

club

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

TORQUE



NatMeet - Tasmania 2016

AUTUMN 2016

Print Post Publication: 100006993



Performance Engine Building

Cylinder Head Porting

Suspension and Brake Modifications and Upgrades

Track Preparation and ECU flashing

2wd and 4wd Dyno Tuning and Power runs

Until 31st December offering Financial MX5 Club members a 7.5% discount on anything instore. Peter Battison or Ray Baker

**REVOLUTION
RACEGEAR**

CANBERRA



Stilo



23 Kemble Court Mitchell ACT 2911

Ph: 02 6262 2680 Mob: 0417 269 325

info@acdcptyltd.com.au

INSIDE ^{club}TORQUE



08



28



12



30



20



34



22



35



26



36

News	
MX-5 News	08
NatMeet XII Diary	13
NatMeet Motorsport	14
NatMeet Concours	16
NatMeet Targa Roads	18
NatMeet Dinner	19

Events	
Twilight Run	20
Mt. Wilson Run	21
Easter in Orange	22
Not NatMeet Run	24
April Fool's Run	25
Sydney News	26
Nature and Telescopes	28
Snowy Mountain Loop	29
Pacific Palms	30
Weekend in Walcha	31
Jindabyne Anti-Freeze	32
Daylight Savings Run	34
MX500	35

Motorsport	
MX-5 Cup Round 2	36
Bathurst 12 Hour	37
Easter 6 Hour	38
MX-5 Club Regularity	39
Ladies' Motorsport	
Development Program	40
April WPR Weekend	41
First Timer at MDTC	42



Mel Keller Editorial

Recently, I took part in an autonomous vehicle training day at Sydney Motorsport Park. Autonomous vehicles are the first step towards the driverless car and contain sophisticated sensors and computers used to detect road lanes, obstacles and traffic conditions. Without any driver input, autonomous cars can accelerate, steer, brake and then, happily, reverse park themselves.

After a few laps of the GP circuit, I was soon belting down the main straight before taking Turn 1 at high speed – with no hands on the wheel. The car detected and manoeuvred around an obstacle before safely and smoothly bringing itself to a halt. It was impressive and very clever but my only thought was - meh.

There's no doubt that technological advances such as ABS, power steering and reversing cameras have made driving safer, more comfortable and reduced negative impacts on the environment. In the future (and with some very expensive infrastructure) autonomous and driverless cars have the potential to eliminate driver fatigue and distraction and reduce traffic congestion. Which can only be a good thing. However, while driverless technology is truly amazing, there is one vital element it cannot provide. The emotion of driving.

I suspect that for most of us, driving a car is more than a method of getting from A to B. Driving represents freedom and independence and the thrill of connecting with a machine and feeling it move with you. There is anticipation and excitement before every weekend trip on a country road and immense satisfaction when you perfectly apex a corner. Done with the right attitude, driving is one of life's great pleasures.

The following pages are full of the emotion of driving. Your stories and photos celebrate the happiness of belonging to a community, the appreciation of our spectacular countryside and the sheer fun of driving our MX-5s. Technology is great but it can't be everything.

club TORQUE

EDITOR
MEL KELLER
publications@mx5.com.au

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Peter Barnwell Phil Donnelley
Peter Hilkmann Bryan Shedden
Craig Morrison Stephen Carter
Maree & Steve Eccelstone
Greg & Lesa Bunn Grant Webber
Josh Fitzgerald Barry & Jenny Luttrell
Kerri Langworthy-Ward Guy Coles
Barry Matson Ken Keeling Greg Cox
Mike Walkden-Brown Mel Keller
Brian Clayton Kim Williams
Julie Farquar Liam Price Joe Kovacic
Matilda Mravicic Stephanie Katz
Steve Green Mark Kavanagh

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

MX2016 Gallery Stephen Lord
Peter Hilkmann Josh Fitzgerald
Mel Keller Tom Wilde Grant Webber
Graham Fletcher Ken Keeling
Steve & Maree Eccelstone Wilko
David & Elaine Gazzard Jamie Martin
Russ Golyak Barry Matson
Ken Keeling Keiran Rodgers
Brian Clayton Bryan Shedden
Kim Williams Gary Nobrega
Julie Farquar Joe Kovacic
David Lawler Samantha Johnson

ADVERTISING
GLENN THOMAS
vicepres@mx5.com

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER
MEL KELLER
publications@mx5.com.au

COVER Josh Fitzgerald



*NEW & USED MX5 SPECIALISTS FOR NEARLY 25 YEARS
DEAL WITH TRUE ENTHUSIASTS - CAMERON & ANDREW*



BLUE MOUNTAINS MAZDA



mazda

T. 02 4788 1018
42 Great Western Highway, Medlow Bath
Open seven days

DL13607

OUR VOLUNTEERS

A big thank you to our Competition Event Secretary Barry Luttrell and his wife Jenny. Barry and Jenny co-ordinated hundreds of entries for our motorsport double header at Wakefield Park on April 10 - 11. They expertly managed paperwork, payments and phone calls so the weekend could be enjoyed by all who participated.



CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL

856

NEW
MEMBERS

70

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome!

Ross Pollock
Peggy Pollock
Matthew Turner
David Boundy
Nicole Szabason
Susan Bush
David Murray
Graham Worsley
Grace Caldwell
Oliver King
Lucas Zadrozny
Sue Johnson
Zac Raddatz
David Raddatz
David Zammit
Subhash Devabathini
Veena Tokachichu
Brenton Higgins
Rachel Hercus
Ben Haynes
Fred Johnson
James Booth
Ronny Hun
Tim Smith
Rob Rabie
William Young

Judith Hansen
Ian Rufford
Magdalena
Wilczynska
Michael DeMaio
CHIH-CHUN Lee
John Anastas
Tanya Rogers
Craig Rogers
John Hansen
Paul Baston
Fred Frost
Rose Frost
Trevor Griffiths
Christopher
Salariosa
Brett Meehan
Alan Sunderland
Georgina
Young
Mark Manion
Xiyue Liu
Harrison Broughton
Anthony Broughton
Danute Revill
Bill Revill

Rob Wilkins
Margret Meagher
John Allison
John Ormsby
Carmel Hatherly
Ian Hatherly
Wayne Young
Elizabeth
Lakos
Timothy Lakos
Susan Dawson
Renee Vester
Jonathan
Cuthbertson
Thomas McCready
Gordon Burns
Malcolm Burns
Sue-Ellen
Evans
Andrew Digney
Rob Henderson
Leona Nalliah
Craig Barney
Matthew Tarrant

President
Bryan Shedden president@mx5.com.au
0422 340 010

Vice President
Glenn Thomas vicepres@mx5.com.au
0402 410 829

Treasurer
Julie Sando treasurer@mx5.com.au
0438 538 837

Secretary
Wesley Hill secretary@mx5.com.au
0422 035 893

Club Captain
Michael Soulos captain@mx5.com.au
0413 113 399

Membership Database
Keith Monaghan membership@mx5.com.au
0418 976 279

Membership
Ken & Maggie Liston 02 9872 1639

Competition
David Lawler competition@mx5.com.au
0403 070 644

Publications
Mel Keller publications@mx5.com.au
0421 069 019

Website Coordinator
Greg Perry web@mx5.com.au
0414 431 055

Regalia
Alan Townsley regalia@mx5.com.au
0414 497 976

BreakFast Club Coordinator
Peter Battisson breakfast@mx5.com.au
0417 269 325

Canberra
Tony & Iris McDonald canberra@mx5.com.au
0467 883 248

Hunter
Josh Fitzgerald 0404 009 304
Lindsay Green 0422 470 118
hunter@mx5.com.au

Illawarra
Jan & Garry Gibson illawarra@mx5.com.au
0458 715 000

RPM
Lesa Bunn rpm@mx5.com.au
0423 276 152

Mid North Coast
Peter Rodgers midnorthcoast@mx5.com.au
0422 237 588

Sydney
Guy Coles sydney@mx5.com.au
0419 914 443

EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES

Competition/Event Secretary
Barry Luttrell eventsec@mx5.com.au
0411 231 107

Track Day Coordinator
Mike Hicks competition@mx5.com.au
0419 201 558

Club Torque Editor
Mel Keller publications@mx5.com.au
0421 069 019

Club Historian
Elaine Caldwell 02 9451 1432

Technical Advisor
Peter Battisson technical@mx5.com.au

Bryan Shedden

President's Brief



There's something special about the feel of a magazine in your hands and flicking through the pages, but many people now prefer reading via tablets, iPads and mobile phones. To cater to this need, Club Torque magazine is now available as a PDF download on our Club website immediately after the print magazine arrives in your letterbox. Just follow the link in the weekly email newsletter OR visit <http://nsw.mx5.com.au> and navigate to "Club Zone" > "Magazine" then click on the latest cover photo. While you're there, why not visit the "Library" and delve into our Club's history via the complete collection of our magazines. And spread the word to your friends!

NatMeet XII in Launceston, Tasmania in February was a hugely successful event, enjoyed by 184 people in 106 MX-5s – the biggest NatMeet yet. With success comes challenges and future NatMeets will be strengthened by some important changes recommended at the recent teleconference of the four Presidents of the MX-5 Clubs of Australia. Firstly, we have proposed that the NatMeet Club Shield should be discontinued as it places too much pressure on individual members to participate in concours or motorsport to accrue points for their State tally when they are not necessarily interested in competing. It also

artificially inflates the number of cars to be judged at Concours, creating an unfair workload for judges and dragging out the judging process excessively. Individual awards (motorsport, concours, etc) and Individual State winners should remain as we like to encourage participation and reward those who wish to compete. Secondly, the Presidents agreed to develop a standard set of rules for concours at NatMeet so there is consistency from one event to the next and to address concerns about bias towards high mileage cars. I will be calling upon our concours regulars for input to the design of these new rules. Your feedback on these proposed changes is very welcome.

This quarter we celebrated the incredible diversity of motorsport offerings that are now available within the MX-5 Club of NSW. We held a drift day at Sutton Road in Canberra, our first ever regularity trackday at Marulan, and our annual showcase double-header at Wakefield Park with our hosting of a Sunday Supersprint round followed by a Monday Club Trackday. This oversubscribed two-day event is extremely important for our Club as it underpins our financial success and therefore our ability to offer an ever expanding range of benefits to ALL members. It also demands a huge

commitment from the Club members who generously volunteer their time to help with scrutineering, flag marshalling, grid marshalling, etc and we can never have enough volunteers. For these reasons, the Club Committee has a firm policy of not allowing any other Club event to clash with our hosting of the Supersprint round.

Looking ahead, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Canberra Chapter on 9 July with a lunch in the Stone Room at Grazing at Gundaroo. Then on 16 October, we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Hunter Chapter with another special event. Both will be heavily subsidised by the Club, including a special gift for every member of those two Chapters even for those who don't attend the celebrations.

Finally, a quick reminder about our Member Survey. All financial members should have received an email in early May asking you to complete the survey. Responses to the survey will help the Committee better tailor future events to meet the needs and aspirations of all members. Your response is important and I encourage everyone to have their say. If you've forgotten about it, please get onto it now!

MX-5 NEWS



RETRACTABLE FASTBACK

THE MAZDA MX-5 RF



With just the press of a button, the power roof on the Mazda MX-5 RF moves efficiently from hardtop to top down, even whilst moving. The revolutionary and stylish design makes open-top driving even more accessible without compromising cabin or boot space. For delivery in Australia, the MX-5 RF will feature the 2.0L SKYACTIV-G petrol engine.

MX-5 MILESTONE

ONE MILLION MX-5s

This image perfectly evokes the sheer joy of driving an MX-5. Tsutomu (Tom) Motano (L) and Bob Hall (R) set out to create a car that celebrates fun, freedom and innovation. Twenty seven years, four generations and one million MX-5s later, their philosophy and design continue to be enjoyed the world over. The One Millionth MX-5 recently rolled off the production line and is currently on a world-wide goodwill tour. It will then have a permanent home at the Mazda Museum in Hiroshima.



AWARD WINNER

THE MAZDA MX-5 ND

Beloved by its owners and by the judges. In recent months, the MX-5 has brought home the UK and Japan Car of the Year, Wheels Magazine Car of the Year and now the 2016 World Car of the Year and World Car Design of the Year Awards. We're going to need a bigger mantelpiece.

World Car Of the Year



World Car Design Of the Year



Wheels Magazine Car Of the Year



SPINNING WHEELS

TECH DAY



Did you know that between 70 and 80% of us are driving on dangerously under-inflated tyres? Peter Gallagher of Jax Spinning Wheels Tyres says that with normal road use, standard air bleeds out of our tyres at the rate of 1 - 1.5 psi per month. Under inflated tyres can lead to increased friction wear and tear, reducing fuel economy and potentially compromising braking performance. For optimum safety, Peter recommends knowing the correct psi for your style of driving - in hot and cold weather - and checking your tyres every fortnight. For the lucky members who attended the Tech Day at Spinning Wheels on Saturday, April 02, there was a huge amount of valuable information in Peter's comprehensive Tech Talk not to mention a specially discounted wheel alignment for MX-5 Club members.



THE MX-5 CLUB STADIUM SEAT

So you've been looking around for that perfect gift. Something unique, clever and affordable. Something useful, durable and customised for the MX-5 fan in your life.

Well, here's the perfect thing.

The MX-5 Club Stadium Seat is a lightweight, durable carry bag that is sturdy enough to carry wine and picnic supplies. It then unzips to form a comfortable padded seat with adjustable back support. So now you can stay warm, comfortable and MX-Stylish at any outdoor concert, sporting event or camp site.

And best of all, the Stadium Seat packs flat and takes minimal boot space, so it will always be on hand in case of an emergency picnic. It really is the go anywhere chair.

Order now to secure your limited edition MX-5 Club Stadium Seat and have all your birthday and Christmas gifts wrapped up.



TO ORDER simply email regalia@mx5.com.au with your contact details and the number of Stadium Seats you require. Your order will be available for pick-up from Alan & Claudine (Sydney), Tony & Iris (Canberra), Bryan Shedden (Illawarra), and others by prior arrangement. If you require postage, additional charges will apply. Payment by cash, credit card, cheque or direct debit must be made prior to acceptance of your order.

We're fundraising with Entertainment™

"I love this Book! I'm discovering places I have never been before."

"I have the Entertainment™ Digital 'Book' on my smartphone and I love it!"

Each Book gives you over **\$20,000** of value!

The *entertainment*™ Book

OR

The *entertainment*™ Digital Membership

With thousands of up to 50% off and 2-for-1 offers, here's a taste of what's in it for you:

Sydney Membership \$70 Sydney Greater West Membership \$65 Newcastle, Central Coast and the Hunter Membership \$60 NSW South Coast Membership \$55

Up to 550 Dining offers!

Sydney

Sydney Greater West

Newcastle, Central Coast and the Hunter

NSW South Coast

Up to 215 Takeaway and Attraction Offers!

Up to 1,600 Retail and Travel Offers!

Up to 50% off Retail, Travel, Leisure and Accommodation

We receive 20% from every Entertainment™ Membership sold. Purchase yours today!



To order your Book or Digital Membership securely online visit: www.entbook.com.au/9n21323

Alternatively, please complete your details below and post to:
1/77 Auburn Street, Wollongong NSW 2500

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

NSW South Coast \$55 (including GST)	# _____ Book(s)	# _____ Digital Membership(s)	\$ _____
Canberra \$60 (including GST)	# _____ Book(s)	# _____ Digital Membership(s)	\$ _____
Sydney and Surrounds \$70 (including GST)	# _____ Book(s)	# _____ Digital Membership(s)	\$ _____
Sydney Greater West \$65 (including GST)	# _____ Book(s)	# _____ Digital Membership(s)	\$ _____
Newcastle, Central Coast and the Hunter \$60 (including GST)	# _____ Book(s)	# _____ Digital Membership(s)	\$ _____

Please post my order \$10.50
TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Payment type: CASH VISA MASTERCARD

Credit Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry date: _____ / _____ **CVV** Torque 11 _____
*The CVV Number is the last 3 digits found on the back of your credit card

Cardholder's name: _____ Signature: _____

Thanks for your support! 20% from every Membership sold contributes to our fundraising.

NatMeet XII

Tasmania 2016



Nat Meet Diary

LAUNCESTON 13 - 19 FEBRUARY STORY **BRYAN SHEDDEN**
PHOTOS **PETER HILKMANN TOM WILDE JOSH FIZGERALD GRANT WEBBER**



NatMeet XII Tasmania attracted a record number of participants with 184 people and 106 MX-5s. The MX-5 Club of NSW was represented by a very keen group of 63 people, 7 from the Canberra Chapter, 25 from Hunter, 7 from Illawarra, 10 from RPM and 14 from Sydney; each and every one resplendent in the "Team NSW" regalia. Our Hunter contingent alone almost matched the total number of participants from Queensland.

The attendances from other states were Victoria 36, Tasmania 32, Queensland 28, Western Australia 15 and South Australia 10.

The MX-5 Club of NSW would like to offer our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the MX-5 Club of Victoria and Tasmania for hosting another successful NatMeet.

NatMeet XII was based at the Country Club Tasmania on the outskirts of Launceston, with most staying at the Country Club Villas. The villa parking areas were a hive of activity with some putting in the final preparations for Concours d'Elegance and Show & Shine, while many went from door to door to socialise and mock those who "missed a spot".

Day 1 on Saturday 13 February commenced with the NatMeet track day at Symmons Plains Raceway (see page 15 for Peter Barnwell's story). Day 2 on Sunday 14 February (Valentine's Day) tempted many of the motorsport devotees to drive 2 hours each way to Hobart for an extra track day at the historic Baskerville Raceway (see page 15 for Phil Donnelley's story).

Day 3 on Monday 15 February saw the start of the main program of events at NatMeet. After a rather chaotic assembly of MX-5s in the carpark at the Country Club, we made our way in convoy to Josef Chromy Winery, where MX-5s were set up on the lawn before the vines, in order of NAs, NBs, NCs and NDs. All 184 attendees crowded into the restaurant for a scrumptious lunch, before heading back outside to watch the judges do the judging (see Craig Morrison's story on page 16).

Dinner was at the Country Club Ballroom with informal finger food and plenty of time to mingle and chat with friends from all around Australia.

Day 4 on Tuesday 16 February was the first of the drive days. We were split into groups of about 10 MX-5s, plus a Tasmanian run leader and tailend Charlie, and armed with an excellent set of run notes in a booklet. Over the next three days, we cycled through three different runs (see Peter Hilkmann's story on page 18).

Tuesday evening was the Theme Dinner in an auditorium at the Country Club, with Steve Maciver from Mazda Australia as guest speaker. The fancy dress theme was "In the garage with your MX-5" which proved to be quite challenging, but everyone got into the spirit of it and had a fun night.

Day 5 on Wednesday 17 February was the second day of touring Targa roads, and we had a "free night" to entertain ourselves. I organised a group dinner for any/all of "Team NSW" at The Metz Cafe Bar in Launceston, and 47 people decided to join in, including a few ring-ins. After "happy hour or two" in front of villa 175, most caught the public bus for the short ride to/from town, which was a lot of fun (see page 19 for Maree & Steve Ecclestone's tale of the evening).

Day 6 on Thursday 18 February was the third and final day of Targa touring, followed by the Gala Dinner in the Country Club Ballroom. Serving of the three course dinner was split up with the presentation of trophies, and our Club members claimed many of the awards. Four of our members narrowly missed out on Concours trophies, finishing second in NA Standard (Craig Morrison by 2.89 pts), NA Modified (Dave Perin by 2.91 pts), NC Standard (Rachel Crawford by 1.48 pts), and ND Standard & Modified (Jen & George Boyko by 1.07 pts). Phil & Helen Mayo won the Individual Champion award for NSW.



**NatMeet XII
Motorsport Awards**

- Encouragement Award
Helen Green and Lindsay Green
Class 2 Standard MX-5 SE & NC
Bryan Shedden
- Class 3 Standard MX-5 ND
Peter Barnwell
- Class 5 Modified MX-5 1.6L
Phil Mayo
- Class 6 Modified MX-5 1.8L
Warren Hotz
- Regularity - Best Regularity Factor
Bryan Shedden



Nat Meet XII Motorsport

LAUNCESTON 13 FEBRUARY STORIES **PETER BARNWELL** **PHIL DONNELLEY**
PHOTOS **JOSH FITZGERALD** **GRANT WEBBER**

Symmons Plains has an undeserved reputation as the "worst" track in Australia but those at the Saturday track day would beg to differ. It was an absolute hoot and completely different fare to the usual diet of tracks we frequent on the mainland. The 'locals' obviously enjoy it too given their enthusiasm and lap times.

The day shaped up well weather wise with 36 drivers in MX-5s of all denominations turned out for a good flogging on the long straights and three tight turns of Symmons. One NA had 440,000km on the original engine and ran hard all day. Most were NatMeet entrants, but there was also a strong contingent of Victorians who came down just for the two track events. Luke and Joe Kovacic from our Club also made the long trip to Tassie for the track events, and as usual, Joe couldn't resist lending a hand to organise things on the marshalling grid.

Symmons is a difficult track - high speed with some tricky turns, some closing radius and a hump on the start finish straight to throw you off line coming into a tight left hander. You need good brakes. After a 20 minute practice run, the day was arranged into five lap sprints with a standing start, and a five lap regularity thrown into the equation after lunch, just to keep everyone on their toes. Plenty of 'runs' were to be had as the day progressed through wind, dust and sun. Mates lined up with mates to fine tune lines and see who could clock the best times. Organisers said any time under 1:15 was 'good' and two thirds of the field were under that mark. A few even dropped under 1:10 with one driver in particular, Luke Kovacic, dipping down to 1:09.53 in a borrowed 2.0-litre ND stocker, after a best of 1:10.49 in Joe's stock NC which was his regular drive for the day. Kim Cole in his supercharged NB (1:08.06) and Colin Denman-Jones in his ultra tidy and fast NC (1:08.76) set the fastest times of the day.

Fastest woman from a field of four was Hunter member Kim Jacobs who clocked a 1:12.87 lap in the only 2.0-litre ND entered. Plenty of interest surrounded the ND 2.0-litre as well as the two 1.5s. All three were road spec' and all showed plenty of promise with 'competitive' lap times.

The day went off without incident apart from the usual brake pad and tyre issues. As usual, camaraderie came to the fore if anyone needed assistance and the whole event was enjoyed by all who attended. Special thanks to the MG Car Club of Tasmania officials for running the event and especially cooking the barbie.

Peter Barnwell

The 2016 NatMeet in Launceston was a very special week of activities for everyone. However, at the top of my list was the track day at Baskerville, just north of Hobart. This 2 kilometre circuit, first opened in 1958 and is the oldest continuously operating track in Australia. It is pure MX-5 heaven! Valentines Day was a perfect date to fall in love with this place after the straight-line blast at Symmons Plains the day before.

I'm old enough to remember when Baskerville was the only circuit in Tasmania and hosted top level racing during the 60's and 70's. Touring car championship rounds were run there with Minis, Cortina GTs, FJ/FX Holdens and Mk1 Jaguars competing.

While similar to South Circuit at SMP, going up and down, it's more exciting, not as technical and just pure enjoyment to drive. The straight is long enough to get to 160+km/hr, goes downhill at about 15° but feels much more, has a hump in it, with a huge brake at the end to negotiate the fast left hander at the end!

There is about 40m change in elevation from bottom to top. At the top of the steep hill there is a totally blind left hander that drops away sharply to reveal the apex and whether you're on line, or not ...

The left hander onto the straight is also downhill, off camber and sweeping, deceptively tricky. Not one person there had a bad word to say about the circuit, everyone loved it, there were big smiles all round. This track was so seductive it even induced Luke into a (half) spin, and that's something you don't see very often!

A total of 30 drivers made the return trip from Launceston, with many opting for only a couple runs in the morning so that they could return early and prepare for Concours the next day. Lucky for them - they missed out on the rain that made things very interesting in the afternoon.

The MG Car Club of Tasmania ran the day very well. One interesting difference was they ran the sprints in groups of four cars, with a standing start! They do things differently in Tasmania, to say the least.

Have a look at the track on YouTube, the ups and downs are not too evident on video but you'll get the idea. Driving this track was well worth the 2 hour drive and 6 am departure to get there from Launceston. Simply the best day!

We offer a huge thank you to the MG Car Club of Tasmania for running the day, and the Mini Car Club of Tasmania who provided the BBQ on the day. Fabulous! **Phil Donnelley**

Nat Meet XII Concours

LAUNCESTON 15 FEBRUARY STORY CRAIG MORRISON
PHOTOS JOSH FITZGERALD GRANT WEBBER

Under threatening skies, the first day of NatMeet XII kicked off with an introduction of what lay ahead in days to come with a brisk top-down drive from Launceston Country Club through lively, twisting roads to the picturesque grounds of the Josef Chromy Winery. Arriving in order of car age from Elaine and Colin Caldwell's classic NA through to Warren Hotz's ceramic ND, every participant's car was professionally photographed against surrounding rows of leafy vines to be used in projected backdrops to the evening events. As arriving cars assembled into model groups for later judging of the Concours d'Elegance, and Show and Shine an occasional light drizzle kept the most earnest of members occupied with chamois at the ready to fend off threats of further rain. However, the prospect of a wonderful lunch and wine persuaded even the most dedicated of polishers into the winery restaurant. A superb three course seated lunch accompanied by some of the very best Tassie cold climate wines was effortlessly served to the 185 guests followed by a warm welcome and outline of future events from David Collins and Bruce Gray of the organising committee. With the rain gods appeased by Shannons and potions of Meguiars the judging commenced of over 80 magnificently presented cars. Said to be the largest entry of cars in the Clubs history with 14 NAs, 31 NBs, 33 NCs, and 5 NDs assembled, the judges (especially those judging the NBs and NCs) worked tirelessly to check and score paint, glass, engine bays, wheels, undercarriage and interiors. A wonderful day was had by all ... well organised, a beautiful location, excellent food and wine, great roads, magnificently prepped cars, like-minded enthusiasts ... and rain gods soothed to give us excellent weather for the rest of the week!





NatMeet XII Concours d'Elegance

Stand out entries from NSW saw awards go to Amy and Romeo Perin in the NA Show & Shine with Warren and Blake Hotz also winning for their ND. Peter and Maureen Hilkmann took out honours in the Concours for their Standard NB8B and Diann Miller's MX-5 won the Modified NB8A. Across the entire show Josh Fitzgerald and Lindsay Green's NB8B took out the People's Choice Award and Craig and Louise Morrison's NA6A LE the Shannons Choice Award for Most Desirable Car.



Nat Meet XII Targa Roads

LAUNCESTON 15 FEBRUARY STORY **PETER HILKMANN**
PHOTOS **JOSH FIZGERALD GRANT WEBBER PETER HILKMANN TOM WILDE**

The theme for NatMeet XII was "It's all about the Car", and for us MX-5ers ... Tasmania is all about the "Targa Tasmania Roads".

There were plenty of Targa Roads for the 106 MX-5s to explore, before, during and after NatMeet and with over 106 MX-5s to cater for, the organisers did an amazing job. There were 3 runs, over 3 days, going to 3 different locations, with each run group divided into 3 smaller run groups. This meant that there were 9 runs happening simultaneously; requiring 9 run leaders, and 9 tailend Charlies. So you can see the logistics involved in all of that. And it all ran like clockwork. Each run included the beautiful countryside around Launceston along with some of the classic Targa Tasmania stages. Our first run was to Bicheno on the East Coast of Tasmania. This was by far the longest run of NatMeet, but with clear and precise run notes we were off. We travelled the back roads via Longford and Campbell Town, enjoying the country side on a fine sunny day, with just one quick shower from one of the irrigation systems. Lunch was at the Beach Front Hotel, in the beautiful town of Bicheno.

As all of our lunches were pre-ordered, it wasn't long before we were sitting down to a fantastic pub lunch, and a light beverage. With lunch over, and a quick look at the blow hole, it was time to return to Launceston. It was only a short drive north of Bicheno where we found our first Targa Stage in the form of Elephant Pass to St Marys. With numerous buses and caravans travelling in the opposite direction, this section of road was not tackled in a spirited fashion by most drivers in our group, everyone opting for a more cautious approach on this narrow section of twisty road. This run was around 400 kilometres return, and although some commented that it was a little long, everyone still enjoyed the day.

Run two for our group was east to Gowrie Park. Again as was the case with all the runs, we had clear run notes that were easy to follow, but they weren't really needed, as our run leader (nicknamed Captain Slow) kept the convoy of MX-5s close together. Even though the groups that did this run on the first day experience quite cool conditions at Gowrie Park, we had beautiful blue skies and warm conditions for our picnic. This run had Targa stages both in the morning and on our return in the afternoon and we all enjoyed a great and relaxing day.

The third run, was the Bridport Run. With several classic Targa Stages in the section, one which included the steep climb with the blind right hander at the top of the hill, and the Tasman Highway to Scottsdale. I think this would have to have been my favourite run, as I finally got to have a more spirited drive along the Targa Stages (much to the disapproval of my better half). But I was able, in my Standard Concours NB, to keep pace with a couple of track boys, one in his NC and the other in a supercharged NB. Suffice to say we all had fun - and it was perfectly legal as we never got close to the 100km/hr speed limit. Maureen was happy that I had got that out of my system, and allowed her to drive back at a more leisurely pace. Lunch was at the Bridport Bay Inn. Even though it was not quite up to the same standard as the Bicheno Lunch, it was still very good and enjoyed by everyone. After lunch our run leaders had found a great photo shoot location for us, so we all lined up for some photographs at the Old Pier with the beautiful background, followed by some car shots of course. All in all we had some fantastic runs to enjoy during NatMeet, and it really whet our appetite to find some more MX-5 roads afterwards ... and we did find some more great roads. After all that's not hard to do in Tasmania.



NSW Team Dinner

LAUNCESTON 15 FEBRUARY STORY MAREE & STEVE ECCELSTONE
PHOTOS JOSH FITZGERALD GRANT WEBBER PETER HILKMANN TOM WILDE

After two days of wonderful MX-5 drives around the Launceston countryside and NatMeet events, it was time for the NSW members to have a night with the bright, city lights of Launceston. Our President Bryan organised dinner for us at The Metz Cafe Bar in town, as well as transport to and from the venue. As usual Bryan thought of everything and arranged pre-dinner drinks at the villas to ensure everyone was in the right mood. The bus stop was very conveniently located around the corner and soon we were all aboard for an out of tune and very noisy version of "The Wheels on the Bus", led by Don Battisson. Bryan's selection of the restaurant in downtown Launie was inspired as we virtually had it all to ourselves including a big bar. The service was excellent with a yummy set menu with breads and dips for entree, followed by a choice of gourmet pizzas, fish & chips or baked chicken breast for mains. The time flew and it was soon time to find our way to the bus-stop and head back to the Country Club Villas. Everyone was even happier now than when we left! We were able to convince the driver that every one of us qualified for a senior's discount on the fare.

The journey back was much better than the trip in as the route took us up and down the many hills of Launceston and we took in all the sites, pity it was 11 pm. We soon arrived back at the villas and the party began all over again. Thanks Bryan for arranging such a fun and well organised night out, that everyone appreciated. Don's contribution to the evening was also very memorable!



In 2018, the MX-5 Club of South Australia will host NatMeet XIII amongst the scenery and wineries of the Barossa Valley, two hours drive from Adelaide.



Palm Beach Twilight Run

RPM 05 MARCH STORY AND PHOTOS STEVE & MAREE ECCELSTONE

The run left McDonalds McGraths Hill 3.30pm with 14 cars, 28 Mazda MX-5 club members and 2 non-members.

Team leader Steve advised everyone not to get lost as this was Maree and Steve's first experience at organising a run! Special mention must be given to Lesa who helped with run organisational information and the maps! Thanks Lesa!

The first part of the run took in the sights of Pitt Town, Scheyville and everyone's favourite, Galston Gorge. Maree's first time on the radio seemed OK giving navigational instructions with Steve in the background commenting on the club members' conversation.

At one point we were stuck behind a Ford Fiesta which Graham described as the pace car!

We stopped at Bobbin Head Picnic area to pick up 4 cars, with 2 more interested Mazda enthusiasts. Now we were all ready for a great run with perfect weather to the beaches!

Next stop was West Head Look Out, Ku-ring-gai National Park. Steve advised that we should be aware of cyclists and wildlife. Graham did a great job reporting on the middle of the group while Greg brought up the rear and often mentioned amazing things along the way.....like the stationary kangaroo at Turramurra! Well spotted Greg! We also had to look out for bandicoots, but as they are endangered there were none to be seen.

We encountered many cyclists along this path and as they are also endangered, we gave them a wide berth too.

The section between Akuna Bay and Westhead was very scenic along the water's edge as well as a good twisty roads for all to manoeuvre.

The road to Westhead is as good as it gets on the northern beaches. Next to no traffic and 16 kilometres each way of smooth road with some big sweepers but unfortunately no sharp MX-5 corners. We had a brief stop at West Head for photos and to admire the spectacular sunset view overlooking Broken Bay and Pittwater. Our dinner venue was in sight. We experienced a scenic drive through McCarr's Creek, Church Point and Bayview.

From here we were off to the Palm Beach Golf Club.

The group broke up slightly along Barrenjoey Road as we were back to civilisation and traffic lights everywhere. But, not to worry, as Maree pointed out sites of interest including where "Home and Away" is often filmed.

The run to Palm Beach finished about 7pm. We were all keen to regroup, chat and enjoy chef Charles' meals which were served without delay.

Thanks to all who participated. The response was amazing. BUT.... then again we are RPMers with a few beachies thrown in!



Concerns about the weather wouldn't daunt our 20 RPMers on our run to Mt. Wilson. First stop, a visit and yummy homemade morning tea at the home of Garry and Robyn Keyvar, a gorgeous property at Berambing. Robyn and Garry are breeders of Irish donkeys and Robyn introduced us to her Jacks and Jennys and gave a very interesting talk on these lovely, warm, little-known animals. Sadly Robyn and Garry declined offers from Sandie and I to become foster children and we were left to only dream of spas on the deck, glass in hand overlooking the valley. It came as a huge surprise to me when over morning tea, the RPMers presented me with a gorgeous basket of wine, chocolates and candles as a thank you for being their Convenor. A much appreciated gesture and a big thank you to the RPM crew for being awesome. On to Mt. Wilson and a visit to "Windyridge" a great example of a cold climate garden dating back to 1877. The group were then treated to a very informative talk by local historian Des Barrett on the history of Mt. Wilson and a visits to historic St George's Anglican Church and the Turkish Bath Museum, fine example of the late Victorian style of architecture which dates back to the 1880's. RPM pretty much had beautiful Mt. Wilson to themselves on the day and retreated for lunch and laughs in the church grounds. RPMers would like to thank Garry & Robyn for their warm, hospitality and organising a day that was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Mt Wilson Run

RPM 21 FEBRUARY STORY **GREG & LESA BUNN**
PHOTOS **GRAHAM FLETCHER**



Any given long weekend is a perfect opportunity to pack the MX-5 boot and head for the countryside. This time the Hunter Chapter set its sights on Orange and its surrounds. 26 members, 14 MX-5s and a Lotus assembled at the Beresfield Service Centre on the first day of the Easter weekend and it was quickly decided to take an alternative route to avoid the chaotic M1 roundabout. Diverting through the back streets of East Maitland we quickly found ourselves on the Hunter Expressway heading north away from the traffic chaos. After a morning tea break and meeting up with the another two cars and 3 members in Denman, we turned onto the scenic

Bylong Valley Way. A road that should be on any MX-5 owners to-do list; the Bylong Valley Way has 140 kilometres of rolling roads through sparse countryside and sudden sheer cliff faces poking up out of nowhere. It was an enjoyable journey until the heavens opened just as we reached our lunch destination at the Rylstone Hotel not that anyone was complaining, the local area desperately needed a good downpour of rain.

After a very hearty meal at the pub, we pushed on towards Bathurst. An enjoyable hillclimb up Hill End Road allowed the more spirited drivers up front to attack some very tight corners and switchbacks. Certainly my favourite road of the tour so far! Regrouping on the outskirts of Bathurst we continued in a more leisurely fashion to Orange via the back roads leading to Millthorpe, possibly the prettiest town in the area. Before long, we arrived in Orange and met up with the Sheddens (another 2 MX-5s and 3 members). With everyone checked in, out came the beverages for some relaxing happy hour drinks. The showers of Friday had moved on and we were met with a glorious sunny morning on Saturday. We were joined by locals Ian and Carmel in their white NC, taking our total tally to 20 cars and 34 members. After a brief briefing by Kuntry Kuzzin, we drove via Molong and Cumnock to our morning tea stop at Yeoval. After a visit to the Dish, we made a short trip back into Parkes to visit the Henry Parkes Centre featuring its four museums - The Elvis Exhibit, Motor Museum, Historical Museum and Antique Machinery Collection. There was certainly something here to interest everyone. From here Kuntry Kuzzin handed the lead over to our convenors to lead the way to the Canobolas Smith Winery for some wine tasting to conclude our day.

Sunday morning dawned crisp and clear; and the Easter Bunny had visited all the cars. We headed off to the historic Gnool Blas Motor Racing Circuit. Gnool Blas is just south of Orange and was used between 1953 and 1961 for open wheel racing staged by the Australian Sporting Car Club and hosted the inaugural race of the Australian Touring Car Championship in 1960. After a 6 kilometre tour of the track/local streets, it was still clear that the original Gnool Blas must have been a real driver's circuit.

Following our lap we headed south out of Orange, past the Aerodrome and through Millthorpe led us to our mid-morning regroup at Blayney. From Blayney the roads became twistier by the kilometre, via The Lagoon on to O'Connell. Finally we turned on to the stretch of blacktop that was the sole reason for selecting this run home from Orange; the legendary Tarana Road. This 44 kilometre road is a stunning mix of flowing crests and curves, switchbacks and dips through dense bushland and numerous single lane wooden bridges over the Bathurst-to-Lithgow rail line it follows. Lunch was at Lithgow Workies, which as we now know is home to the largest meals money can buy.

Our run along The Bells Line of Roads toward Windsor was punctuated by a few impromptu stops in search of new season local apples. At this stage we said our goodbyes to many of the Hunter-based members who preferred to beat the traffic heading north, while our Illawarra-based weekenders headed south.

A huge thank you to our organisers/run leaders for helping over the weekend!



Easter in Orange

HUNTER DATE STORY JOSH FITZGERALD STEPHEN CARTER GRANT WEBBER
PHOTOS DAVID GAZZARD GRANT WEBBER JOSH FITZGERALD





Not NatMeet Run

HUNTER 21 FEBRUARY STORY **BARRY & JENNY LUTTRELL**
PHOTO **ELAINE GAZZARD**

Whilst some of our Chapter was at NatMeet, nine cars and sixteen people met at Beresfield Hungry Jacks to brave a long Sunday morning run through the beautiful Hunter Valley and Barrington foot hills. We also welcomed Josh for his first run and our visitors for the day, Stephanie and Sylvia. The run had something for everyone with easy driving and scenic sections and a couple of more challenging sections thrown in with variable weather along the way.

We travelled via Beresfield, Millers Forrest, Berry Park, Duckenfield, Morpeth, Clarence Town and on to Dungog. We diverted along the way via Glen William and Pine Brush Roads for some twisty country roads, old wiggly narrow bridges, short sections of 40 km/h rough bitumen and great scenery.

We stopped in the main street of Dungog for morning tea and some of our participants used the stop time to explore the local craft shops.

Eight cars left Dungog to drive the challenging Bingleburra Road with its share of tight corners, climbs and drops through the foot hills of the mountains across to East Gresford. Great sightseeing was available from the tops of the ridges and the threatening rain was holding off.

The run from east Gresford to Bolwarra Heights took us through Vacy and Paterson including road works at Mindaribba that combined with a narrow rain band to make MX-5s look more like 4WDs from mud and dirt.

The corner of Patterson Road and Maitland Vale Road required caution as the right turn is across two roads.

The drive across Maitland Vale road took us through the scenic areas of Rosebrook, Hillsbrough, Lambs Valley, Stanhope and Elderslie terminating at Braxton on the New England Highway. It was now a short run down Wine Country Drive to a well-deserved comfort break and lunch at Hunter Valley Gardens. Lunch at Oscars was washed out by a heavy storm which arrived with our food resulting in quick shifting of tables and people to under-cover. Participants then decided to call the run "Not Nat Meet All Seasons"



Dam Buster Run

HUNTER 21 FEBRUARY STORY AND PHOTO **ELAINE GAZZARD**

Well the Hunter Chapter hit the road again with a country run to Glennies Creek Dam and Lake St Clair.

We had 16 members, 2 guests and 11 cars, which was a great turnout with the unpredictable weather report.

It was good to meet Angie in her new Mustang with Andrew and Stephanie joining young Josh in their red NC. As a newbie the roads we drove were new and exciting with the tops up and down a couple of times, but mainly down.

Driving through the cows on the road is a real buzz; they are so big next to our little cars as we continued up the hills till we reach the dam for morning tea. The Ladies put on a great spread of chocolate chip cookies, scones, chocolate sultana slice and raspberry meringue slice. It was all yum.

After morning tea the dam busters went for a walk along the dam wall, it was really very pretty. About half way along the wall, the dam in the sky burst open and the rain started to fall. You should have seen the hundred meter dash back to the cars as some members still had their tops down, (us) oh no soggy seats! Drying cloth abound.

Before leaving we got a short briefing from the run leaders Josh and Lindsay, explaining that there was a thirty metre dirt road patch over a single lane bridge, you should have heard the moans and groans about washing cars or that Josh could do it for them, but it was all in good fun. After that back in the cars heading towards Muswellbrook for lunch. As usual MX-5 only cross main highways when they really have to, so travelling unknown roads for me again, with lots of beautiful views along the way.

Arrive Muswellbrook Workers Club. The club was surprising, they had cheap, lovely food and they really looked after us. Thank you to all for your company and many thanks to Josh and Lindsay for another well organized and fun run.

April Fool's Run

HUNTER 01 APRIL STORY AND PHOTO JOSH FITZGERALD



April Fools Day this year coincided with the last day of Daylight Saving. What better way to wave goodbye to the last late afternoon sunset than a top down drive to Birubi Beach. After a top-down drive over the Hexham Bridge and across Tomago Road to Nelson Bay Road, we reached our destination at "Crest – Birubi Beach". Being the beautiful afternoon it was, the opportunity was not wasted to get some photos of the line of MX-5's (and one members' 3MPS) basking in the glowing sunset stretching across the sand dunes. With the sunlight diminishing we headed up to the restaurant. The restaurant is

the perfect spot with sweeping panoramic views right down Stockton Beach to Newcastle Harbour with the light from Nobbies Lighthouse clearly visible after dusk.

It's not easy to serve a table of 19 people but the staff and chef were up to the task and the food prepared was absolutely perfect. Scotch Fillet on the Bone, Barramundi, Beer Battered Flathead, the menu had something for everyone and didn't disappoint. Crest is now my new favourite restaurant! With dinner finished and tables cleared, and daylight saving well and truly gone we said our goodbyes in the cooler night air and headed our own way home, with roofs down, because we can.

Although Sydney is geographically the smallest Chapter, it is home to almost half our Club members. The Chapter was formally ratified on 10 July, 2013 at Waverton. So who are the members of the Sydney Chapter? Well amongst many others, we have 48 retirees, 10 engineers, 4 nurses and

0

Hairdressers

13

Years - the age of our youngest member Kate. Kate holds a CAMS Junior license and has commenced her driver training in an MX-5 NC with a view to competing in Club motorkhanas. Our oldest member is John at 89 years of age. The rest of us would just rather not say.

Or DIABLO, just one of our Convenor's favourite personalised MX-5 plates. Others include MR 70 AD (Mr Toad) - MYMX5 - MX 05 MX - NA 6 - NA 600 - DII nS (Di's) - JE 55 EA (Jess-ea) - REG 91E (Who?)

DIA 810

89

The number of NAs. There are also 109 NBs, 98 NCs and 13 NDs.

0.6%

25%

Of our members are ladies. Add 75% gentlemen and that equals 100% awesome. Because statistics.

There are 6 Andrews, 6 Craigs, 7 Roberts, 8 Marks, 10 Daniels, 10 Johns, 10 James, 11 Stephens, 12 Davids and 1 Guy

1

Of our MX-5s are British Racing Green or Mango. Go faster red accounts for 26% while black, blue and grey have equal numbers at 9%. There are also 8.5% white and 2.3% yellow. One car's colour is, as yet, undetermined as the owner has never washed it. We will seasonally adjust the numbers after some rain.

BALMORAL FISH & CHIP RUN



“The highlight of my visit to Sydney was the Balmoral Run with the Sydney Chapter. An amazing turnout, great Fish & Chips but the company was even better. Thanks to Guy Coles and the MX-5 Club Sydney Chapter for being so awesome. I was given a hat with the club logo on it. I shall wear it proudly.”

Russ Golyak, New Jersey



INNOVATION

WHEEL BALANCING

“No storage room in a convertible. Pfft...” says Jamie Martin of his Club Trackday preparations. So what’s the strangest item you’ve ever transported in your MX-5? Send us a photo or drop us a line at publications@mx5.com.au





Nature and Telescopes Run

CANBERRA 20 FEBRUARY STORY AND PHOTOS **BARRY MATSON**

Canberra is famed for its many short-sighted politicians, but how many Australians know that it also has international recognition for its far-sighted scientists. Each year our club honours them with a run around some of the facilities, and padded out by a scenic drive through some of the best ACT bush scenery. Barry and Elfie led the run this year on 20 February in their crystal blue NB3. Fifteen other MX-5s had turned up at the 09:30 start at the Defence HQ at Russell. Although the forecasters were threatening the possibility of light showers, the morning skies were barely overcast with just enough shade from the summer sun to make going topless the preferred option. As the morning wore on the sky became a little more threatening, but by noon the clouds had cleared away. Although the sun then became quite relentless, the tops stayed down.

We began with a leisurely drive around the airport and out to the border town of Queanbeyan. Most Australians will be aware that Canberra has a pretty little artificial lake in its centre, but perhaps fewer appreciate that nearby Queanbeyan has a much larger water reservoir lake formed in a beautiful bush valley by the construction of the Googong Dam. This was our first stop, and the natural beauty was nicely complimented by the rainbow of 16 MX-5s lined up at the lookout.

We had plenty of time to admire the lake but, since there was no food available, we cut our visit shorter than planned, and headed for our picnic lunch at Tidbinbilla Nature Park. This involved some excellent sports car driving on the old and new Cooma roads. Lunch was a leisurely affair on travel rugs and lawn chairs, with interesting conversations on many

diverse subjects. Then, with the entire afternoon still in front of us, we decided to add an unplanned stop at the nearby NASA facility.

The NASA Deep Space Tracking station at Tidbinbilla boasts one of those large microwave radio dishes that most people probably associate with radio astronomers exploring the universe. However this one is different, since its prime role is to keep in touch with man-made spacecraft that are visiting other planets and beyond. In fact, it is still in touch with the earliest space probe, Voyager 1, launched in 1977, as it moves on out of our solar system, having wildly exceeded expectations for its useful life. One day soon, the sunlight reaching its solar panels will be so weak that its batteries will go flat and communications with Earth will cease. Quite possibly it may, in the distant future, come close enough to another star to perk up again.

From Tidbinbilla we took the spectacular winding MX-5 road past the Cotter dam to the famous Mt Stromlo optical telescope facility. This site, which is operated by ANU scientists, was destroyed in the devastating 2003 bush fires that even wiped out parts of Canberra. Now, new facilities have been installed and the astronomy research continues. The view from there is magnificent, but since it now includes some of Canberra's outer suburbs, the site is probably not as good as it once was for astronomy.

After taking some group photos we departed independently for home: Elfie and Barry a little sun drenched red by then.



Snowy Mountains Loop

CANBERRA 19 21 MARCH STORY AND PHOTOS **KEN KEELING**

To foster inter-Chapter fraternization, our original plans were changed to coincide with Illawarra's Anti-Freeze Weekend in Jindabyne. The weather co-operated and 10 cars departed on time for Jugiong from our Hall rendezvous. Before coffee was complete, the missing three cars had arrived and our full complement of 13 cars departed Jugiong, diverting from the Highway at Coolac to travel via the more interesting by-roads through Darbalara and Brungle to Tumut for lunch by the river.

After lunch, the Snowy Mountains Highway gave us access into the alpine region and Adaminaby and from there more winding back roads led us to Jindabyne.

After settling in to our motel, our Canberra MX5-ers met up at the Banjo Patterson Inn with the Illawarra Group's 35 people (18 cars) and a convivial evening followed.

Apart from Natmeet and track day events, I think 31 MX-5s meeting up on a weekend run must be some sort of noteworthy occasion

The number of cars involved sensibly required break-up into smaller groups and that precluded any sort of joint run with the Illawarra Group through the Snowy Mountains. Consequently, it was agreed that each Chapter would independently "do their own thing" on Sunday although several of our people joined up to run with the Illawarra cars. Sunday dawned a grey and drizzling sky, but the weather eventually relented, the rain cleared and our picnic morning tea was enjoyed in sunny conditions by Talbingo Pondage.

The sector between morning tea and lunch, was designated as an optional "girls run" with quite a few women drivers deftly piloting us through the bends to Tooma. En route, a "history stop" allowed us to take in the story of the disastrous loss (and finding many years later) of an airliner, the remains of which may be seen in Cooma at the "Southern Cloud" memorial.

A short drive soon had us at lunch, a pleasant break enjoyed at the Tooma Inn. After lunch three cars of our convoy broke off to return home to meet Monday commitments.

The remainder of the 360 kilometres to complete our Snowy Loop via Khancoban and Dead Horse Gap was an enjoyable uphill run over dry mountain roads.

An Italian-themed repast at Bacco's in good company and a modicum of wine completed our thoroughly enjoyable day of MX-5ing.

Monday's foray was again over some interesting roads less travelled, via Dalgety and Maffra to Cooma for an early lunch, after which we independently made our way home.

The only less than optimal aspects of our weekend away were one car being unexpectedly required to return a parent back home on Saturday evening (fortunately that outcome is OK) and the an emergent problem with the "blower" on Malcolm's supercharged MX-5, which started making some loud and really weird music. That racket was stifled by judicious use of borrowed pruning shears, but not without inflicting mortal injury to the drive belt and a resultant noticeable loss of power. But the ad-hoc bush surgery did enable him to return home unaided and much less worried - in much appreciated golden silence - and with remarkably improved fuel economy.

Another Canberra Chapter "Good Weekend Away" - and a Snowy Loop run, home to home, of 1004 kilometres by my NC's odometer.

Pacific Palms

MID NORTH COAST 13 FEBRUARY STORY **GREG COX** PHOTO **KEIRAN RODGERS**

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and Wallis Lake and surrounded by National Parks, the destination for our February run was Pacific Palms, part of the Great Lakes region of the Mid North Coast.

It was under clear skies and rising temperatures that our 5 car group departed Port Macquarie on our run south down the M1 Pacific highway. We welcomed new members John and Margaret for their first run with us in their new ND, and look forward to their regular participation.

The first leg was to Cooperook, where we turned off the highway onto the winding back roads through Lansdowne and on to Taree, where Kevin was waiting to lead us to his home at Wingham.

On arrival, Kevin and Carole provided a sumptuous morning tea which we all enjoyed along with a catch up chat.

Fully refreshed, our now 6 car group followed Kevin south down the M1 to the Wootton turnoff that leads us to our favourite MX-5 road, the Wootton Way (Nurbushring) through to Buladelah.

This 20 kilometre stretch of old Pacific Highway which is mostly used now by motor bikes and sports cars due to its wide flowing curves, is a real joy to drive in an MX-5.

All too soon we were back at the M1, which we crossed to join the Lakes Way through to Pacific Palms, where lunch was taken at Pacific Palms Recreation Club overlooking Wallis Lake.

After an enjoyable meal with great company we said our goodbyes and made our respective ways home.

Our sincere thanks to Kevin and Carole for inviting us into their home, and generous hospitality.



Willwarrin Pub Run

MID NORTH COAST 09 APRIL STORY **GREG COX** PHOTO **PETER RODGERS**

It was a perfect Mid North Coast Autumn morning for our run to Willawarrin, west of Kempsey.

Eleven enthusiastic members departed the Rivermark Café in Port Macquarie for our first leg north up the M1 freeway to Kempsey.

The tedious road works and reduced speed limits on this stretch of road tested our patience, however, after Mike and Ian from Nambucca Heads joined us, we soon arrived at the Netherby River Café on the banks of the Macleay river for morning tea.

While enjoying the alfresco garden environment and river views, Jasmin tempted us with her usual culinary treats.

Before departing we were joined by Cathy and Wayne who then led our now 8 car contingent on some quiet back roads around the outskirts of Kempsey. I then resumed the lead as we travelled west through the foothills and along the winding river flats to the tiny village of Bellbrook. After a short break and some photographs, we travelled the 30 minutes back to Willawarrin, for lunch at this quaint country pub.

After an enjoyable lunch, and with storm clouds threatening, we each departed individually for home.

Before travelling far, the storm hit and it was roofs up for the wet drive back.

Fortunately, the late changing weather didn't dampen the enjoyment of driving these great roads around Slim Dusty country.





Weekend in Walcha

MID NORTH COAST 12 - 13 MARCH STORY **MIKE WALKDEN-BROWN**
PHOTOS **KEIRAN RODGERS WAYNE LANG**



Our group of 15 bright eyed and enthusiastic MX-5 people met at Port Macquarie for our annual weekend to Walcha. In our group were new members Sandy and Chris Clarke driving their new red 1.5L ND, John and Judith Hanson driving their white NB, Stephen. Also in our group were Liwan Hanson from the RPM chapter driving their blue NB. A big welcome to all and a big thank you to Wayne and Cath Lang, Kevin and Carole Attrill, Peter and Keiran Rodgers, Graham Rochester and Pingky for their ongoing support for the Mid North Coast Chapter. Unfortunately Greg Cox, Peter and Jill McDonald, Jenny and Barry Luttrell, were unable to make it this time so it became an exercise in logistics to sort the breakfast arrangements due to some late changes creating insufficient numbers for breakfast in the Motel Restaurant for Sunday morning so we made our own arrangements.



Just a fabulous weekend away and once clear of Wauchope there was next to no traffic and that wonderful scenic drive on The Oxley Highway to our lunch stop at 'Gingers Creek Roadhouse'. Oh Oh, a little mishap when Wayne shared my milkshake by accident to the amusement of all who of course laughed. Wayne stayed a long way away from me after that - I thought I had BO.

After lunch we said our goodbyes to Peter, Keiran, John and Judith, who had prior commitments and had to return to Port Macquarie.

Our smaller group of nine and 5 MX-5s continued on our way to Apsley Falls and then our motel rooms at Walcha, dinner at the bistro of the Apsley Arms Hotel and after drinks and dinner a good night's rest.

I can't describe what a joy it is to drive an MX-5 on well formed windy mountain roads with great scenery and no traffic, nothing compares.

Sunday was another beautiful day and just a joy. Due to the light traffic we had lots of time and had a long rest stop at Nowendoc and cruised into Gloucester well ahead of time where we met Graham and Pingky who joined our group for lunch and the return trip through Booral and Bulahdelah to Port Macquarie. By that time we were 3 MX-5s and decided to drive Wootton Way both ways for the joy of it and return via Foster. A bad accident at the turnoff to Foster cancelled that idea as the road was blocked, so we continued and went the back way into Port Macquarie.

I think all would agree we had a beaut weekend away and a terrific drive. My thanks to all who were able to come and perhaps a few more from other chapters next time who I'm sure would just love this drive.



Jindabyne Anti-Freeze Weekend

ILLAWARRA 19 - 20 MARCH STORY BRIAN CLAYTON
PHOTOS BRIAN CLAYTON BRYAN SHEDDEN





After a wet and stormy Friday, Saturday dawned fine and clear, if not a little cool, our intrepid anti-freezers met at Haywards Bay, including from Sydney and RPM chapters.

After the sign on and briefing from the trip leader, and forming into two groups for safety's sake, we set off following the road along the magnificent coastal scenery which is the South Coast, through the Kiama bends and Gerringong, past the wineries at Mount Coolangatta and on into Nowra. We journeyed on through the state forests south of Nowra, tops down and enjoying the brisk fresh air. Our first stop was the Heritage Bakery on the highway at Milton for coffee for all and cakes for some. Refreshed, we reformed south of Ulladulla and set off again, following the highway south. Glimpses of the ocean gave way to more forests and the sound of bell birds in some of the gullies.

Through Batemans Bay and Moruya we travelled, fortunately, with the road works which were causing delays of half an hour the week before, no longer in evidence. The Bega Valley is one of the delights of the trip south and greeted us in all its glory. No road works meant we arrived at Ciccios in Narooma half an hour early for lunch. The proprietors, notified in advance, had reserved tables for us and we enjoyed some lovely seafood, right on the beach, in lovely autumn sunshine.

With still a long way to travel, there was no time for dilly dally and the convoy set off for Pambula for a brief refuelling and comfort stop, then on to the Mount Darragh road, President Bryan leading a group who wanted to "have a crack" at the tight and twisty section up the hills. Meanwhile, the touring group enjoyed a less pacy but nonetheless brisk run up through the lovely mountain scenery. The rise in altitude with cooler

temperatures, and a brief shower in Bombala, convinced some to put their tops up and we were off again for a brisk and picturesque run along the Snowy River Way to Jindabyne.

That night we were joined by Ken Keeling and his group from Canberra who were also doing a Snowy tour, and also based in Jindabyne. In the room set aside for us by the hotel, we enjoyed pre-dinner drinks, a good hotel bistro dinner and a few post dinner drinks. Sunday dawned overcast and cool with just a little Scotch mist about. Two cars from Canberra had opted to join our run which was planned to take in some of the more "adventurous" roads on the loop around Jindabyne and Eucumbene lakes. Trip leader Tony Heathwood gathered the Anti-freezers, picnic lunches packed in the boot, in temperatures only a little above freezing (yes - several lunatics wore shorts), and delivered the briefing. While the bulk of the group was heading off to Adaminaby via Berridale, an intrepid few were to follow Peter from Canberra and President Bryan on a more adventurous route via Rocky Plain and past the Eucumbene trout farm.

Meanwhile the rest of the group followed Tony out of Jindabyne, through Berridale, to the turn off to Adaminaby, most of us with the tops down. The Scotch mist became a little thicker and started to look more like rain. But with lovely high plains scenery the intrepid group pressed on, heaters blowing and rain drifting over our heads. It was, however, a different story upon reaching Adaminaby, where rain forced the tops back on as we aimed for Sawyer's Hill and Cabramurra.

Again, the group who were "having a crack" lead out, this time a smaller group. Everyone, by now, knew which group was the tourist one. Fortunately, just west of Adaminaby, the skies cleared and we were able to enjoy some fabulous mountain scenery, as well as roads built specifically for an MX-5. After stopping briefly at Cabramurra it was on again, stopping briefly again at Tumut Ponds dam. If you want evidence of the parlous state of our water supply, Tumut Ponds dam provides a real wake up call. So little water!

On the road again, heading for our lunch stop at Cattlemen's Hut. If you blink you will miss the turn off and Peter, Malcolm and Bryan must have blinked

because they were not there for lunch (they continued on to Khancoban). This proved to be a great spot for a picnic with most finding a spot on a log to sit and munch. The hut is now mainly used by walkers as an overnight stop and, while a little rough, provides a warm and comfortable shelter.

After lunch it was on to Khancoban. Every rise greeted us with magnificent mountain scenery. Even the stark silver trunks of the mountain ash, killed in disastrous fires a few years back, had a beauty of their own. Through Khancoban, we stopped at Murray 1 Power Station for a coffee and comfort stop and rejoined by Bryan, Peter and Malcolm. We were greeted by the lady running the information centre, who, upon realising we were a group, immediately offered to run a guided tour of the Power Station. Tony & Iris also popped in for a visit, after the Canberra Chapter run had split up into several smaller groups.

What a fabulous ambassador that company has. She even showed us how we might save many dollars on our power bills.

After that brief but interesting stop it was on to Thredbo via the superb twists and turns of the Alpine Way ... and (eventually) Jindabyne where a cold beer and a Persian banquet awaited at Café Darya. The dinner developed into a party and was a great night to cap off a wonderful day of driving and sightseeing.

On Monday, a smaller group of anti-freezers set off for the coffee stop at Bredbo on Monday morning. We then headed off through Queanbeyan to Tarago where lunch awaited at the Loaded Dog. From there it was a brisk run through Nerriga and on to Nowra and home. All agreed it had been a great weekend and one we must put in the calendar in future years.



Daylight Saving Run

ILLAWARRA 27 FEBRUARY STORY **KIM WILLIAMS** PHOTOS **KIM WILLIAMS BRYAN SHEDDEN**



It's always a sight to behold, when MX-5s of every vintage, colour and customisation gather together for a run. This time the people of Engadine got to see 12 MX-5s and a BMW at the first muster point for Sydney members. Hang gliding spectators and tourists got to see another 8 MX-5s from the Illawarra when the two streams converged at Bald Hill lookout at Stanwell Tops to begin a trek down South.

There were 32 people in total, including 4 visitors. Could the Werri Beach Fish Shop cope with such numbers? Liam even came all the way from the Central Coast to tag along for the afternoon drive! Aside from the driving itself, one of the most spectacular things about the day was experiencing all four seasons on this one afternoon. It was hot at Stanwell park, almost cold during the rain forested

roads on the way through Jamberoo and a foggy night on the trip home afterwards.

The run ended at Werri Beach fish shop, where some very interesting conversations were to be had. The drivers were raving about the climax of the run coming down Saddleback Mountain, and how sure-footed the cars seemed in this section of the run, whereas the conversation between passengers seemed to focus on how, no matter how early they reminded their driver to hit the brakes ... their foot always seemed to remain on the wrong pedal - the accelerator! Safe driving was the order of the day and all cars, drivers and passengers arrived unscathed, with smiles on their faces. The exception was Brendan's passenger, who was white as a sheet by the trip down the first mountain, not from speed but from motion sickness. A quick trip home was the better solution to the other alternative! All then enjoyed a delicious meal of their choice at Werri Beach fish shop. A great day out, enjoyed by all.

Illawarra Go Kart Challenge

ILLAWARRA 14 MARCH STORY AND PHOTO **JULIE FARQUAR**

Well, I didn't think you could get into a smaller space than an MX-5 ... but I was wrong! Go-Karts have taken the smallest space award. The Illawarra Chapter delights in trying to find new challenges and improve on past records while hurling themselves around a tyre festooned race track.

On one early Monday evening recently, several MX-5 members and family friends met at the Kembla Grange Go-Kart track to squeeze themselves into tiny vehicles and go at extremely fast speeds around tight corners, while trying to out-jockey everyone else. There were three groups: the young ones (fiercely competitive and with a devil may care attitude), the "I'll show the kids how it's done" group (fiercely competitive and all with a death wish) and the patient "no you go first" group (fiercely competitive but well mannered).

All the groups showed skills and abilities that enabled fast cornering and lively competition. There were disappointments, when the times weren't captured because of an electronic glitch, but the men manfully got over this with stories that could be likened to the fish-that-got-away scenarios. Jan and Garry provided plenty of sustenance and there is nothing better than a chicken sandwich and the laughter of recounted near misses. For the old hands, there was a chance to improve on past times and for the newcomers to the sport it was a matter of survival. And fun. Brendan and Bryan, Alex and Allyson, Jack and Tom recorded the fastest times in their groups. A Go Kart may not be an MX-5 replacement but it was certainly lively, good fun and an energetic way to spend the evening in the company of good friends.



MX 500

BreakFast Club 17 APRIL STORY **MARK KAVANAGH** PHOTOS **GARY NOBREGA**

A long time ago when man first started to build roads for their primitive cars, they were carved out using hand tools and followed the contours of the land resulting in roads that have multiple corners and go up and down hills. It is these very same roads that the modern day MX-5 driver seeks out for their own personal Jinba Ittai moment or in more modern terminology, drive it like you stole it, with no regards to the tyres other than, I hope they hold on round this corner. The MX500 was such an event.

14 enthusiasts in 12 fives ranging from an immaculate NA up to brand new ND's assembled at Maccas McGraths Hill for the event. After some words of encouragement from the Club Captain, we were released onto what would arguably be one of the best road loops out and back to Sydney using the Putty Road, Bylong Valley Way and Bells Line. As we got away at 7.00 am the Putty was virtually devoid of traffic meaning that necessary overtaking was minimal. The road being dry was a bonus. The twisties could be attacked with a degree of spirited driving, of course at all times driving to the conditions and ensuring the speed limits were duly noted. The first re-group after 150 kilometres of great driving on the Putty was at

Howes Valley so that some adjustment to the road positions could be made to accommodate those at the front who expected greater tyre wear in the next section of the road. The legendary gorge section was thoroughly enjoyed by all and is a piece of road that must be driven numerous times by any enthusiast. We were in luck as no caravans and or trucks slowed our passage through this awesome section. On the re-group at the end of the gorge we were passed at speed by an M1 and M3CSL who were enjoying their own "safe speed" moment.

We purposely slowed the pace a little when we broke out into the Hunter Valley near Milbrodale on account for the heavy blue light presence. We were confronted by the RBT point and half a dozen police and highway patrol cars. We were waved through. From Broke we proceeded on to Denman for morning tea or breakfast for some. The food at the café was both generous and well-priced.

With everyone being re-fuelled we continued down the Golden Highway to the turn off for the Bylong Valley Way. It was only a couple of kilometres after the turnoff that we passed the M1 & M3 at the side of the road. Sure they were thinking how good a group of MX-5's at

speed sound.

The Bylong is one of those roads where a "kind of flow" (those who ride bikes would understand) can be achieved between the corners within the open sections while still being able to admire the scenery (prior to it being dug of for open cut mines).

In the middle section of the road is an uphill like a larger and not quite as tight Galston Gorge. Those with Torsens were able to attack the uphill hairpins using all their power while the rest were stuck with wheel spin or switched on their car's organic component traction control. After descending from the ridge line we cruised through Rylstone and on to Kandos for fuel stop.

It was at this point that people were making their own individual assessment of their best route home. As a more spread out group we drove down the highway on route to Lithgow where the decision could be made to take the hand carved Bells Line of Road for more of the same or a relative cruise down the Great Western Highway. Most chose the BLOR.

Do not be discouraged by the 500 kilometre plus route. This is an epic and easy day drive that should not be missed.



MX-5 Cup - Round 2

MOTORSPORT 07 MAY STORY STEVE GREEN PHOTOS SAMANTHA JOHNSON

It was going to be a busy weekend at Wakefield Park for Round 2 of the MX-5 Cup with 5 races in total, all 10 and 15 lappers. Saturday dawned with perfect conditions for qualifying. Cameron MacArthur taking full advantage of these conditions by posting a blistering time of 1:05:15 setting the pace for the weekend and putting himself on pole for Race 1. Unfortunately for Cameron a mechanical failure saw him sitting still on the line when the lights went out and the rest of the field taking evasive action to drive on by.

Rob Hay went on to take out Race 1 with Verne Johnson pressing him all the way. Both these guys locked together all weekend with some great clean racing. Verne finishing on top in Race 2 with Rob right behind.

Sunday presented the "polar" opposite conditions with a cold wet track. Mix in the Super Trucks with their ability to further slick up the running surface and the team knew they were going to have to adjust their game plans big time.

Cameron managed to make his way back through the pack and would take out the remaining 3 races. Ian Caldwell laid down some PB's over the weekend and Russell Harris debuted the new #70. David Johnson new to the series was always pushing for a podium position taking out 3rd in the trophy race. Matthew Johnson and Stephen Brennan also new to the series had the added pressure of circulating with some TT cars at close quarters. A V8 E type Jag, Commodore, Pulsar and BMW just to keep them on their toes.

So the weekend had a bit of everything. Warm weather, wet weather, Super trucks greasing up the track and a few TT cars thrown into the mix to spice things up.

Knew we would get some good racing from our regulars Ian and Russell and the very experienced Rob Hay. But congratulations to the new kids on the block, Cameron, Verne, David, Matthew, and Stephen. All showed excellent skills in very trying conditions. Certainly earned your racing stripes with plenty of track time, super quick qualifying times and some exciting door to door stuff.

Best of all everyone adhered to the Cup sporting code of conduct and plenty of racing room given, well done to all.

Thanks to our sponsors:-

Blue Mountains Mazda
Audio Technica
DeckSpeed



Bathurst 12 Hour Weekend

ALL CLUB 06 - 07 FEBRUARY STORY AND PHOTOS JOE KOVACIC

Mount Panorama Bathurst - Motorsport Heaven at one of the worlds best racing circuits.

A sunny Saturday morning greeted 13 enthusiastic MX-5 Club cars for our run to the Legendary Mount Panorama, Bathurst 12 Hour weekend.

We met up with an additional 4 MX-5s at Bathurst for an 8.30 am start. Upon arrival at Mount Panorama, Bathurst we parked our cars in the Harris Park club cars area along with the Ford and Holden Club, alongside a gaggle of Ferraris and McLarens.

We all enjoyed the morning festivities while anxiously awaiting our Parade Lap which did not eventuate due to the corporate Ferraris gazumping us.

The afternoon saw us enjoy the qualifying sessions of the GT3 12 Hour Production cars from the Comfort of David & Gaynor's Rydges Hotel Balcony situated at the end of Conrod Straight. Most of us enjoyed a pizza dinner at the Church Bar while celebrating Linton Jones' 36th Birthday and exchanging stories on a most exciting Saturday.

Sunday morning was an early 5.30 am start in the dark for the 12 Hour race. The full field of 50 exotic international race cars was a spectacular sight to behold. There were some of the worlds best GT3 production cars in attendance including the McLaren 650S, Nissan GTR Nismo, Bentley Continental, Audi R8 LMS, Ferrari 458, Mercedes SLS AMG, Porsche GT3 and many more cars all lined up the multi-million dollar starting grid. Eventually after 12 gruelling hours Shane Van Gisbergen in a McLaren 650S won the race, followed by Katsumasa Chiyo in the Nissan GTR and third place to Bentley Continental.

This is the fifth time we have been to this event which is growing larger in popularity. I would like to thank Ian and Tim from Raceline Events who organised all the Club Cars. Next year, we will endeavour to get even more of our worlds most popular convertible MX-5s to this exciting weekend of Motorsport Heaven. Put this event in your diary as a must do on the weekend sometime in early February 2017.



NSWRRC Easter 6 Hour Regularity Relay

MOTORSPORT 26-27 MARCH STORY MATILDA MRAVICIC
PHOTOS MEL KELLER

Rather than the traditional Easter Egg hunt on the Easter Weekend, how about hunting down some regular lap times on a race track?

When Stewart Temesvary asked me if I would be interested in competing in a 6 Hour Regularity Relay, it didn't really take much convincing. If it involves a race track and a race car, "it's a yes from me". And, even better; I would be part of an all girl team. As it turned out, the event had a record breaking number of female entrants! How could I turn down a chance to support the sisterhood? Our team comprised of Tammy Hotz, Mel Keller and me. Initially Russell Maxwell was also part of our team but he was seconded to another MX-5 team to replace a vehicle that was experiencing mechanical issues. And so our all girl team was born.

In a regularity relay, teams of drivers compete against each other by nominating individual lap times. The winning team is the one that is able to most consistently match their nominated times without the aid of in-car devices or radios. A regularity relay highlights the need for consistency, strategy and teamwork.

Sunday was spent practicing and nominating lap times; the most challenging of the event for me. I had one day to re-programme my default behaviour of racing for the fastest time and dial into the rhythm needed for consistent times.

Then, there was the strategizing. Who would start first? What order would we run in? How long would our sessions be? After much deliberation and a few Easter eggs, we settled on the main components of our strategy for the big day.

On Monday we quickly encountered Rule One of motorsport: no amount of strategizing can prepare you for the harsh reality of what unfolds during the course of the event. Both Mel and I had our fair share of issues (Mel with an electrical fault and my front wheel just didn't want to stay straight), leaving Tammy to do the lion's share of the initial laps in her trusty NB. It was a nail biting finish as no one driver could do more than 40% of the laps. Against the odds, we finished in the points.

It never ceases to amaze me the amount of volunteers and enthusiasts that come out of the woodwork to lend a helping hand. It is this family of helpers that our team is truly indebted to. The camaraderie and friendships forged during these events is what I love most about motorsport.

Sincere thanks to all of our crew, particularly:

Stewart Temesvary, Graham Fletcher – our Team Manager who together with Guy Coles and James Burke braved the heat for 6 solid hours signalling times; Gary Nobrega who very adeptly repaired the electrical gremlin in Mel's car; the crew of caterers who kept us hydrated and nourished and all the other family members and friends who came to support and cheer us on.

What a challenge to learn another motorsport discipline. I will definitely be back. It was an awesome weekend with an awesome crew!



Inaugural MX-5 Club Regularity

MOTORSPORT 01 MAY STORY **BRYAN SHEDDEN**
PHOTOS **WILKO DAVID LAWLER**

When Competition Secretary David Lawler was presented with the problem of a shortage of track bookings for 2016, he recommended that we try using Marulan Driver Training Centre for a club track day. Noise restrictions limit the ability to use race cars at MDTC, so it was quickly agreed that it would be unfair to include it in the point score for the Club championship. Marulan is a very short and tight track with minimal run-off area, and David had sleepless nights worrying about how he'd manage the risk of drivers pushing too hard on the track. Then Gaynor Lawler came up with the brilliant idea of making it a regularity event. Regularity involves each competitor choosing a lap time they think they can regularly match, and they are scored on the basis of how close they get to that lap time over the course of the day. This format is brilliant for encouraging consistency over outright speed, and the slowest drivers have the same chance of winning as the fastest ones.

May Day arrived with the prospect of "mostly" clear weather and a field of 31 keen competitors. The low numbers meant that there would be plenty of track time for everyone. After the obligatory track walk, there were two practice runs of up to 12 laps each for the four run groups. This is the first time we've had official timing at Marulan, so our track diehards were fascinated to get some lap times. Ralph Thompson was quickest in practice with 46.944, followed by Alan Townsley (47.878) and David Lawler (48.129).

We stopped for an early lunch break so that competitors could nominate a regularity time. And then it RAINED! It was a short, sharp and intense downpour and the BOM radar

suggested there wouldn't be any more to follow. How on earth do we set a regularity time for a wet track that would dry out quickly, AND our nominated time would determine the run group we would be assigned?! The good news was that we would be permitted to adjust our nominated time after the first regularity run.

With nominations locked in, we hit the track for the first of six trials of five laps each. For each trial we started with 500 points and lost 1 point for every 0.25s slower than the nominated time, or 2 points for every 0.25s faster than the nominated time. Failing to finish the five laps resulted in a zero score. Needless to say, those in the first run scored poorly due to the wet track that rapidly dried, and the next three groups benefitted from an almost dry track. Keith Monaghan blitzed the field on his first trial with a score of 492, closely followed by Kim Jacobs (487) and Martyn Voormeulen (486). In Trial 2, Jamie Martin was the first to hit a perfect score of 500, while Gerardo Martin, Matthew Tarrant and Keith all scored 498. In subsequent trials, there were more perfect scores of 500 by Rohan Matthews, Greg Unger, Bryan Shedden, and Keith Monaghan (twice!).

At the conclusion of six trials, we were summoned to the cafeteria for the trophy presentation. And the winners were: Peter Morris in 3rd place (2947), Gerardo Martin in 2nd place (2948), and Keith Monaghan in 1st place (2982). Keith was a machine, dropping only 18 points in total and 8 of those were in the first trial. Congratulations gents! All agreed that the MX-5 Club's first ever regularity event was a great success and we hope to do it again sometime soon.



Ladies' Motorsport Development Program

MOTORSPORT STORY **STEPHANIE KATZ**
PHOTOS **GRANT WEBBER**



My partner, Guy, saw a post for a Lady's Motorsport Development Program run by NSWRRRC and sponsored by CAMS, he jumped and said "this is great, this is EXACTLY what you need Steph". The program is for female drivers who have done some Club level driver training and are now asking themselves "... can I do this?" And I have to say the answer is a definite YES.

The first session was at the MDTC with Barton Mawer and started with prepping the car for scrutineering and the track. We then headed off onto the track where Barton rotated amongst us to observe our level of driving knowledge. During the following sessions on the track, Barton gave constructive advice and explained the rationale behind them. After having many sessions I was having a ball and feeling very confident. During our lunch break Barton delivered a white board training session on apexing and braking on the track compared to out on the street and how different the attitude is between the two. After lunch we went back out for a few sessions and applied some of the classroom learning.

Session 2 was at SMSP North Circuit during a break in the NSWRRRC Easter 6 Hour Regularity Relay and also included Official's Training. First up we were given pink L plates to put on our cars and told to prep our car for scrutineering as we'd been taught. Thoughts of Turn One had me excited but terrified at the same time. I thought "I can't do this, I love my car too much to hurt her."

It was practice day for the NSWRRRC 6 Hour Regularity so all the practising cars were pulled off the track so the four of us could have the track to ourselves for 30 minutes. I was assigned a NSWRRRC veteran driver, Peter and sent to the staging grid but then the nerves came back (grrrrrr). Pete calmed me down and explained how we were going to learn the race line and not go above my limit until I was ready. That was music to my ears. Clearly my nerves were my own worst enemy.

We were then let out onto the track, I was told that first we need to warm the tyres and brakes but at the same time shown the race line and braking points. After a few laps I thought this is not scary, it's actually fun. We both identified that I need to work on my gearing and practising heel-toe. And then the red mist came in. I was having a ball, and although there were some rushed gear changes (and occasional profanities), when I got it right and the car just grabbed the tar and stuck to the corners. I was on fire! After the first session, I was buzzing with adrenalin but the nerves came back in session two. Pete asked if I was nervous, I said "Yes a little". When I asked if he felt the same before hitting the track he said; "Yes, a little." That was great to hear, I am normal and like everyone else. I discovered that Turn One is actually a nice corner to have after such a long, high-speed straight. When you line the car up correctly with the right race line, gear, acceleration and braking points it is amazing what the car can do. On Day 2, I was placed with professional flag marshals on the track. My first position was start finish line where I got to green flag the start of the 6 Hour regularity, Yay! I was shown the correct way to black flag a car, I would like to say no one from the MX-5 club was black flagged, well done ! My second position was on Post 16 and I saw first hand how passionate and committed the Marshals are to safety and to the drivers on the track. There are another 3 rounds in the program so this driver's development is to be continued ...

April Double Header at Wakefield Park

MOTORSPORT 10-11 APRIL STORY BRYAN SHEDDEN

Members of the MX-5 Club of NSW have an enviable record of competing in the CAMS NSW Supersprint Championship. We have been competing since 1998 and are the most successful Club in the history of the competition, winning the club shield for a record ten times including back-to-back titles in 2014 and 2015.

Each year we have the opportunity to put something back into the motorsport community by hosting a state Supersprint, and Sunday 10 April at Wakefield Park was our chance to showcase our capability with Round 1 of the 2016 season. Why Round 1? Apparently the CAMS Supersprint Panel wanted to introduce some important changes this year and entrusted us as the guinea pigs. We had a record field of 102 competitors, 16 cars per run group (up from 14), "hot track" starts (next group departs while previous group on cool-down lap), and Joe Kovacic our regular grid marshal on sick leave. Pressure? Absolutely – our Competition Secretary David Lawler was a nervous wreck by the end of the day. But united we stand and we carried it off with aplomb, thanks to David and the dedicated support of our volunteers on grid, flags and scrutineering. Thank you – we couldn't do it without you and you did our Club proud! From a driver's perspective, the day was managed perfectly and we all had the opportunity for six runs. That's amazing with such attendance numbers.

In beautiful sunshine we saw some new exotics on the track, including Warwick Morris' Lamborghini Gallardo, Greg Frame's Chev-powered Holden Gemini, and Phillip Ryan's Chev-powered Nissan 280SX. Fastest time of the day belonged to Marek Tomaszewski in his Stohr with 0:55.304 – only a few tenths away from his outright record of 0:54.994. Our fastest Club member was Chris White in Class 4B with 1:06.710.

A total of 23 MX-5 Club members competed with class podiums to Bryan Shedden (1B), Jason Russell (2A), Luke Kovacic (2C), Ralph Thompson (3B), Chris White (4B), Ian Combes (4B), Phil Abraham (5B), Ray Estreich (6A), Greg Bunn (SVB), and Warren Hotz (SVC). The MX-5 Club of NSW has taken an early lead in the Club Championship scoring 495 points, but ARDC are hot on our tail with 448 points. ARDC will be tough to beat this year!

The double-header at Wakefield Park, with Supersprint on Sunday and Club Track Day on Monday, is a perfect opportunity for our motorsport community to gather for a celebratory dinner in Goulburn. Gillian Fletcher did a superb job of organising a group booking at the Paragon Cafe. 40-plus club members crowded in for a meal from the delicious country-style menu, a few drinks and plenty of laughs. A fun night after a big day at the track. Monday morning arrived with more beautiful autumn weather for the final round of the 2015/16 Club Championship. We had another capacity field of 78 drivers, including 11 first-timers and 15 ladies, which is an exceptional turn-out for a Monday event. The competitors were given the opportunity to complete five runs of five timed laps each (plus out-lap and in-lap). The day flowed very smoothly and without incident. Well, except for Phil Ashton misjudging the grip from his road tyres and causing an unfortunate coming together with Brett Gilles' Skyline, our Clerk of Course on Sunday. And then there was the first-timer car that missed the checker flag – twice – with Keith Monaghan offering guidance from the passenger seat. It seems Phil and Keith had other things on their mind, as this was Day One of a week-long driving holiday in the Victorian high country.

The ladies group savoured the

opportunity to have an experienced supersprinter coach them from the passenger seat for an untimed run or two. Rumour has it that our fastest ladies Lesa Bunn (1:14.098) and Gaynor Lawler (1:14.657), who both smashed 2.5s off their PBs, may have benefitted from their advisor's tips. Whatever – it was great fun watching Gaynor chase Lesa in the afternoon runs, each spurring on the other, and both ladies were thrilled with their progress.

Fastest time of the day went to Cameron Macarthur in his modified SE (Class 10, 1:06.064). This was the first club outing for NDs at Wakefield Park and the bar is now set by Peter Feutrill in standard 2L (Class 3, 1:15.339) and Andrew Macarthur in modified 2L (Class 7, 1:13.478). Other class winners were Mitchell Bennett (Class 1, 1:16.675), Bryan Shedden (Class 2, 1:13.165), Gus Elias (Class 4, 1:14.480), Phil Mayo (Class 5, 1:15.929), Tristan Rappo (Class 6, 1:10.803), Ray Estreich (Class 8, 1:13.824), David Johnson (Class 9, 1:09.961 taking 4.3 seconds off his PB!), and Peter Barnwell (Class 11, 1:08.407). Mover of the day was Josh Allen who smashed 4.8 seconds off his PB, with 1:20.307 in a standard NA6.

Final mention to the crew of nearly two dozen members from the Hunter Chapter who made the long trek to Goulburn, most of whom officiated on Sunday, and then backed it up with 14 competitors on Monday. It was a superb effort and a credit to the enthusiasm generated by Co-Convenors Josh & Lindsay.

Sadly we now have a five month wait until September for our next trip to Wakefield Park. The good news is that it's another double-header with the Mini Car Club hosting the Supersprint on Sunday, followed by an MX-5 Club Track Day on Monday.

Marulan Driver Training

A First Timer's Perspective

MOTORSPORT 28 FEBRUARY STORY LIAM PRICE
PHOTOS GRANT WEBBER

It was a bright and early Sunday start for club president Bryan Shedden and myself. A one hour drive through the tight and twisty turns of the Macquarie Pass heated up the tyres for the day ahead. This would be my last drive as a complete novice to the skill of driving.

For some background information, the Marulan Driver Training Centre is a 90 minute drive from Sydney. A tight twisting track with a top speed of around 100 km/h, it's a match made in heaven for an MX-5. Before commencement of any track activities, you are guided by a walk around the track with commentary on the best way to smoothly transition through the corners. Nerves were high following the talk, the constant reminder in every newcomer's head was the ever possibility of damaging your pride and joy.

Drivers are divided into 6 groups based on their selection of driving ability and experience. As a first timer, I was given an adviser for the first 3 rounds of my driver training experience. Waiting at the starting line, I put my helmet on and handed the car over to my first advisor. David Lawler drove my car out on the track first to show me the capabilities of the car, in my mind we were going quite fast at the time. However, David assured me with confidence that this felt like a drive to the shops for him. By the end of the day, he was right.

The expert advice I received from David towards tackling the Marulan track was finely honed in by the time of my 3rd adviser. Pay close attention to the smooth steering inputs, the moment of braking in a straight before the turn ahead, finally mashing the throttle trying to hit the perfect apex. Within these 3 rounds on the track, I had learnt more about driving than since I was an L plater. If anyone asks me what the best modification to your MX-5 will achieve the best gains from, all I say now is time on a track. Mazda developed all 4 generations of the MX-5 with the idea of "Jinba ittai", this translates to "horse and rider as one". Going for a faster horse is worthless without being a competent rider. For those who want to maximise their learning potential, ask for a ride in an expert drivers car, the experience will be priceless to understanding your car's capability on the track.

I would like to say thank you to the organisers of the day and all involved in providing advice for the first timers. The experience will go down as the best \$100 I've spent towards enjoying my MX-5. Thanks also to Deckspeed Racing for their major sponsorship of the Club, which helped to minimise the entry cost for first-timers like myself.





MAJOR SPONSORS



23 Kemble Court
Mitchell ACT
(02) 6262 2680



113 Fairford Road
Padstow NSW
1 300 669 620



PO Box 12
Hamilton NSW 2303
1800 028 822



mazda

www.mazda.com.au
1800 034 411

CHAPTER SPONSORS



Unit 6/1 Park Street
Belconnen ACT
(02) 6253 1396



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



42 Great Western Hwy
Medlow Bath NSW
(02) 4788 1018



MX2016

PHOTOS Stephen Lord

