, and the exteriors polished to a mirror finish.



This NatMeet saw the introduction of Show & Shine for those attendees who thought their MX-5 didn't "cut the mustard" under the bonnet with the Concours cars. From what I saw in the car park, there were probably a lot of people who thought they had made the right decision by entering Show & Shine. But did they?

The judges toiled throughout the morning going over the cars from top to bottom finally finishing just before the field was due to head off on the afternoon run.

With all the results in and tallied the most outstanding Concours MX-5 went to Dave Perrin from NSW with his modified NA, taking out the Best in Show, the Champion NA, Best Modified NA, and Peoples Choice, by amassing 395.98 points, 27.13 points clear of Queensland's Mark Seville in another NA.

The biggest surprise of the event was reserved for Damon Muller, the Canberra Chapter Convenor, who won his class with one on the lowest scores on the day. Damon took his dog home halfway through the event and the car was only partly marked. Unknown by Damon, all the other cars of his model had entered Show & Shine, leaving Damon as the sole entrant and winner of his Concours class! The shocked look on his face at the presentation night was priceless. ■

Concours d'Elegance Winners

Category	Winner	State	Car
Best in Show	Dave Perin	NSW	2
Peoples Choice	Dave Perin	NSW	2
Champion NA	Dave Perin	NSW	2
Champion NB	Keith & Alison Greenlees	SA	37
Champion NC	John & Marion Tait	QLD	70
Standard NA6	Colin & Elaine Caldwell	NSW	1
Modified NA6	Dave Perin	NSW	2
Standard NA8A	Chris & Wendy Ward	QLD	19
Standard NB8A	Damon Muller	NSW	47
Modified NB8A	Paul & Kathryn Young	QLD	29
Standard NB8B	Keith Monaghan	NSW	31
Modified NB8B	Keith & Alison Greenlees	SA	37
Modified SE/SP	Simon Corston	WA	46
Standard NC	Annette & Gary Moss	NSW	54
Standard NC RC	Dianne Byers	NSW	51
Modified NC	John & Marion Tait	QLD	70

Show & Shine Winners

Category	Winner	State	Car
NA	Phil & Helen Mayo	NSW	6
NB	Mark & Lynda Gray	NSW	53
NC	David & Gail Collins	VIC	76



NatMeet X - Eat, Greet & Be Merry

• Words: Dianne Barry • Photos: Keith Monaghan, Peter Hilkmann

• 6-10 April 2012

Whoohoo hooo, NatMeet is here again!!!!

The expectation of the next few days was easily met at the Friday night Welcome BBQ at ANU University House Common Room. Greeting old friends and making new ones brought back wonderful memories of previous NatMeets. And what a posh evening it was. I'm sure I have never been to a white linen BBQ before – good food and wonderful company really set the tone for the weekend ahead. A lovely touch were the decorated cakes each member had at their seat.

Saturdays dinner at the **Australian War Memorial** raised the bar somewhat. A number of us decided to experience the pre-dinner tour, so after a big day in the cars – rush home, quick shower, shave and shampoo, dress in one's best bib and tucker, board the buses and off we went. The guides gave great insight into Australia's participation in a number of wars. A very humbling tour.

Then, onto the main event, pre-dinner drinks and hors d'oeuvres started this very elegant affair. The beautifully dressed dining area under "G for George", set the tone for a memorable evening. Red roses as the centrepiece, white linen and black chairs, everyone dressed to suit the occasion in this spectacular setting. Good food, stimulating conversation with great company, how can you miss!

A very thoughtful touch was the place card, the name on the front (in case you forgot who you were) and the name on the reverse side so you could address everyone by name. All of the small thoughtful things helped to make this a superb evening.

Sunday night was another story altogether. Not a lot of elegance, except for Sir Les Patterson of course. Another resounding success, with everyone participating. Some imaginative costumes provided terrific entertainment. A touch of genius, was to have a cocktail party – not seated, so everyone mingled, or were molested, by one who shall remain nameless. The night rounded off with a film of the history of car racing in Australia.

Mondays dinner was the culmination of the whole weekend. Another very enjoyable dinner in the Great Hall, the centre of which was a beautifully decorated NatMeet cake. Another of those touches, which enhanced the entire weekend.

The main event had arrived! Who would win??? The judges had made their decisions. Numbers were tallied, votes counted, everyone on the edge of their seats. THE WINNER IS ... NSW, hooray, hooray. But if you are from the Hunter Chapter, as we are ... we won it!

Lets not forget "Bruce", the one man entertainment package, who had most up either dancing or performing, finishing off the weekend on a high note.

Congratulations to everyone, because we were all winners after all. To the NatMeet Committee – take a bow – you have set the bar high for Queensland. Two years to go (but who's counting), see you there. ■



NatMeet X - Out for a Drive

• Words: Paul Beerworth

• Photos: Matt Wilmot, Ed Cory

• 6-10 April 2012

We have some brilliant roads around our Nation's Capital, particularly those that bring out the best of the MX-5 and drivers. And so, daydreaming during the long drive across the Hay Plains after NatMeet IX in South Australia, I came up with a great selection of runs visiting Bombala, Eden, Yass, Galong, Harden, Boorowa, Crookwell, Gunning, Breadalbane, Cabramurra, Khancoban, Jindabyne, and Cooma.

Sadly the cumulative distance of these "little" drives amounted to some 1,600 km, and unsurprisingly, the Committee thought that was a bit over the top.

So, when I returned to Canberra, in the real world and mindful of the other events to be conducted at NatMeet X, it was time for a rethink. In the end it was easy. Some of our best roads right are on our doorstep.

Friday. Canberra Chapter members escorted NatMeet X visitors on our *5 Hills in a 5* run. A short introduction to our fair city from the hill tops – Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie, Mount Pleasant, Capital Hill and Red Hill. Great hill climbs, within the speed limit, and the views show Canberra off to perfection. Just enough roundabouts to whet the appetite!

Saturday. Right in our backyard and running due north for 65 km from Tharwa is the *NASA Run*. This run links Tidbinbilla Road, Paddy's River Road, Brindabella Road, Urriara Road and Coppins Crossing Road. Tharwa is the oldest official settlement in the ACT, proclaimed in 1862. The Tharwa Bridge crossing the Murrumbidgee River was opened in March 1895.

The run included a visit to the *Tidbinbilla Deep Space Tracking Station* (the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex, one of three in the world) – the NASA connection – which was officially opened in March 1965. Our visit appeared to have overwhelmed the *Moon Rock Cafe*.



Sunday. For those drivers not participating in the Wakefield Park Track Day, or the WOW Bus Tour of Canberra, there was a 160 km run to Goulburn via the Old Hume Highway from Gunning to Breadalbane. From the University, we took the "new" GDE to the Barton Highway, then the Namina

Road to the Sutton to Murrumbateman Road and then the Gundaroo to Gunning Road. One of the highlights was seeing entrepreneur Dick Smith's property at "Bowlyie" near Gundaroo, complete with a nice airstrip and hangars.

The Old Hume Highway from Gunning through the Cullerin Range is "bliss on a stick" for MX-5 drivers, a sharp contrast to the days when it was the main road to hell, or Sydney (take your pick)! From Breadalbane, we headed north again into the hills to approach Goulburn from the north west, and after a slow pass through the city centre, onto the Braidwood Road to Wakefield Park. The return drive took in Tarago, with its iconic *Loaded Dog Hotel* and Bungendore at the southern end of Lake George.



Monday. After a late-ish start, a full complement of participants and cars headed off on a relaxed drive to Bungendore past the faux squattocracy's rural estates of Wamboin to Bungendore for coffee and a wander through the Wood Works Gallery and leather shop. Leaving Bungendore we climbed through Smiths Gap to the Federal Highway. A sharp crossing and, for some, a brief sprint along the old Federal Highway before turning onto Shingle Hill Road to Gundaroo and lunch at *Grazing Restaurant*, located in the Royal Hotel, built in 1865.

The roads, the weather, the company, in MX-5s, in autumn, in Canberra - awesome! ■

NatMeet X - Track Day at Wakefield Park

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Tiit Saul

• 8 April 2012

A 6am departure from ANU University House after a most enjoyable evening at the War Memorial under "G for George" the night before was not something everybody was looking forward to. Nevertheless this was the penalty paid by those competing at the Track Day at Wakefield Park on Easter Sunday. Unfortunately the 26 entries from NatMeet registrants was a little disappointing. Another 24 members from the NSW club made up the balance of the field.

The NatMeet competitors were broken into seven classes. The first three for standard NAs, NBs and NCs respectively, the next three classes were for modified cars in the same categories, whilst class 7 was for all forced induction MX-5s. Under NatMeet Rules all these cars were to run on standard street tyres, which created an extra challenge for those more familiar with running R-spec tyres. Following registration, scrutineering and the drivers briefing, proceedings were underway by 9.30am with familiarisation and driver training before commencing the six-minute supersprint sessions. Five groups of approximately ten cars competed. The first two were NatMeet competitors, Group 3 was a mixture of NatMeet competitors and NSW members, with the final two groups made up of NSW members.

Each group completed four runs before breaking for lunch. During the lunch break the NatMeet registrants that arrived at Wakefield Park on the organised run from Canberra were taken for a few laps around the circuit behind a pace car. After lunch the "NatMeeters" were broken into three groups for an eight-minute regularity run. This was then followed by a further two supersprint runs before calling a halt to the days proceedings just before 4:00pm. The weather had been ideal as it had been all weekend. A big thank you is extended to the NSW members who assisted by acting as officials.

Trophies were presented to the NatMeet class winners at the closing dinner on Monday evening. The class winners were Bryan Shedden (1), Glenn Thomas (2), Robert Pimm (3), Phil Mayo (4), Greg Bunn (5), John Toomer from Queensland (6), and Ray Estreich (7). For the regularity winner, the trophy was a set of road tyres for his MX-5 that was donated by Kumho Tyres – a big thank you to Kumho for their generous support. The regularity was calculated over six laps and



the winner was Phil Ashton with a time variation of only 0.92s. Second place went to Glenn Thomas (1.90s), third to Keith Monaghan (1.99s), and fourth place to Peter "Sir Les" Battison (2.51s).

Whilst not part of the NSW Championship, new class records were established for 2011/12 by Bryan Shedden in class 1 (1:16.36), Jean Cook for ladies in class 3 (1:25.18), and Deen Hameed in class 6 (1:12.69). Fastest time of the day was won by Mark Hellmund (1:10.41) from Andrew Irwin (1:10.46) and Steve Green (1:10.95). A full set of results are on the motor sport page of the club website. ■

NatMeet Track Results

Class	Place	Car No.	Driver	State	Best Time
1	1	68	Bryan Shedden	NSW	1:16.36
	2	55	Peter Battison	NSW	1:19.29
2	1	4	Glenn Thomas	NSW	1:16.26
	2	35	Keith Monaghan	NSW	1:17.85
3	1	6	Robert Pimm	NSW	1:15.70
	2	18	Neil Sivyver	QLD	1:22.66
	3	31	Peter Phillips	QLD	1:22.81
	4	25	Henri van Roden	QLD	1:24.08
	5	47	Allen Weber	SA	1:25.08
	6	1	Jean Cook	NSW	1:25.18
4	1	56	Phil Mayo	NSW	1:17.13
	2	28	Mark Seville	QLD	1:21.55
	3	153	Rob Jones	SA	1:22.89
5	1	43	Greg Bunn	NSW	1:19.56
	2	611	Paul Byers	NSW	1:21.03
	3	46	Brian Hegerty	QLD	1:21.41
6	1	53	John Toomer	QLD	1:13.14
	2	3	Phil Ashton	NSW	1:13.39
	3	16	Matt Wilmot	NSW	1:13.78
	4	72	Peter Feutrell	NSW	1:14.75
	5	11	John Tait	QLD	1:17.55
7	1	38	Ray Estreich	NSW	1:15.12
	2	88	Stuart Lutz	QLD	1:15.45
	3	7	Simon Corston	WA	1:17.23
	4	2	Dave Perrin	NSW	1:17.64
	5	888	Lisa Capamagian	QLD	1:24.16



NatMeet X - WOW Bus Tour & Funkhana

• Words: Cheryl Ashton, Gary Moss

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann

• 8 April 2012

While the boys & girls were playing on the track, most NatMeeters chose a more relaxing option of either the "Wives of Wakefield" Shopping Bus Tour, or a run to Goulburn with an optional Funkhana for bonus laughs.

"Wives Of Wakefield" Bus Tour

When I was asked to write this article I was betwixt and between ... because *what happens on Tour stays on Tour* ... albeit a single day Bus Tour, it was primarily shopping, so must be classified as Secret Women's Business. So I've written an expurgated version suitable for the menfolk:



After a lovely sleep-in and full breakfast, our day started at 9:30am with our entertaining Chauffeur, Stuart, collecting us from University House and taking us on a drive around the Parliamentary Triangle and Canberra sights.

Then it was full steam ahead to the **Bus Depot Markets** where Stuart sat patiently in the WOW bus awaiting our return ... oh what a man! The Markets offered a huge range of gourmet food and produce, clothing, art, craft, shoes, cards, handbags, leather goods, clothing, oh - did I mention jewellery?

We were then chauffeured to the trendy suburb of Manuka where we had lunch at **Caph's Cafe** - great food and great service! After recharging our batteries with a little food and wine, we had a browse around the beautiful boutiques of Manuka then boarded our WOW bus to **DFO** at Fyshwick, where the serious Secret Women's Business really came into play. So as to safeguard my membership in the Sisterhood Fraternity my lips are sealed, zipped, closed, under lock and key!

Suffice to say all our lovely WOW girls wrote their name on the back of all their receipts for the day, proving the ACT economy had had a healthy boost! Sue Jones from South Australia was the winner of the WOW Lucky Dip - a lovely Intimates Bag and Bras & Things Gift Voucher. Congratulations Sue!

Our darling Stuart chauffeured us back to University House to rest our weary feet (and credit cards) before we transformed ourselves into "Stars of Stage and Screen" for our evening at the **National Film & Sound Archive**. ■ CA

Funkhana

When it comes to motor sports, there are those in the club who would lead you to believe that the true test of motoring skill is on the track. Not so my friends. I doubt that even one track competitor dared to compete with their spouse in the car. I am certain that not one track competitor would trust said spouse sufficiently to permit them to steer their precious MX-5 from the passenger seat.

Funkhana, my friends, is the real test of both motoring **and** life skills. As was ably demonstrated by our intrepid teams at NatMeet X. Now, to be fair, not all teams were made up of married couples. Some friends teamed up to compete. Afterwards, some of those teams were still on speaking terms.



Who could resist with such silly events as:

1. WHO SCRAMBLED MY EGGS? (Shamelessly cashing in on the Easter theme here, we unapologetically added a bonus egg & spoon Le Mans start).
2. VORTEX OF TREPIDATION (aka ELMER'S WABBIT WEVENGE - beating the Easter theme to death).
3. TRUST (with bonus points for nearest to the pin)
4. BOOT BALLOON CRAM

Honestly, it's hard to drive when you are laughing that hard. While the field was small in numbers everyone had a ton of fun!

Special thanks to Kevin Barnes from Queensland who helped out organising the event and to all the helpers and participants. They are all MX-5 drivers. Good sports with sports cars.

Hooroo! See you all at Natmeet XI. ■ GM

Megalong Valley Run

• Organiser: Mark Garven

• Photos: Pete Kemp, Robert Clow, Diane Garven

• 29 January 2012



Midweek Run to Patonga

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: John Waldock

• 7 February 2012

Like most of our summer, Tuesday 8th February dawned grey and wet. Not the best day for our run to Patonga. The **Pie in the Sky** a little north of Cowan, the venue for many a "coffee and lies" was our assembly point at 10:00am. Not long after leaving home the phone rang – it was David Pitt a Tasmanian member of the MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania holidaying in Sydney, enquiring as to whether he could join the run having seen it promoted in the Events Calendar on



the website. "Sure" was the response, then "I'll plug Pie in the Sky in my Navman and see you there".

Nine cars and fifteen people headed off at about 11:00am following coffees and a short pre-run briefing. By now the drizzle had stopped and the skies over Patonga way were looking a little brighter. No one was brave enough to lower their hoods at this time. As always the run down to Brooklyn over the Hawkesbury and on up to the Mooney Bridge is always enjoyable, it's just a pity about the over-zealous speed restrictions on the Old Pacific Highway. We managed to safely negotiate the metropolises of Kariong, Woy Woy and Umina before heading up the hill past Pearl Beach and then the final descent into the sleepy little village of Patonga settled on the shores of beautiful Broken Bay. A little over half our group ate fish and chips whilst the balance opted for lunch at the pub. We re-assembled at the pub for coffees before wishing David a safe and enjoyable trip down the Princess Highway to Melbourne and then home to Hobart.

Whilst not exactly sunny, the drive up, lunch period and afternoon had been quite clear so it was hoods down for the trip home. It is to be hoped that we shall enjoy better weather for our next mid week run in May. ■

Organiser required for 29 May Midweek Run

For the next midweek run to proceed, we need someone to volunteer as organiser. If you're unsure where to start, the Club has details of past runs which can be re-used or modified. Or you might have some great ideas about a new route or venue that you'd like to share with your fellow MX-5ers? We also have guidelines to assist with planning and leading a Club run. Organising a run is actually good fun!

Please contact Mark Garven if you're able to help out or would like to find out more.

captain@mx5.com.au or 0406 321 554



Three Gorges Run

• Words: John & Sharon Cassidy • Photos: Bruce & Natalie Davies, Natalie Garven

• 25 February 2012

After what seemed like an endless summer of storms and rain, we were blessed with blue skies and puffy white clouds for our inaugural **Three Gorges Run** as we converged at Rofe Park, Hornsby, basking in the late afternoon sunshine. Our run took the 14 cars with 28 drivers and partners through the familiar territory of Galston Gorge, snaking our way through the seven hairpins, and enjoying the sound of the engines reverberating off the sandstone cliffs, as we made our way down to Tunks Bridge at the bottom of the gorge and into Berowra Valley Regional Park. Traffic eased as we left the first of three gorges behind, and continued through the rural enclaves of Galston and Arcadia. The green fields, complete with horses and cows felt a million miles from suburban Hornsby.



At Berowra Waters ferry we managed to get 11 of the 14 cars on board, then enjoyed a subdued climb up to the freeway. The six lane open road was a stark contrast to the winding bends, and gave an opportunity for those inclined to blow out some cobwebs.

Stopping at Deerubben Reserve, Mooney Mooney to regroup, we watched the array of pleasure craft and fishing boats dock, and listened to tall fishing tales. Forty minutes of "tall tales" was enough, so our journey continued, taking us on the Old Pacific Highway and back over the Hawkesbury River, onto the dual lane sweeping bends for some exhilarating driving, until we found ourselves in suburban Berowra once again. Onto Mount Colah where we turned into picturesque Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park for our final gorge descent to the very scenic Bobbin Head.

Eleven of the fourteen cars stayed on and we enjoyed a BBQ feast on a balmy evening in wonderful surroundings, as the sun descended in the summer sky. A few members had never been to Bobbin Head, which made it even more enjoyable for them. ■



Brekkie & Nut Run

• Words: Michael Soulos, Deen Hameed, Mark Garven • Photos: Timothy Heppell, Neil Hamilton-Ritchie • 25 March 2012

The Club had never visited Mt Irvine. March is the walnut and chestnut season in the Hawkesbury Harvest. Reasons enough for the BreakFast Club to drop by on our way home and design a new route for the Club Cruiser Run to join us. Dermer Bennett, a new member, suggested **Nutwood Farm** as it had plenty of parking, all of which we needed on the day when both runs merged. Whether you prefer early spirited drives or late starts to your monthly run with your Club, we all share a love of driving our MX-5s within our comfort zones with likeminded members and friends. Each run was unique, meeting the expectations of all. ■ MS

BreakFast Run

I'm not very good with writing up things, and for the life of me, can't seem to think of anything of use to say. It was an enjoyable run on a fabulous day, on some very pretty roads. The drive to Mt Irvine was personally my favourite, the highlight of my day, but that would be Mark's baby to write about. :) As for the rest, the day ticked all my boxes, good, food, good company, great roads. If I can summarise my contribution in a sound bite, I'd just say it was great view from the front! ■ DH

Cruiser Run

For the Club's cruiser run, we were joined by a couple of members of the Datsun Sports Owners Club in their Datsun 2000s (surely a legitimate ancestor of the MX-5). Barry Courtney from the DSOC provided the following report:

Trish and I had arrived early and were greeted by Mark who got us to sign-in and then provided us with a Code of Conduct, Incident Sheet and a very detailed Google Map. We were very impressed with just how professionally it was all organised and also how friendly and welcoming a group they were. One person joked with me that they would let us catch

up at times during the run. Hmm! Before long conversations were going on all around with people looking over all the cars. On this leg of the journey there was 18 MX-5s counted but sadly only 2 Datsuns – a real shame as the MX-5 Club members were very interested in our cars.

The drive was also a real treat taking in some great "road less travelled" routes. There were some areas where the ferns and stringy barks took your breath away. The vegetation in places was growing right up to the edge of the road. Some sections of the road surface were even tinged with green moss. On this day it almost rained with occasional light mist falling while the MX-5ers had their roofs down the whole time.

After a brief coffee and convenience stop we arrived at the Walnut Farm to meet up with the MX-5s that had gone on the earlier run. There was then more mingling, chatting, car viewing and photography as well as people collecting chestnuts. We were advised that because of the recent wet weather that the walnuts were not their best. Some people were roasting chestnuts over a fire and these were shared around. A really good day out and I for one will go again.

While the Datsuns and a few others headed off elsewhere, quite a few members from both the earlier and later runs headed back to **Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens** for lunch. The restaurant there has spectacular views out over the gardens and the valleys beyond. Unfortunately, it was quite full when we arrived, with a large contingent there from the Jaguar Drivers Club (which also made for some interesting machinery in the carpark). But we managed to find some seats and juggle some tables around, and a pleasant lunch topped off what I think both groups felt had been a fantastic run. Many thanks to Michael Soulos for his efforts in organising both runs. ■ MG



Sliq's Putty Road Run

• Words: Victor Lee

• Photos: Keiren Heikkinen, Chris Flak, Neil Hamilton-Ritchie, Gavin Cross

I can't think of a better way to start the year than a Breakfast Club run up Putty Road! 21 January would be the day.

Sliq's Putty Road Run has been a recent tradition created by Michael (a.k.a. Sliq) before he relocated to Perth. It's a yearly affair to introduce newcomers and remind old-timers of the fantastic stretch of road only a stone throw from Sydney. We had an overwhelming turnout of over 25 cars and as such, we tried a new formation, dividing ourselves into two groups to make the run more manageable.

With a coffee in hand, we departed from the McDonalds at McGraths Hill and made our way up the Putty Road through country towns that were still asleep. We were quickly engulfed by mass fog at the start and the moisture in the air seemed to have brought out the fresh fragrance of the grasslands.

While most drivers who are accustomed to the Putty Road would rave about the "twisties" just past Howes Valley, I personally prefer the uphill climb between Colo and Colo Heights. That stretch of road is paved like a freeway and has a variety of turns that allow drivers to tackle in their own style. It also crosses from one side of the mountain to the other and creates a great contrast between the warming sun closer to town and the chilling updraft of the cliff face on the back of the mountain at that time of the day.



Upon arrival at the **Enzo Cafe** near the Hunter Valley Gardens, we were seated inside their country cottage near the fireplace. Breakfast was divine as always and we spent a good hour or so there before we all made our way home via the Old Pacific Highway where a handful of lucky participants were introduced to some fresh oysters at Mooney Mooney.

Many thanks to Alan (a.k.a. Gobsmax) for leading the second convoy at a more relaxing pace. :) ■



WTFRU Wearing to Berry Run

• Words: George Miscovski

• Photos: George Miscovski, Andrew Lord

• 12 February 2012

In the early hours of one summer morning at Heathcote McDonalds, Maverick swooped in with his hippie co-pilot. A horse trotted past, while a life-like snow man waited for the kiddies near the playground. The devil was in disguise lurking amongst us as was our fearless leader in tights. A cheerleader bright and cheery, a dashing dapper gent rolled out of bed and comfy in PJs, and even a man from the Snowy River rounded off our unusual posse designed to turn heads and make strangers smile. It was also hard to miss yours truly, the 70s porn star with his colourfully dressed plaything.

No, it's not some weird movie set. Nor was it your worst nightmare. It was just a bunch of your MX-5 Club members meeting up in the wee hours of the morning to drive down to Berry for breakfast while dressed up in costume. We're not sure why we did this but we are certain that fun was had by all and even the weather turned up with a smile.

Our trusty leader in tights navigated us all safely through the beautiful scenic roads of the south. It was a lovely day all round unlike the drenching endured by last years attendants. Breakfast at Berry was consumed at the **Bookshop Café** under a cool shade. A tasty and fitting end for all.

Prizes were handed out after the event. Our best dressed went to Frosty the Snowman. Runner up was taken out by Maverick (or Goose if you will) from Top Gun. And a truly wtf prize went to ... a horses head that loved to read books ...

Many thanks to MX5 Mania for providing the prizes and to all the attendees of the day. I hope you all had as much fun as I did. I am looking forward to embarrassing myself with you lot next year as we make it three in a row. ■



Club Track Days

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Tiit Saul

• 14 February 2012



Round 4

The weather gods smiled on us for our first track day at Wakefield Park in 2012. The day was warm but not excessively hot and the seasonal thunderstorm did not break until most of us had made it safely home.

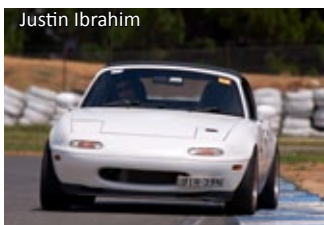
Entries closed at 80. We apologise to those that tried to enter after we had reached the limit, this point being reached just after “early-bird” closing. The message here is *get your entries in early to avoid disappointment*. After a few “no shows” we had 77 starters on the day. 59 were in MX-5s with a good spread through all classes, and there were eight first-timers. All competitors had the opportunity to complete seven runs of six minutes duration.

The Club would like to thank **Peak Performance Tyres** the NSW Kumho Performance Tyre distributor for their attendance and assistance offered to members at this meeting.

MX-5 Club Track Day First-Timers



Eric Hardas



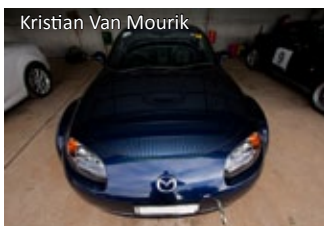
Justin Ibrahim



Stephen Ohye



Stuart Plascott



Kristian Van Mourik

Fastest time of the day was recorded by new member and Port Macquarie resident Leroy Day in his beautiful Elfin MS8 clubman with a time of 1:09.20. Second on the day went to Craig Hasler in his BMW 3 Series with Lexus power (1:09.39), with Keith Bridgement third in his Subaru WRX (1:10.41). Fastest MX-5 on the day was Ralph Thompson in his red NC (1:10.81) closely followed by Steve Green in “Goldie” (1:10.91) followed only 0.01s behind by Mark Hellmund. The “Old and Bold Award” ended up a tie between Keith Monaghan and Rod Menzel who were both 0.22s under their target times.

Class winners were Bryan Shedden in class 1 (1:17.62), Keith Monaghan doubling up to win class 2 (1:17.28), and regular supersprinter Stewart Temesvary made a welcome return to club days to take out class 3 (1:15.22). In the process, Stewart established a new class record, eclipsing Luke Kovacic’s record from last December’s event by a mere 0.01s. John Karayannis continued on his winning



Allan Cruz



Roger Palfreyman

way in class 4 (1:16.61) – the Clubman class is proving to be tightly contested with the top four drivers separated by only one second. Peter Browning topped Class 5 (1:15.56), and Phil Munnings equalled his class record set at the December event to win class 6 (1:13.61). Letitia Caldwell was the fastest lady in class 6 (1:22.23), narrowly edging out Lesa Bunn. As mentioned earlier Ralph Thompson won class 7, with Simon Kendrick winning class 8 (1:13.06). Class 9 went to Steve Green with Jean Cook being the fastest lady of the day (1:19.10).

Coming Up

Construction of the new South Circuit at Eastern Creek along with the support facilities has unfortunately fallen well behind schedule due to our wet summer. This has forced us to cancel our first scheduled meeting there on 12 May, and an alternate venue and date could not be found. We will now have to wait until 27 October to run on this circuit.

The MX-5 Club of NSW are hosting Round 3 of the Kumho Tyres CAMS NSW Supersprint Championship on Sunday 3 June at Wakefield Park. I will be looking for addition officials to act as flag point observers on that day. That event will be followed by Round 5 of the club championship the following day. Officials at the supersprint will be offered the usual 50% discount off their entry fee for the club track day the Monday. ■

Supersprints & Regularities

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Guy Coles, Bryan Shedden



Two rounds of the **2012 Kumho Tyres CAMS NSW Supersprint Championship** were completed during April.

Supersprint Round 1

The supersprint season opened at Wakefield Park on Sunday 1 April, hosted by the Mini Car Club. A good entry level of over 80 cars, including 14 MX-5 Club members was a promising start to the year. Class winners on the day were Ralph Thompson in 2B and Steve Green in 3B, Bryan Shedden was second in Class 1B once again having to compete in a higher class because of a lack of entries in 1A this year. Other class place getters on the day included Phil Abraham (3B), Scott McGarry (2A), Phil Ashton (2B), Peter Browning (3A), Keith Monaghan (1B), James Horne (2A), Phil Munnings (2B) and I (SVB). Robert Young (a first time supersprinter), Kevin Addison and Tony King contributed to the club's healthy lead in the Club Pointscore over the NSWRRRC and the ARDC.

Supersprint Round 2

Round 2 was held on the new North Circuit at Eastern Creek hosted by the NSWRRRC on Saturday 21 April. Unfortunately an expensive entry fee was a deterrent to many competitors resulting in a poor field of 70 drivers. Class wins and supersprint class records were established by Ralph Thompson in Class 2B (1:15.935), and Bradley Cecil in Class 2C (1:14.205) making a welcome return after a twelve month absence. Other members to score class places included Steve Green (3B), Glenn Thomas (2B), Phil Abraham (3B) and I (SVB). First time supersprinter Luke Kovacic was just edged out of third place in Class 2C.

After the first two rounds our club holds a narrow lead in the Club Pointscore (179 points) to NSWRRRC (164) and the ARDC (163).

Coming Up

Round 3 of the Supersprint Championship will be held at Wakefield Park on 3 June and will be hosted by our Club. We will be looking for members to compete and others to help as officials. Supplementary Regulations and Entry Form are on the club and supersprint websites.



Luke Kovacic

Regularities

On the Easter weekend four club members competed in Regularity events at two separate race meetings.

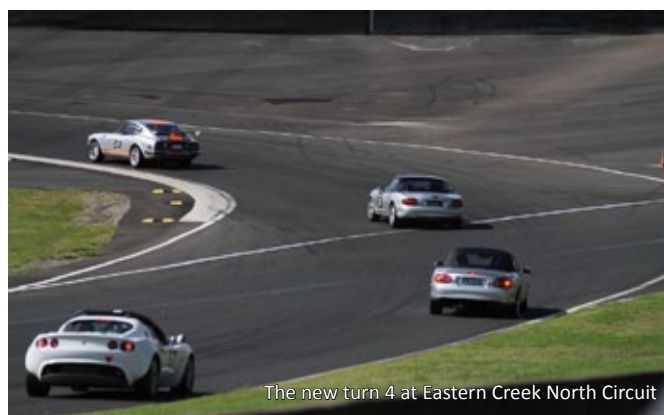
Tony King competed at Bathurst on the full circuit. Regularity competitors had five, four lap runs, divided into one practice and four regularity events. With 48 competitors, Tony acquitted himself very well recording a fourth, seventh, nineteenth and twenty-fifth, in addition to a commendable best lap of 3:03.49.

Whilst at Wakefield Park, the Festival of Sporting Cars conducted a two day race meeting on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. Entry levels overall were disappointing; however there were sufficient entries in regularities to split the field into two with 24 competitors in each. Stewart Temesvary, James Horne (having his first regularity run), and I were entrants. We competed in a fifteen minute practice/qualifying, four ten minute and one fifteen minute regularities over the two days. I recorded two wins whilst Stewart recorded a win and a second. James gradually improved his results as the weekend progressed finishing with a commendable seventh in the final event. A teams event was run in the fifteen minute regularity with **Teamx5** taking out third place.

Next regularity event will be the PIARC six-hour regularity teams event at Phillip Island in early August. Indications at present indicate that we will be attempting to enter *three* teams in this extremely popular event. ■



Steve Green



The new turn 4 at Eastern Creek North Circuit

CAMS Come & Try Day

• Words & Photos: Chris Flak

• 27 January 2012

"CAMS Come & Try Day" said the post on the MX5cartalk forum.

"CAMS Come & Try Day" announced the Events Calendar of the club website, highlighted in red.

So I made my enquiries. I've got a Wakefield Park licence. OK was the response. I sent in my paperwork and just before Australia Day, received my joining instructions.

"I'm going to Eastern Creek!" I told my No.1 son.

"What, another broken gearbox?" he teased, shaking his head.

Friday afternoon, spent half an hour checking the car, adjusting tyre pressures – the instructions said 5 psi above normal. I normally run 32, so 37 psi for the day.

Eastern Creek is only a short cruise from my home in the Blue Mountains, and I'd never been there before. I had been close, when **Australia's Wonderland** was in business. I can remember being there with wife and children, and hearing a roar in the background: Eastern Creek Drags. Wonderland and Cheryl passed on years ago, and Eastern Creek has developed since then.

Friday night, the MX-5 in the garage, cleaned out, fluids checked. Everything working and ready to go. Watched a video on YouTube – a BMW hitting the wall at Turn 1 and rolling, ending up on it's back like a helpless turtle. Driver survived ... with minor injuries. Sobering.

Considering the wet weather we'd been having recently, things didn't look good for the Saturday, however the day greeted with cloudy skies and the rain held off.

It the pit area at EC, I was greeted by a collection of EVOs, Imprezzas, Porches. A Skyline I recognised from our club track day, a new-looking Golf R, an RX-8, an MG with rubber bumpers. Another competitor rolled up in a red NA. Naturally we talked about MX-5s, and yes he was thinking about joining the Club.

After a period, we were directed to scrutineering. The people there kindly let me store the contents of my boot in the office. At the briefing, the Clerk of Course gave us a run down of the rules for the day. We would be restricted to 140 km/hr on the circuit for safety reasons. "Do as your instructor tells you or you will be removed from the event and escorted from the course". Not the exact words as I recall them but the message was clear: Have fun, but obey all rules and directions. Motorsport is dangerous. Got it.

We were split into two groups, one for the circuit, the other for motorkhana, then we would switch around.

The motorkhana event was held on the wet skidpan and hosted by the Hills District and Thornleigh Car Clubs. We were given a map of the event which was called the Spiro

Slalom. I'd never been on a skidpan before let alone go around obstacles at the same time. A gentleman named Cliff was to be my coach for the event. As we progressed, he showed me what I was doing wrong and how I could improve my lines. And water helps you slide ... ahem ... after a few runs I began to get the hang of it, doing the first handbrake turns in my life. That was fun. Got to do that again.



At the break, I met some club members – Rob and Sue – who had come over to take a look, and commented on my white NC. Although it wasn't so white any more after the grubby skidpan.

The next session was on the EC North Circuit, and we were directed from the car park onto Pit Lane where we were joined by our coaches. I was allocated to a gentleman named Rudy. "These cars are small aren't they", he remarked. Rudy explaining what we were going to do, then we were off. Sedately. "You can go hard" said Rudy. Righto. Rudy and I had two sessions in the car and it was an eye-opener. The car's limits were definitely above mine for the moment. We built up speed through the corners, learning the lines, where to be aggressive and where to pull my head in.

First run over. Rudy explained what I was doing wrong. My attitude was to listen, listen, listen, watch and learn. On the second run, I was a lot more confident and spent the time chasing a tuned Honda Civic. The MX-5 was definitely faster in the corners though. Again, learnt heaps.

After that, unfortunately I had to miss the Officials Tour and a Drifting demo due to a family commitment.

The day cost me \$30 plus fuel. For what was offered it was excellent value. I recommend it, and thank CAMS for putting on the event. Considering the day, every young driver should do time on the skidpan, under supervision. For me the day was a great learning experience. ■

Wheel Alignment Tech Day

• Words: Victor Lee

• Photos: Bryan Shedden

• 10 March 2012

All club events are in essence a way for us to catch up with one another, built upon our common interests in the '5'. Tech Days take that concept a step further to create an opportunity for experienced hands to share their knowledge with willing listeners.

As our first Tech Day of 2012, we partnered with **Spinning Wheels** at Waterloo to deliver the event using a blended approach that combined a Tech Talk with a 'Group-Service' to our Members.

Between 7am and noon, MX-5 owners were scheduled for a wheel alignment with "Stu the Magician". Members received a generous, discounted rate from **Spinning Wheels** for the service. MX-5s offer a wide range of wheel alignment possibilities straight out of the factory, let alone with aftermarket modifications, and they have a dramatic impact on handling. Some preferred to have their cars tuned for comfortable and safe cruising, while others went the whole hog with an aggressive track-dedicated set up. We all sat and waited for our cars to be transformed and enjoyed each other's company throughout the morning. Many just showed up to watch the show, enjoy the conversation and eat pizza.

14 wheel alignments, 20 pizzas and many bottles of soft drink later, we were at the pointy end of the day. The guys at **Spinning Wheels** gave us an informative and valuable Tech Talk on suspension, alignment and tyres. They also pointed out the many pitfalls of dodgy tyre repairs, "form over function" ride heights, and delicate alignment attributes where more is not necessarily better.

Overall, the event was a success and several new members signed up with the club just prior to the event.

Big thanks to Stu, Fulvio, Nick and Pete for being troopers and staying back on a Saturday afternoon to show us a few things about suspension and tyres. Their services can be found at <http://www.spinningwheelyres.com> ■



Canberra Chapter

• Words & Photos: Damon Muller, Bob Judd, Bricet Klören

Five Hills Run - 29 Jan 2012

It's traditional for the Canberra Chapter to start off the year with the Five Hills run, and this years run was once again great fun. It also doubled as a bit of a practice for the NatMeet run, which was to be held a few months later and led by Canberra Chapter members. A good group of cars gathered in our traditional meeting place in Russell, some perhaps wondering if we would be late to our picnic spot, as is our tradition.



The run takes in five of the hills around Canberra: Mount Pleasant, Mount Anslie, Capital Hill (ie., Parliament House), Red Hill and Black Mountain. The impressive scenic sights were only a little let down by the slightly threatening weather, but luckily the rain managed to (mostly) hold off. We had a few newbies along on the run, but even after driving through the labyrinthine roads of the Australian National University we didn't manage to lose too many of them.

Eventually we managed to get all of the cars, including a few stragglers and a few who had skipped the run all together, to our picnic spot on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, just behind the National Museum of Australia. The overcast sky robbed us of the opportunity to watch the sun set over the hills, but the weather was otherwise far from unpleasant. As the darkness began to encroach and people started saying their goodbyes, a bit of light rain swept through. But ending the run in a slightly damp state is all, I must admit, traditional, so I don't think anyone really minded. ■ DM



New Zealand Run - 20 Feb-4 Mar

A group of 21 intrepid Canberra Chapter members, family and friends signed up for an unusual "run" around New Zealand. We travelled nearly 6500 km at an average speed of 30 km/hr. We stopped for the day at 7 wonderful locations – Bay of Islands, Auckland, Tauranga, Napier, Wellington, Akaroa and Dunedin – and we spent another day exploring the breath-taking Fiordlands. We made new friends and formed marvellous memories which will last a lifetime.

But how can any self respecting MX-5 owner be satisfied with a paltry 30 km/hr average speed? It all sounds much more exciting when you know we were aboard the gorgeous ship *Sea Princess* cruising around New Zealand for all that time. To increase the average actual land speed, we hired six Porsches – RUFs, Boxsters, 911s – at Tauranga to drive around the North Island. Just to check the opposition out, you understand. It was a glorious day over some wonderful roads, but we all wished we had our little zoom-zoom babies with us.

The highlights of the cruise can't be adequately summarised. Suffice to say that the men looked dapper and the women stunningly beautiful wherever we were and whatever we were doing, but especially so on the two formal nights. The activities on board were endless, from bridge to zumba, and all highly energy draining. It was fortunate that wherever anyone turned there was food! I know that everyone who went had a wonderful time because we are already planning our next cruise. ■ BJ,BK



The MX-5 Cruisers

Bob Judd & Bricet Klören

Dave & Liz Burr

Tony & Iris McDonald

Len & Jan Hogg

Mike Masters & Helen Kemmis

Ian & Bronwyn Dickinson

Norm & Roz Barker

Matt & Kerry Shepherdson

Peter & Lia Battison

June Malone

Peter & Jennifer Le

Canberra Chapter - FnC at Malua Bay

• Organiser: Denni McCarthy, Tony Maxwell

• Photos: Damon Muller, Det Voges

• 19 February 2012



Canberra Chapter

• Words & Photos: Ed Cory, Damon Muller

Goulburn Brewery - 18 Mar 2012

26 members from the Canberra Chapter took part in our monthly run – this time a cruise via Tarago, Windellama, and Bungonia to the old Goulburn Brewery, **Bradley Grange**, for a tour, tasting, and lunch. Fortunately, though it was cut off by the Goulburn floods, the buildings are protected by a levee bank and were not affected, allowing our visit to proceed as scheduled.

After assembly at the War Memorial, we drove to Bungendore for coffee and browsing – allowing the late sleepers to join us there. The drive to Goulburn took us over some quiet back roads seemingly designed for our cars, with the Windellama-Bungonia-Goulburn leg being over roads familiar from other Club runs.



Our host and guide, Michael O'Halloran, explained the workings of the Brewery and the associated buildings, and introduced us to the house brews. Of breweries established in Australia prior to 1840, only the **Bradley Grange** survives intact as an integrated set of buildings housing the various activities associated with brewing, malting, milling, coopering, smithing and stabling. Construction of the Bradley Grange was underway in 1833. It was designed as an integrated industrial complex, as Goulburn was then at the edge of the expansion of the Sydney colony and the brewery needed to be able to operate without relying on regular supplies from Sydney. ■ EC



Convenor's BBQ - 22 Apr 2012

April was a busy month for us here in Canberra. Early in the month NatMeet X rolled into town and a bunch of us Canberrans busily played gracious hosts, leading runs, imitating superheroes, directing people to the best places to buy pornography and fireworks (okay, maybe not that last one – fireworks are banned here too now). But the *really* big event of the month was the annual Canberra Convenor's BBQ (which, as is often the case, is probably more accurately the "Convenors' BBQ", due to the continued involvement of past and present Convenors).

Because there is nothing worse than trying to set up a BBQ with lots of hungry MX-5 drivers loitering about and getting under your feet, we sent everyone off for a "mystery run". Departing from Old Parliament House, each car was given instructions and a bunch of questions to answer. They were told that it wasn't a race – there was no prize for first back – but the car that answered the most questions correctly would get a little something. There were multiple runs, one which went up Mount Anslie and one which went up Red Hill, but they all converged in the quaint country town of Queanbeyan and headed out south past the Googong Dam, then back into Canberra to finish, just a hop, step and jump from where they started, at Telopea Park.

Line honours went to Stuart and Mel, but not the prize, as they missed a very small number of questions. The winners of the day, with all 20 questions correctly answered, were Denni and Tony, who took home a nice bottle of red. Maxine, in an heroic effort driving solo without a navigator, was awarded the inaugural wooden spoon prize – a set of stylish wooden spoons.

In testament to how hard it is to do a truly tricky mystery run, everyone returned safely and in a timely fashion. Punctuated with a few brief sprinkles of rain, we then had a great BBQ. Special thanks to Paul for bringing along the BBQ trailer and cooking the snags, Bricet and Bob for the salads and potatoes, and Rachael for all her help in putting it all together. ■ DM



Hunter Chapter - Convenor's BBQ

• Words: Peter Hilkmann

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann, Jen Boyko

• 15 January 2012

The Hunter Convenor's BBQ was once again very well supported by members from the Hunter Chapter, with 28 people turning up for the event, including Ray & Pam Estreich, who brought up some more regalia for all.

The day started at the end of the F3, at a very respectable time of 9:30am. We had a short run organised, firstly heading down toward Freemans Waterhole, via the backroads, past Mount Sugarloaf, and Holmsville (Jennifer Hawkins Country). We then headed north to Kurri Kurri and on to **Walka Water Works** in Maitland for a BYO morning tea. As usual there were more than enough goodies (i.e. Health Food) for everyone to share and enjoy.

Everyone was so engrossed in the social aspect of this run, and enjoyed catching up with everyone after Christmas, that the time came all too soon to pack up and move onto the second stage of the run. It wasn't long however, and we were all into it again, as it was only a shortish drive through Lorn & Morpeth to the Convenor's home at Thornton, where the chit-chat picked up from where it had left off at morning tea.



Every available parking spot in the short little street was taken up by MX-5s, and the drinks and nibbles were broken out. The BBQ was fired up, and with plenty of cooks on hand, we were all eating again in no time. A big THANK YOU to Marcus and Tiffany for supplying the portable fridge and food warmer.

The Hunter MOTY Award for 2011 was presented on the day to Peter Hilkmann, and Wendy Parsonage was also presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a cake, as she was celebrating a Birthday. How many years? My lips are sealed!

We spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying each other's company, in perfect weather conditions. By late afternoon the crowd slowly dwindled, after another memorable day with friends created by their bond with that great little car they drive ... the Mazda MX-5. ■



Hunter Chapter - Mark's Mountain Run

• Words: Mark & Linda Gray

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann

• 18 March 2012

11 MX-5s started out from BP Beresfield with a new potential MX-5er, Rachael Crawford. We headed for the mountains on the first stage via the back roads with rain arriving just 3 km into the drive. So a quick stop to raise roofs, and we continued on the drive. Shortly after we were able to pull over and drop the tops, enjoying the country air heading towards the Bucketts Way. We turned left on a farming road we have never been on before and experienced some nice winding single lane roads that were a lot of fun except for the odd cow pat.

Arriving at our morning tea stop at Silo Hill overlooking Stroud and surrounding farms, we were joined by one of our new MX-5ers Peter & Kieran Rodgers from Bonny Hills near Port Macquarie. A meet and greet with all and traditional Hunter Morning Tea with lots of specialities. After a quick look around the history of Silo Hill it was back on the road to head across another winding road near Girvan passing Australia's Tallest Private House. Yes, it sits high in the mountain range in the Myall River State Forest and at 10 stories certainly stands out. A brief stop on the way to our lunch destination was made at Bulahdelah, where we were greeted by Patrick & Merla Bramston who, due to their busy motel, couldn't join the run.

It's off again crossing to the opposite side of the highway and into Myall National Park through the winding roads of The Lakes Way. Our lunch was at the famous **Frothy Coffee Boatshed** overlooking the Smiths Lake. During lunch we were joined by some more MX-5ers John & Julie from Laurieton in their sporty Red NB. They joined us for lunch and spent time discussing our various activities with other MX-5ers.

After lunch we headed back down to Bulahdelah to have a drive over our famous Nurbushring. On the north side of the Wootton Way, we said goodbye to our Mid North Coast MX-5ers and returned to the Nurbushring for one last blast. Then it was down the Pacific Highway for our last stop at **Heatherbrae's Pies** for Coffee and Lies. We all agreed it was a great day. ■



Hunter Chapter

• Words: Bruce & Gill Bettinson, Bob Pimm

• Photos: Peter Hilkmann

Whitewater Rafting - 12 Feb 2012

We had an earlier start for this run, leaving from Morisset McDonald's at 8:00am. After all the rain we were fortunate to have a beautiful summer morning with a turnout of 8 cars starting the day heading towards Penrith for a combined run and social day of whitewater rafting.

Had a good run going via Yarramalong ending up on Wisemans Ferry Road arriving at the ferry ahead of schedule. Surprisingly there was not much traffic on the road.

Once across the ferry it was time for a stretch, coffee etc, then off again on our way to **Penrith Whitewater Stadium**. Again we had a good run into Penrith with no hold ups. If anything we arrived early so there was plenty of time to have lunch and allow members participating in the rafting ample opportunity to psych themselves up.

The 8 MX-5 members risking life and limb were together in the same raft, and taking it in turn to sit at the front for that extra feeling of fun/adventure. Every run was different, going down front ways, sideways and even backwards. Thanks to the support crew watching from the side with encouragement and taking photos.



The instructions for paddling etc were clear, but there were some mix ups due the amount of fun being had by all. Towards the end of our session another electrical storm was coming towards us. Fortunately we were out of the raft, changed and on the road just as the storm hit.

We made our way back home via the M7 with the rain following us, therefore it was decided to stop at the **Mooney Mooney Club** for a well deserved refreshment break.

Home by 6:30pm after a long day and 400 km on the road. We hope all who attended had a good time and we'll see you at the next meeting. ■ BB/GB

Bob's April Fools Run - 22 Apr 2012

An early rise for most of the participants – the morning started foggy with the sun poking through the clouds promising to bring a dry warm autumn day. There were 14 starters from the Hunter with two cars from Sydney joining us later in the day.

We split into two groups as we headed off to wend our way through the Hunter vineyards to reform at Broke. We crossed the causeway on Milbrodale Road and cruised through more picturesque Hunter farmland. Finally Putty Road. Then the reason we are here – the twisty bits, and grins all round. We continued on to the **Grey Gum Cafe**, where we were welcomed by the Sydney contingent for morning tea. After coffee and homemade goodies it was back on the Putty Road towards Windsor. We had been lucky as the traffic was light allowing us to enjoy our run from Beresfield to Windsor.



Everyone arrived in great spirits and in no time at all, blankets, chairs and even tables magically appeared as we set our picnic lunch. After a few hours of good food and great company it was time to pack up and head home. Some choose the Highway but most of us enjoyed the Putty Road one more time.

As we neared the end of our journey, light rain fell but it didn't dampen our spirits one iota. It had been a fabulous day spent with good friends enjoying our MX-5s. ■ BP



NatMeet X, Canberra, Easter 2012



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