

# CLUB TORQUE

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

AUTUMN 2011

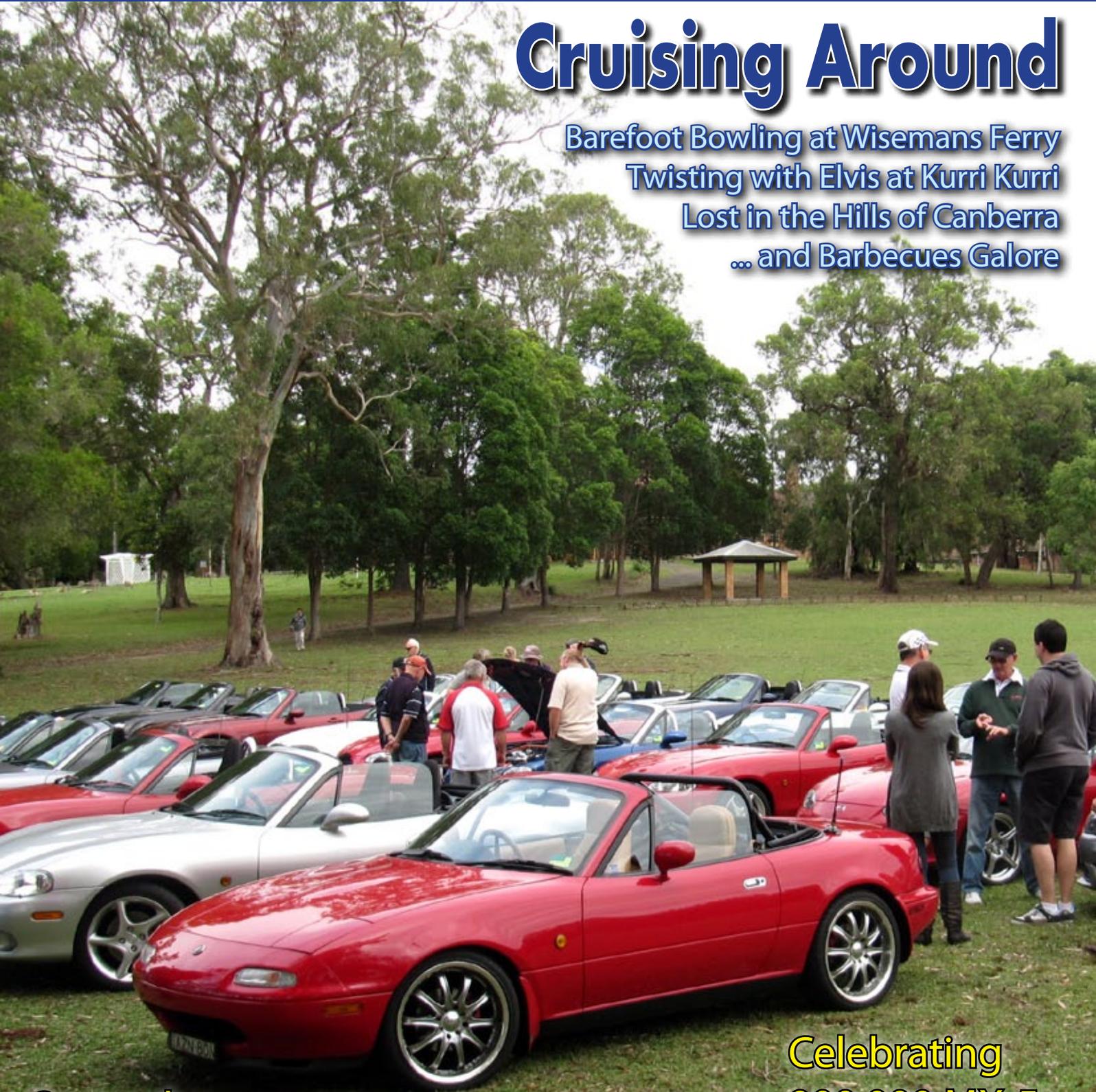
## Cruising Around

Barefoot Bowling at Wisemans Ferry

Twisting with Elvis at Kurri Kurri

Lost in the Hills of Canberra

... and Barbecues Galore



On track ...



Marulan Driver Training  
Wakefield Park Track Day  
Supersprinting & Regularities  
and more ...

Celebrating  
900,000 MX-5s





## Strange Sightings

Mark Garven came across this MX-5 on the streets of Winnipeg when he was in Canada recently. Although it was "only" about -10°C at the time, temperatures of -30°C are not uncommon in Winnipeg. Note the yellow electrical plug hanging over the front number plate - this allows the car to be plugged in when it's cold so that the oil doesn't freeze! For an NA to survive 20 years in Winnipeg is good going. The roads are treated with salt and grit over the winter, so you don't see many old cars at all. Obviously this MX-5 has a very dedicated owner!





## Your Committee

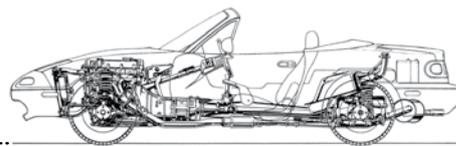
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*Main Cover Image: Sydney & Hunter members gather on the Lake Macquarie foreshore at Morisset prior to the Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival (Ken Liston)*

## CLUB TORQUE - AUTUMN 2011



## From the Editor



Thank you to all who provided feedback on my first issue of **Club Torque**. The response was overwhelmingly positive, which was a huge relief, even though I was quietly confident it would be. Now the pressure is on and I hope I can continue to maintain the standard I've set for myself!

The Summer issue of **Club Torque** focussed on the club's motorsport activities, reflecting their dominance in the event calendar over the last few months of each year. My intention is to rotate the central theme of each issue across the various activities of the club. This quarter, the highlight is on the the club's **Cruiser Runs**.

New members to the club might be wondering what we mean by "Cruiser". No, we're not talking about nefarious types in search of a "special friend" in a public park! In our context, a Cruiser is someone who drives leisurely about in the hope of discovering something. Cruiser Runs are not about getting from A to B; in fact sometimes the drive from A to A is equally entertaining! Nor are Cruiser Runs about testing driver skills on a challenging twist of road - although that can be an added bonus. Cruiser Runs are all about indulging in the joys of driving your MX-5 with the roof down. With a refreshing wind in the hair, you savour the passing aroma of fresh bread from the bakery, brewed coffee from the café, freshly mown grass, rainforest earthiness, eucalyptus zing, and yes, occasionally the "delights" of aged roadkill. After a nice relaxed drive amongst a convoy of colourful MX-5s, you arrive with a healthy appetite for morning tea/lunch/dinner at a carefully selected venue and enjoy exchanging a few lies with friends, old and new. Cruiser Runs are indulgent and highly enjoyable.

There is one last comment I'd like to make. I am *always* on the lookout for contributions for **Club Torque**. Consider this an open invitation to submit an article or photograph or even an idea. If there's something you would like to see published here, there are bound to be others who would agree. Afterall, this is **your** club magazine and I'm merely the facilitator. So please write to me at [publications@mx5.com.au](mailto:publications@mx5.com.au) or call 0422 340010.



*Bryan Shedden #68*

# The President's Brief

• Words: Glenn Thomas

• Photo: Tony King



Welcome to another edition of **Club Torque**.

Do you have an exceptional talent? Do you have unique skills? Would you like the chance to add community involvement to your resumé? We have opportunities within the Club to allow you to use these talents and skills while providing the opportunity for you to add to the quality and manner in which your Club is run. We are currently seeking talented people to support or participate in various positions. In particular we would love to hear from any member who is a competent computer-user to administer the Club's membership database. Similarly, we would like to find others to provide support to our Webmaster and any of the other committee positions. Not been in the Club for long? This doesn't matter; as long as you are willing to participate, we can use your support. Please contact me at [president@mx5.com.au](mailto:president@mx5.com.au).

## Member of the Year

Speaking of support, I was exceptionally pleased when the *Member of the Year* and *New Member of the Year* results were recently totalled. Unfortunately, I was unable to be present to make the formal presentation at the Marulan Driver Training Day and I have to thank Michael Hicks for covering for me. In fact, it was probably most appropriate that Michael made the presentation as he, Val Stewart and the recipient were key people in realising the Driver Training Day. So who is our MOTY??? Congratulations to Michael Soulos.

As you may be aware, Michael Soulos has been extremely active in the organisation and participation in the BreakFast Club runs. Michael has been quite active



Mike Hicks presents the MOTY trophy to this year's recipient, Michael Soulos, co-ordinator of the BreakFast Club runs.

in promoting various runs and has provided support for others who take on the organisation of some of the BreakFast runs. Michael has also been active with identification and provision of feedback regarding opportunities to improve the way in which the Club does business and the Driver Training Day was an example of this.

You will also have noted that I referred to the New Member of the Year award too – who is the NMOTY??? Sorry, you will have to wait as the opportunity to present this award has not yet come around. Could it be you??? ■



## MX-5 Special Edition

A new MX-5 Special Edition with styling and suspension upgrades is now available in Australian showrooms. With just 200 MX-5 Special Editions being brought into the country and the upgrades being added at no additional cost, buyers will need to move fast to secure one of these rare models.

The MX-5 Special Edition takes the fun to drive factor to even greater heights with the addition of Bilstein-tuned suspension. A bright painted strut tower bar provides a stylish finish to the suspension set-up. On the outside, the MX-5 Special Edition makes its mark with new bright painted BBS 17-inch alloy wheels and a range of contemporary new exterior colours - Dolphin Grey Mica and Sparkling Black Mica - along with the ever-popular Aluminium Metallic. Inside, the tone is set by unique grey coloured Recaro leather seats which are complemented by a leather steering wheel and handbrake both featuring grey highlight stitching. Chrome meter rings and air vent bezels complete the look.

The Mazda MX-5 Special Edition has a Manufacturer's List Price (MLP) of \$47,200. ■



# 900,000th MX-5 Produced!

• Words & Photos: Mazda Australia



Total production of Mazda Motor Corporation's MX-5 sports car (known as the Mazda Roadster in Japan) reached 900,000 units on 4th February 2011. This significant milestone was achieved 21 years and 10 months after mass production of the first-generation MX-5 commenced in April 1989.

The MX-5 was initially certified by **Guinness World Records** as the world's "Best selling two-seater sports car" when production reached 531,890 units in May 2000. Guinness updated the record when production passed 700,000 and, later, 800,000 units. Currently, Mazda is reapplying to **Guinness World Records** to have the record updated to 900,000 units.

Nobuhiro Yamamoto, program manager of the current MX-5, said, "Since Mazda launched the original MX-5, it has undergone two complete product redesigns and a series of upgrades. Its enduring success is due to the strong support it enjoys from MX-5 fans around the world. Going forward, I will strive to keep the MX-5's spirit alive while evolving it into a car that will be loved by even more people."

Mazda's senior managing executive officer in charge of development, Seita Kanai, said, "More than 20 years have passed since the first-generation Mazda

MX-5 was born. During this time, society and vehicles themselves have changed significantly. Responding to environmental issues and the depletion of the Earth's natural resources has become increasingly important for all automakers. As part of its environmental efforts, Mazda announced its new SKYACTIV technologies last year. Currently, we are pushing forward with development of future products that will incorporate these technologies. Many of the elements that go

into our SKYACTIV technologies, such as comprehensive weight reduction, grew from the long years of development work that have gone into the MX-5. Indeed, the guiding principle behind the SKYACTIV technologies to build cars that are fun to drive is perfectly embodied by the MX-5."



"As we head toward the next production milestone of one million units," Kanai continued, "Mazda is committed to further evolving the MX-5. We will refine its fun-to-drive character and further enhance its environmental and safety capabilities. As Mazda passes its 91st birthday, we are turning our sights toward our 100th anniversary. In the years ahead, we will continue to cherish the MX-5, alongside its loyal fan base, as the symbol of the Mazda brand." ■



# Caves Beach Summer Cruise

• Words & Photos: Mark Garven

• 23rd January 2011

Sunday was shaping up as a perfect summer's day, so it wasn't surprising that we had almost forty MX-5s (plus an MR2 looking for a new home), turn up for our run to Caves Beach. So tops down, sunscreen on and away we went. Down through Galston Gorge - always a nice drive - and across to Berowra Waters. The ferry across the creek only takes fifteen cars at a time, so with a few interlopers included, it took four trips to get all our MX-5s across. After we climbed the hill up to Berowra, we regrouped at the old toll gates. Coincidentally, the Porsche Club was also meeting there for a run, with about 6-8 cars in attendance. Now, Porsche drivers probably don't feel inadequate all that often, but the sight of forty MX-5s lined up and gleaming in the sunshine made quite a statement.

Once we were all back together, we took the freeway up to Ourimbah, then the back road across to Long Jetty. Someone had managed to drive their car into the brick wall of a house (hope they were OK), which created a bit of a delay as the tow truck performed the extraction. But then it was across the bridge at The Entrance and up the coast road behind the dunes. Very relaxing. A final run up the Old Pacific Highway, and then in to Caves Beach.

Lunch was at the new **Caves Beachside Hotel**, where they'd set aside a function room for our group. An excellent venue in a great location (a big thank you to Lesa Bunn for getting this organised), with nice food and good company. After a summer cruise in our MX-5s, what more could we ask for? ■



# Midweek Muster to Patonga Beach

• Words & Photos: Sean MacCormaic

• 1st February 2011

What do you do for a Club run when Sydney Summer temperatures are forecast to – and do – break all records? Go to the beach!

Michael Soulos has often remarked that midday summer is not ideal for top down driving in your MX-5, and that is the appeal of his BreakFast runs. But sixteen cars with a complement of about thirty hardy souls decided that a run to Patonga was a great alternative to the stifling conditions in the suburban outdoors or sitting it out in a virtual air-conditioned cubicle. Considering the weather, sixteen MX-5s was an exceptional turnout.

We met at Rofe Park, Hornsby Heights for the usual briefing in what were still reasonably pleasant weather conditions, good enough in fact for people to decide to drive with the top down. Ken and Maggie Liston accepted the mantle of leader for the day to avoid the embarrassment of the organiser who turned up in an unconventional vehicle, a Mazda but not a real car. It was soon dubbed an MX-2.5. Enough said!

The first leg of the run took the old Pacific Highway to **Pie in the Sky** for a compulsory coffee and comfort stop. Sitting out under the shade cloth with a light breeze feeding in from the Hawkesbury River was very convivial and the fact that the service was slow didn't really matter all that much, time was on our side too, and so we lingered, sipped coffee and solved all kinds of problems, vehicle, political and otherwise.

You can't have too much of a good thing when there is more to come, so with the whip cracking we meandered back to the cars, reassembled and made the run down the hill to the bridge, crossed to Mooney Mooney and wound up the hill towards Mt. White and Calga where we veered right to continue on the old road and cross the Mooney Mooney Creek bridge. The MX-2.5 followed at a respectful distance. This last section is a great MX-5 drive – would be better if it were not limited to 60km/hr – and you can get some good gear changing if you are driving it on the right day. Unfortunately this was not the right day for us. The leaders caught up with a small Kombi type van which ambled along at



unspeakably low speed and made no effort

to allow the clutch of MX-5s to get by when there was ample opportunity. By the time the driver turned off, we were at the Gosford turnoff. Never mind, it is worth creating an opportunity to do the run yourself instead of waiting for the next organised event.

After a short section of the Central Coast Highway we turned off at Kariong onto the Woy Woy Road, with glimpses of the sea along the way, and after snaking down the hill entered Woy Woy proper and turned south on the road to Patonga Beach. The climb up Mt. Ettalong was the final segment of the run and we descended the other side finding parking along the foreshore opposite the pub.

Sydney sweltered. Poor devils! We swanned around under the pine trees on the forecourt of the pub drinking cold ales and picking up the conversations so rudely interrupted by the organiser at **Pie in the Sky**. A gentle sea breeze wafted in over the company creating an atmosphere of calm, contentment and bonhomie. I believe the organiser was forgiven.

Some savoured the pub fare on the terrace, others fish and chips under the awning of the takeaway shop next door, while a certain few found the bus shelter with views of the bay and the park a very congenial venue. No one was in a particular hurry to leave, which always indicates that it was a successful day. ■

*The next **Midweek Run** is scheduled for Tuesday 31st May. Make a note of it now, because we need a **new leader** for these runs as the regular guy is no longer available. Check the Events Calendar on the Club website for further information and bear this in mind - if there is no volunteer, there will be no more runs.*



# Barefoot Bowling at Wisemans Ferry

• Words: Mark Garven

• Photos: Ken Liston & Mark Garven

• 26th February 2011

Twenty MX-5s rolled up for our final “daylight saving” run of the summer. After leaving Hornsby, we’d be taking the scenic route to Wisemans Ferry via Central Mangrove and Spencer.

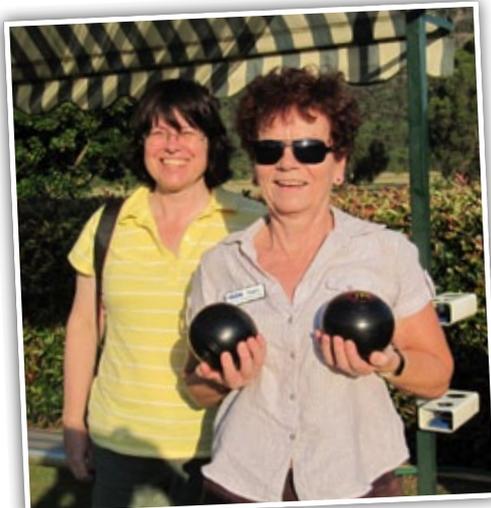
After a quick run up the F3, our progress on the road to Central Mangrove was somewhat impeded by a truck. Imagine our delight when he took the turnoff towards Wisemans Ferry ... just where we were going! Anyway, he soon turned off and we had a nice clear run through to Spencer, where we stopped at the general store for an ice cream. Back on the road to Wisemans, we soon found ourselves backed up behind a Learner. Now, there were plenty of opportunities for him to pull over for 30 seconds and let a convoy of MX-5s past, but that thought didn’t seem to cross the supervisor’s mind. So we gradually overtook as opportunity allowed,

then re-grouped to cross on the ferry to Wisemans. It’s always a great sight to see a ferry chock-a-block with MX-5s!

After a very pleasant (if occasionally frustrating) drive, we pulled in to the **Wisemans Ferry Bowling Club**.

While some were happy to sit themselves down on the verandah with a beer or lemonade, a few of the more adventurous souls slipped off their shoes for a few ends of **barefoot bowls**. One of the locals gave us a few pointers, but it would be fair to say that our enthusiasm exceeded our ability! Still, much fun was had by all. The meal that followed was very nice and great value - highly recommended if you find yourself at Wisemans Ferry around lunch or dinner time.

*The Saturday mid-afternoon departures have worked well over the warmer months, so we’ll look to schedule a combination of Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning runs again next summer. ■*



# Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival

• Words & Photos: Ken Liston

• 27th March 2011



"Ken who was that on the phone?" enquired Maggie. "It was Mark, he asked me if I could lead the run on Sunday" said I. "Oh! Do you know the way?" asked she, knowingly. "Of course not" admitted I. "Well that's going to be interesting!" said she.

Fortunately for me and everyone, Mark in his usual efficient manner had prepared a run sheet and it was agreed that he would email it to me so I could print out copious copies for everyone. Just like magic the email arrived and as it turned out I printed out enough for every member to have their own copy.

Sunday arrived. It had been raining all night. Light misty rain and a grey sky greeted us when we slid into the MX-5. "Well it looks like the hood is staying up all day (groan)" I thought. So off we went along a wet and bumpy Pennant Hills Road. Let's hope the newly elected NSW government can fix this excuse for a main road! At the start point, the rain had stopped but the sky was still threatening. Some of the braver members amongst us lowered their hoods and the more timid ones, us included, left hoods raised. After much discussion (guess what about) it was nearly time to go (we could not keep our fellow members from the Hunter Chapter waiting), so 19 MX-5s, 29 members and 2 prospective members in their Suzuki were off north bound - on time, unbelievably.

We travelled north on the Old Pacific Highway and contrary to more frequently adopted practice we veered to the right and took the far less interesting but quicker M3 (sorry about that *Pie in the Sky*). The trip was uneventful with the exception of some confusion at the variable speed signs north of the Hawkesbury River Bridge, which said 90km/hr if raining or 100km/hr if not. Well the road was wet but at that time there was no rain so we took it at 100km/hr. The illuminated speed sign next to the speed camera at the top of the hill was displaying 100 and I have not received one of those dreaded letters from the RTA yet so maybe we got away with it.

At last we managed to get off the freeway and headed towards Morisset and a nice morning tea at **Aunt Molly's Olde Bakehouse**. Our timing was perfect as the Hunter Chapter arrived only a few minutes after us. Or perhaps they had been hiding in the bushes up the road awaiting our arrival? We all enjoyed meeting with old and not so old MX-5 friends and there's no prize for guessing what we were talking about. The coffee was welcome and really good. The scones, cream and strawberry jam were really something else.

At that point I gladly handed over the run leadership to Phil Mayo, and readers can skip ahead to page 13 for a description of the remainder of the drive, including the tour of **Morisset Hospital**.

On arrival at Kurri Kurri, we all parked our cars a few blocks from the main streets which were closed off for the festival. The place was a hive of activity. Hot rods and 50s-era cars lined both sides of the main street, and there were food stalls and rides for the kids. It was a real country fair. Even Elvis was there. The place had great atmosphere and it was wonderful to see so many young and old people having such a great time. ■



# Canberra Cruise: 5 Hills in a 5

• Words & Photos: Damon Muller

• 16th January 2011

The traditional January run of the Canberra Chapter is an easy cruise around Canberra we call “5 Hills in a 5”. The exact reason we have a traditional January run is lost to the mists of time, and the fact that by “hills” we mean “hills or mountains”, and by “5” we mean “5 or 6”, is best ignored, because that way, as they say, madness lies. Topographical inaccuracy and innumeracy are no reason to pass up on a good drive, however, as the ten or so cars that showed up for the run indicates.

We met, as is our want, in Russell, and proceeded in an orderly fashion through Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon to *Mount Pleasant*. Well, orderly other than the compulsory U-turn (executed early in the run to get it safely out of the way). I don't

know the history of the naming of Mount Pleasant, but I can't help but think putting a mountain in the middle of a military base and calling it “pleasant” is regarded as ironic at best, sadistic at worse, by generation after generation of aspiring officers. It does, however, offer a fantastic, and under-appreciated, scenic view of Canberra from the top. We paused for a few minutes to admire the view and take a few snapshots, then piled back into our cars and headed down the mountain.

The second “hill” was *Mount Ainslie*, a spot popular with cyclists and kangaroos alike. Fortunately we didn't have to dodge too many of either on our way up or down. Again the view was admired and photos were taken, but time was slipping away from us. Time and tides and the rotation of the Earth relative to the sun wait for no man, so we rounded up the troops and headed off again.

*Capital Hill* was the third hill. You may know of it as the grassy mound under which our federal politicians spend much of their time buried. It is easy to spot due to the enormous flag pole stuck on top of it. We thus exercised our democratic right to drive around it. Around some of it, anyway. Unfortunately these

days you can only drive around half of it for “security reasons”. Still, half is at least 50% better than nothing, so drive around it we did, not stopping lest we arouse “security reasons” sorts of suspicions.

From Capital Hill we proceeded in a roughly southerly direction and up *Red Hill*. The view on Red Hill is certainly worth the time to stop and admire, unless like us you are up against certain chronological constraints governed by that aforementioned rotation of the Earth.

As such, we kept driving, and saved the view for the passengers.

Down the hill we went, following a route which took us around *City Hill*, and then up *Black Mountain*. Those keeping count may now

realise the source of our numerically challenged run. I suggest you do what we do, and pretend that City Hill doesn't count.

Black Mountain is the home to Canberra's answer to the Sydney Tower: Black Mountain Tower. That is, it's a structure that is quite distinctive and is irrevocably associated with the place, but no one is quite sure what it's used for. Not really having time to explore the mystery of the tower on the hill, we zoomed back down the mountain (the sort of zooming you do at a safe and legal speed, of course), through the nation's premier educational intuition, and out to our picnic spot behind the National Museum of Australia.

Luckily, and by luckily I mean through careful and exacting planning, we made it to our picnic spot just in the nick of time. We met a few other cars as we arrived at our spot, and had time to arrange our picnics, and watch the orange sun sink over the lake and mountains to our west. A pleasant picnic was enjoyed by all (presumably – no one complained), and the rain, unable to contain itself any longer, started to fall just as we were packing up and leaving. All in all, it was a pretty good drive (if I do say so myself). ■



# Canberra Convenor's BBQ & Treasure Hunt

• Words & Photos: Damon Muller

• 27th February 2011

At the end of February the Canberra Chapter held its annual Convenor's BBQ (actually Convenors' BBQ, as it turns out), and treasure hunt run. The event comprised a BBQ lunch at a mystery location, subsidised for members, following a rally-style treasure hunt run.

A course was plotted out in the weeks leading up to the run, taking in some of the more fun roads around Canberra. A series of questions was also posed, requiring the drivers and passengers to keep an eye out along their route. Some of the questions could be answered by paying attention to a particular sign by the road, others required that the members jump out of their car and did a bit of hunting.

While the members were off exploring the mysteries of Canberra and surrounds, we headed off to the secret BBQ location at Black Mountain Peninsula to set up the club BBQ trailer. Former chapter convenors Pat Rooke and Paul Beerworth met us there with the trailer and together we set up lunch for the questing drivers.

Within an hour or so the first of the drivers turned up and turned in their answers. As more drivers turned up, we were relieved to discover that the questions were neither too hard or too easy – a few people got them all correct, and no-one got zero (unlike last year). A tie-breaker question saw the coveted prize (a nice bottle of red), awarded to Norm and Roz.

Despite threatening, the rain held off for the BBQ, and a good time was had by all. ■



The questions along the route included identifying the rose named after an American president at Old Parliament House (answer: Lincoln), identifying what is grazing on the lawns out in front of the New Zealand High Commission (corrugated iron cows), what to watch out for crossing the road at Greenhills according to the sign (tortoises), and how many chimneys are visible on the Governor General's house (three).



# Hunter Cruises

• Words & Photos: Phil Mayo

## Four Beaches Run & Convenor's BBQ 16th January 2011

The Hunter Chapter run in January was to visit four Lake Macquarie beaches. Fourteen cars started at our usual meeting place at the end of the F3 BP Service Station, on a steamy morning. We had a visitor, my neighbours, Chris and Dianne Haig, in their multiple concourse winning V12 E Type Jaguar. The group drove through the bush back roads past the Minmi "beach" to meet the lake at Speers Point and followed around the foreshore to our first stop at Blacksmiths Beach. The sea haze filtered out the normally great view north to Newcastle and the Swansea Heads.



the run at Fishing Point which was the venue for the Convenor's Sunset BBQ.

Twenty two members filled the deck, cracking open the champagne, followed by food and lies as the sun went down on a great MX-5 day.

The inaugural Hunter Club Member Of The Year award was presented to Helen Mayo. Helen achieved 54 points, next was Bob Pimm with 50 points, and Mark Gray with 48 points.



## Mark's Mountain Run 13th February 2011

An early start on 13th February for the now annual run through the hills of the Lower North Coast led by Mark & Lynda Gray. Leaving Beresfield we worked our way to Morpeth then the river flats and farming land through Largs, Patterson and a stop at Dungog to stretch our legs. North from Dungog onto the Bucketts Way and then Gloucester for morning tea in the beautiful park. From Gloucester, still following the Bucketts Way through the hilly MX-5 roads, to the timber towns of Krumbach and Burrell Creek into Wingham.

On the way we came across the Burrell Creek Markets which we could not pass on by, much to the surprise



We headed south over the Swansea bridge and out along the southern breakwall to our next stop - Swansea Heads to see where Lake Macquarie joins the Pacific Ocean. While standing on the side of the channel we were entertained by the variety of skills shown by the skippers of the boats crossing the choppy channel entrance.



Our next stop was Caves Beach then up to Mawson's Lookout which gives an almost 360° view of the Lake area from the Central Coast to the Watagans and then North to Newcastle.

Lunch was at the **Swansea RSL** overlooking the Channel – good bistro food and quick service. After lunch we headed south to Catherine Hill Bay beach where we planned to stop and have a beer at the "Catho" Pub but it was "chockers" following a Hot Rod Club show and shine that had just finished so we continued around the bottom of the lake to finish

of the local wannabe Local State Member who was shaking hands and distributing pamphlets – after over twenty non local MX-5ers wandered up he lost interest and went home! We gained another passenger as Patrick’s daughter - Mary Joy - fell in love with a baby rabbit that was for sale. The Bramston family now has another member – “Miata”.

Our lunch stop was the **Mondrook Garden, Cafe and Gallery**, which as well as providing great food has lovely gardens to wander through including a pair of local koalas living in the gums in the garden. Unfortunately the weather turned rainy so the tops stayed up for the rest of the trip.



After lunch we followed the Manning River through Tinonee, Purfleet, Cundletown and into Taree. From Taree it was down the Highway diverting for a run on the Wootton Way (Nurbushring) which was treated with caution as it was raining quite heavily. Happy hour was held in the lounge area of the **Plough Inn Hotel** at Bulahdelah, and we later moved into the dining area for a great pub meal. After dinner members said their goodbyes to make their own way home at varying times, according to their commitments, through the now heavy rain. Despite the wet weather, it was another memorable run of over 350km, thanks to Mark & Lynda.

## MX-5 Economy Challenge 18th March 2011

It was a wet Friday evening for the economy challenge so only 4 cars started at Beresfield at 7pm. It was a mixture of country and city driving to finish up at Warners Bay to top up the tanks. We headed off to **Pippies Hotel** to do the arithmetic over a couple of drinks. The fuel consumption results were:

Capacity	Team	L/100km
1.6L	Phil & Helen Mayo	5.53
1.8L	Mark & Lynda Gray	6.41
1.8L	Jen & Lauren Boyko	6.56
1.8L	Bruce Hanson & Wendy Parsonage	7.04

## Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival 27th March 2011

The Hunter Chapter met at their usual starting place at Beresfield and headed down the F3 to meet up with a run from Sydney at **Aunt Molly’s Olde Bakehouse** in Morisset for morning tea. Twenty seven MX-5s meant over 40 people to fill with coffee and scones.



Having a captive audience gave me a chance to talk about our next stop on the first stage of our run through the grounds of **Morisset Hospital**. The hospital is now a ghost of its former self – It was started in 1906, as an “asylum for the insane”, its 1300 acres was developed to hold 1600 patients at its peak in the 1960s including the infamous ward 21 for the criminally insane. It is now a 130 patient, non-acute mental health facility. Unfortunately many of the beautiful buildings and facilities are now left unattended and not maintained but the grounds are open to the public and have access to some of Lake Macquarie’s quiet bays and peaceful foreshores.



Thanks to members helping the staff with serving coffees and collecting money, morning tea went smoothly, allowing us to have a chat and then get on with the run to the hospital. On entering the cleared area before the buildings we were met by the hundreds of kangaroos that call the area home, I distinctly heard Skippy calling them over the UHF radio. After cruising some of the roads we assembled on the foreshore oval to inspect cars and ponder the stories the buildings



could tell about a chapter of Australia's mental health history.

After leaving Morisset, 26 cars headed through Cooranbong over the Wattagan Gap to **Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival**. Now in its eighth year the weekend attracts over 30,000 people to the region and town centre and is all about rock 'n' roll, classic cars, hot rods and the 50s & 60s. There are lots of great rock 'n' roll and rockabilly dances put on throughout the local clubs and pubs and on Saturday and Sunday the main street and Rotary Park is transformed into all the glory of a bygone 50s & 60s era. There's a classic car and hot rod 'Show and Shine' with over 400 cars on display, entertainment, rock 'n' roll dance workshops, main stage entertainment, talent quests, feature bands, market stalls, Vegas-style wedding renewals, and side show alley. The event is such a big headline that Elvis made an appearance and sang some of his 50s & 60s hits!



After lunch at the festival, the Hunter Chapter headed north led by Marcus and Tiffany Jeffery on a run which went through Maitland, Bolwarra, Seaham, alongside the Williams River, Raymond Terrace, and back to their house at Thornton. Once again we traversed some roads that were new to most members and were great MX-5 roads especially when we observed showers on the hills around but not above us allowing the tops to be left down. The day finished with a look at the Melbourne Grand Prix on TV, followed by a BBQ, drinks and lies. Thanks to Marcus and Tiffany for their generous hospitality. ■

# Membership News

• Words: Bryan Shedden

## New Members

A warm welcome is extended to 33 new members who joined our ranks in January-March 2011:

Hilton Pollard	Christopher Hookham
Simon Kendrick	Sharon Hookham
Linda Peck	Ian Combes
Drew Peck	Christopher Combes
Brett Lansley	Caryl Rorke
Lisa Gyecsek	Eric Hardas
David Turnedge	Phil Lea
Andrew Walker	Elaina Elliott
John Lamond	Julia Mushet
Matthew Morris	Bruce Robertson
Margaret Kierse	Paul Orton
Tim Kierse	Gillian Orton
Stuart James	Patrick McBride
Mitchell Mathieson	Ian Giblett
Regino De Guzman	Barb Giblett
John Waugh	Daniel Jensen
David Alland	

## Membership Count

We currently have 515 financial members and another 101 members who are unfinancial as of 31st March 2011. Please renew so that you may continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, including receipt of **Club Torque** magazine.

## Membership Renewals

If you intend to renew your club membership and have not received a 2010/11 Renewal Advice, please phone Ken Liston on 02 9872 1639, or email Stephen Carter at [membership@mx5.com.au](mailto:membership@mx5.com.au).

## Club Events Calendar

All members are encouraged to make the most of their membership by participating in the huge variety of club activities. See below for a sneak preview of events in April-June. Please check the **Club Events Calendar** on our website, and I'm sure you will find something you will enjoy. Visit <http://bit.ly/efLNED>

- Dyno Day at MX5 Mania
- Breakie in Gaol Run
- Mudgee Weekend Run
- Goulburn Railway Museum
- Kuntry Kuzzin's Run
- MX2500
- Tasmania Targa Tour
- Majors Creek Run
- Bulga BreakFast Run
- Eaglereach Encounter
- May Midweek Mystery
- Brass Monkey Run
- Dubbo Zoo Long Weekend
- Bryan's Breakie at Berrima & Lunch at Cambewarra
- Club Trackday
- Supersprint Rounds 2-5

# What Are You Wearing to Berry?

• Words & Photos: George Miscovski

• 20th March 2011

*\* the run title has been slightly altered for the protection of innocents!*

It was a dark and stormy night ... It was. It *really* was this time. An hour before sunrise on Sunday 20th March, a dedicated eleven cars met at Heathcote braving torrential rain to drive to Berry via Kangaroo Valley. Dressed more suitably for a Rocky Horror Picture Show than a car cruise, among us were; pirates, punk rockers, mad scientists, a clan of Scots and others in all manner of embarrassing attire from blue suits to sharp suits. We even had a Wally but we had a hard time keeping track of him.

As the group left, the rain really let loose giving our wipers a thorough workout. By the time we passed Wollongong it all but disappeared as tops started to come down to enjoy the overcast skies. The southern countryside is a joy to drive through in dreary weather as it is on a lovely spring day. We were lucky to keep dry all the way to Berry and even had enough time for a group photo before the heavy rain came back. As expected, the locals in Berry were curious about our strange attire and many positive comments were made.

Thanks to everyone that braved the torrential rain to attend what turned out to be a very enjoyable day. We have some very keen club and forum members. They came from as far as Melbourne and some were up at 3am to be there! I bow to your dedication. It was great to be able to turn off the wipers after sunrise and pull the top down. Can't say the same for the very wet trip home though.

Much thanks to Michael Soulos for keeping us all together and pointed in the right direction. I also wanted to congratulate everyone on their outstanding effort in regards to their costumes. It was great to see everyone get into the spirit of things. I wish I had thought ahead to work out a prize for best costume.

I'll make sure and do that next year if everyone is keen to revisit a themed cruise. If I had to pick a winner though, it would have to be Fernando in his punk rocker outfit complete with tight shirt, zebra pants and a very cool wig. ■

More information and photos from the run are posted at <http://mx5cartalk.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=63&t=45633>



# Great MX-5 Roads: Oxley Highway

• Words: Matt Wilmot

• Photos: Sandra Wilmot

When you mix in MX-5 circles, you discover that there are certain roads that are often spoken about. These are roads that are unanimously coveted as being particularly suited to the enjoyment of Mazda's Roadster. On the Eastern Seaboard, one road seems to receive most of this praise: **the Oxley Highway**.

Now, although it pains me to say this, it has been the cause of some amusement amongst some of the members of the MX-5 Club that I have yet to drive down the Oxley Highway. So when fellow MX-5 enthusiast Nath approached me about organising a roadtrip for a small group of us, the Oxley Highway was at the top of the list of roads we must drive.

Of course, I had already done my research. I knew that typically, when coming from the south, you also use the opportunity to take in 2 other great tourist roads: **Bucketts Way**, and **Thunderbolts Way**.

So, at 8am on a Saturday morning, a small group of us assembled at **Pie In The Sky** in Cowan. What followed was two days and 1100km of simply fantastic driving. Following our rendezvous at PITS, we had a nice cruisy run up "The Old Road" and then turned north up the freeway. The freeway is always far more bearable when you are "flying in formation". North of Newcastle you then leave the freeway and head along Bucketts Way. "Bucketts" as it is more affectionately known, is a nice flowing road. It has some appalling

sections of very patchy tar, but for the most part it's nice flowing 100km/hr of open bends and low hills, and the countryside coming into Gloucester is quite open and very picturesque. Plenty of photo opportunities presented themselves.

Upon reaching Gloucester we did a bit of café hopping, as Roadster drivers like to do. From our research, we can highly recommend **Perenti Café** who serve good food and decent coffee. A great place to refuel, you might say.

As lunch concluded, we noticed a storm brewing directly over Thunderbolts Way. However, we pressed on. Which was a good thing, because "Thunderbolts" put on an impressive show for us. As we headed out of Gloucester the rain started to fall. With the two Roadsters leading our group, tops down, we opened throttles to sustain that minimum 80km/hr you need to remain dry!

This was a fantastic road, which winds over some great hills and waterways and literally twists its way up the valley and up the mountain. In these conditions, the results were quite simply epic, with dark clouds and plumes of mist rising out of the trees.

At the top of Thunderbolts, the rain had abated, but the lookout was fogged in. However the mist parted to give us a glimpse of the view. The rain then started to pour, so we closed roofs and began our descent. As





we dropped onto the plains, the cusp of the storm was clearly visible overhead, so we stopped, dropped tops, and rolled on across the plains beneath a majestic sky.

Thunderbolts junctions with the Oxley Highway at Walcha. It was here that we stopped overnight, at the **Walcha Café**. Apparently journos from *Wheels & Motor* often stay here. For what it's worth, we can add our endorsement - a humble & cosy little B&B. When booking the accommodation, Toni the proprietor had asked me if we were motorbike riders?

"Close" I said, "Cars."

"What kind?" was the reply?

"A mix of Japanese cars, MX-5s and the like"

"Have you ever done the Oxley before?"

"Nope"

"Oh, you are going to LOVE this road!"

At the B&B, there were pamphlets for motorbike riders, with suggested routes around the area. They proclaimed the Oxley to be "arguably the best motorcycle road in Australia" So, suffice it to say, our expectations were high.

We awoke to a cloudy but dry day, and headed off down the Oxley. Heading south we had a clear run over the open stretches of the tablelands, and then

came upon the first flowing section of the Oxley - 20km of sinuous 3rd and 4th gear bends which wind through a forest. Then you reach the sign that signifies where the real fun begins: 45km of 'squiggly line'. As you descend the mountain, the view opens out and the road hugs the side of the valley. It's epic - 4th, 3rd and 2nd gear corners, hundreds of them linked in a perfect ribbon. As high as our expectations were - the Oxley delivered in spades.

Tasmania aside, this would have to be the best piece of driving on mainland Australia.

I've done the Alpine Way, the Snowies are impressive. I've done the Great Ocean Road, a proper sea cliff drive is a must. But for sheer cornering thrills, the Oxley Highway is hard to beat.

Truly a memorable driving adventure. ■

# Club Track Day at Wakefield Park

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Oz Event Photo & Bryan Shedden



Round 4 of the 2010/11 Club Championship was held at Wakefield Park on Sunday 20th February.

A strong field of seventy-six entries including nine first-timers competed at our first Track Day for 2011 on the 20th February.

Following on from AROCA Victoria's lead of running timed rather than a specific number of laps in each session we decided to run this event in a similar manner. We experimented with several different times eventually deciding that six minutes would appear to be the appropriate time for our cars at Wakefield Park.

## Welcome MX-5 Club Track Day First-Timers



Tony West



Russell Maxwell



Brad Johnson



Mitchell Bennett



Hilton Pollard

The large number of entries required the field to be broken into seven groups. Most competitors completed five runs during the day with a total of between twenty-five and twenty-nine timed laps.

Fastest Time of the Day was once again set by Val Stewart in her RX7, Val's fastest lap of 1:08.36 was an identical time to her fastest lap at last December's Track Day. Second was newcomer Brett Lansley who recorded a time of 1:10.36 to win Class 7 and set a new Class record for this year. Third was Mark Hellmund's 1:11.05 to win Class 6.

In Class 1 Allan Cruz (1:17.99) was the quickest with Dianne Byers recording a time of 1:29.88 to establish the women's record for that class. Dianne and husband Paul finding the NA not as quick as their NC. A thousandth of a second separated Brad Carpenter (1:17.19) from President Glenn Thomas in Class 2. In Class 3 newcomer Stuart James was fastest with a time of 1:16.99. Ian Vickers was the only runner in Class 4 recording a time of 1:17.49.

Peter Browning won Class 5 with a 1:15.88 and newcomer Letita Caldwell recorded a time of 1:27.89 in Class 6 for the ladies. Dennis Brady returned to win Class 8 with a time of 1:11.76. The Haslers topped the time sheets for Classes 10 and 11; Craig recording a 1:11.19 in his Lexus powered E36 BMW to win Class 10 whilst in Class 11 Kayne recorded 1:14.28 driving his Mitsubishi Evo. Lea Farrell established a new ladies record for Class 10 recording a 1:27.70.

Because of the large number of entries we did not run regularity at this event; however the "Old and Bold Award" resulted in a very close finish with Dennis (the Rev) Brady edging out Ian Vickers by only one thousandth of a second on handicap.



Our next Club Track Day is on Monday 9th May following our hosting of the third round of the 2011 State Supersprint Championship on Sunday 8th May. Kumho Tyres are sponsoring this year's Supersprint Championship. Why not volunteer to be an official on the Sunday and earn a 50% discount on your entry fee for the Monday? Please let me know if you can officiate on the Sunday. ■

# Marulan Driver Training Day

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Tony King

• 13th March 2011



Thirty two members and seven visitors participated in the club's Driver Training Day conducted at the **Marulan Driver Training Centre (MDTC)** on Sunday 13th March. The day was suggested by Michael Soulos, our 2010 Member of the Year recipient, who was responsible for the recruitment of many entrants - thank you Michael. It was good to see entrants from all three chapters of the club participating, with people travelling from the ACT, Bathurst and Dubbo in the west, the south coast, Sydney, the Hunter and one from as far away as Queensland.



Following registration, the day commenced with a briefing by Val Stewart on driving attitudes and practices. Garry Willmington, the owner of MDTC, then conducted a track walk pointing out the one kilometre track's many features with suggestions for the best lines in order to achieve a quick lap time. Just prior to commencing the track activities, Garry briefed us on the noise and behaviour standards that are currently necessary at the facility. At the end of the day he commended all participants and the club for our adherence to his requests. What would you expect from MX-5ers and their club?

So to the track, nine experienced race or supersprint drivers had volunteered to act as driving coaches. At registration earlier the entrants nominated their groups based on their driving experience. Cars were let out

onto the circuit with six to eight cars on the track at any one time. For the first set of ten minute runs the coaches demonstrated the correct way to drive the circuit giving pointers along the way. After a few laps they pulled into the dummy grid area and swapped seats for the remainder of the session. After the first set of runs the use of coaches was optional. Later in the day many entrants chose to invite coaches back in their car to gauge their improvement.

The coaches Matilda Mravicic, Nick Martinenko, Chris Gough, Bryan Shedden, Stewart Temesvary, Lindsay Burke, Steve Green, Peter Browning and Mark Hellmund were also able to do some quick laps in their own or borrowed cars during the day - thank you guys for giving up your own time to help out the club and its members in that way, and similarly thank you to Val Stewart for her contribution.

The day wrapped up at about 4pm with many very happy members who had experienced a great day. Some participants have previously competed at our Club Track Days at Wakefield Park. I had the feeling that we will see most of the others entering future Wakefield Park Track Days to further their driving skills and experiences. Based on the success of the day I believe that it should be a regular feature of our annual calendar. ■



# Generosity is Alive & Well in Our Club

• Words: Allan Cruz

• Photos: Allan Cruz & Oz Event Photo

At the Wakefield Park Track Day in February, I was again reminded of the generosity and helpfulness of people associated with the MX-5 Club.

I've been on a lot of MX-5 Club runs, and have found members (& guests) to be friendly and sociable. I also notice the same atmosphere on all the MX-5 Club Track Days. But experiencing first-hand the generosity and willingness to help a fellow racer in times of trouble. Here's my personal experience on the matter ...

It was our group's first run after lunch, and during my third lap, a coolant by-pass hose ruptured (unknown at the time) and sprayed coolant everywhere. With no warning this caused a snap spin on turn 9. A video of the incident is posted on-line at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qzs9x7SgqY> (or search YouTube for "Wakefield Turn 9 Spin").



*This is what caused the problem - a ruptured coolant by-pass hose located at the back of the engine, up against the firewall.*

A lot of things went through my mind when this incident happened. The first thought was determining the cause. Why did I spin like that? Did something break? Is it terminal? Is it minor? Is it somewhere in the drivetrain? Is it somewhere in the engine? My thought process went on and on and on. All of this while I'm still in the car, gingerly coasting (engine turned off) my car into the garage area. Although by this time, based on where the needle on my temperature gauge was pointed, I had a pretty good idea what might have caused the spin.

The problem was a case of bad news / good news / not so good news.

The bad news ... me breaking down on the day. My first incident with my very reliable NA (touch wood my only one).

The good news ... if any coolant hose had to rupture, one of the by-pass hoses is the least problematic.

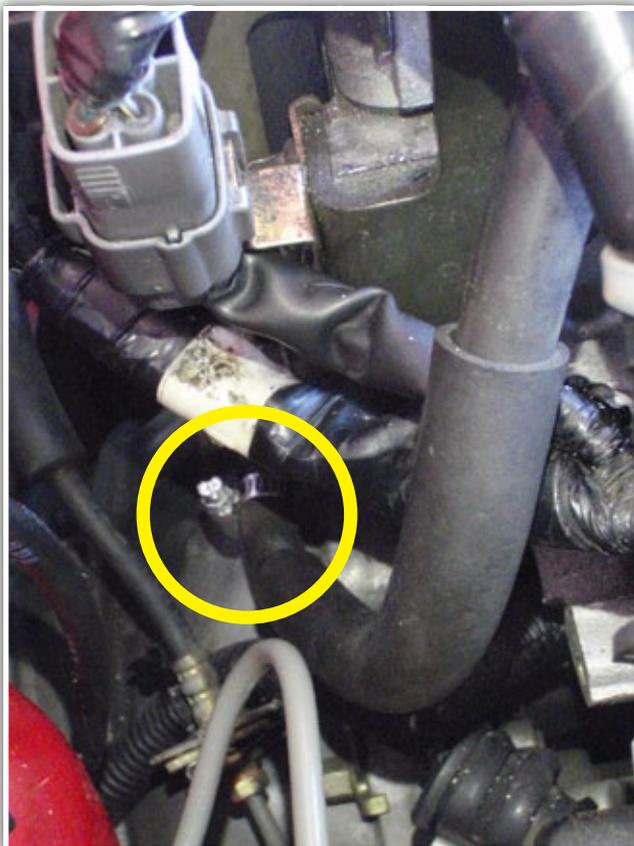
The not so good news ... the hose that ruptured was located at the back of the engine (against the firewall) which is very hard to access even with the correct tools.

Then another series of thoughts went through my mind. This time, it was ... how do I fix the problem? Where can I find parts? If it cannot be fixed trackside, how am I going to get it home? How much will all this cost? Etc. etc. People who have broken down far from home would know what I'm talking about.

In the end all of these questions were addressed quite easily. Here's why ...

It was the generosity and overall willingness to assist a fellow racer by others. I was amazed how many people came around offering genuine help. I was just blown away by it. You certainly didn't feel alone solving/fixing the problem. I think that is why desperation and panic never set-in for me.

The generosity came from everywhere. From people I don't even know or have not really met, offering help,



*Back of the engine - the rupture happened close to where the bottom clamp is now fitted in this picture. Removing the original spring clip and hose was a nightmare.*



*A fastener driver tool was used as a temporary bung, with a hose clamp to lock it in place. It got me home.*



*The other bung was an old spark plug, complete with cable tie to hold the hose out of the way. It's agricultural but it worked!*

to acquaintances and friends offering their trailers to tow me back to Sydney. Again most offered their help. I didn't have to go out and seek it. Seeking help I'm sure would have involved some grovelling and begging on my part which would not have been a pretty sight. So I guess I spared them that nightmare.

Kidding aside, for me what was shown on the track that day was a selfless and extremely generous gesture. As embarrassed as I am to admit this, it gave me a lump on my throat. Luckily I didn't get a chance to show this as I was too busy burning my hands and cursing the darn hose while trying to remove it from the back of the engine. By the end of that day, I had a new enemy, and it was a 13mm diameter rubber hose.

My heartfelt thank you and true appreciation for the following people:

**Many fellow racers** who came around offering their assistance, and others giving moral support – I wish I knew all your names. Thank you.

**Dennis Brady** for lending me his work gloves. Thank you.

**Bryan Shedden** for offering me his spare coolant and helping fill up the radiator. Thank you.

**Val Stewart** for giving me her spare hose off her RX7. Thank you.

**Robert Kai** for offering to tow my car on his trailer back to Sydney. Thank you.

**Lindsay Burke** for offering to drive his car back to Sydney so that Robert Kai could trailer my car. And for lending me most of the tools we used. Thank you.

**Robert Kai & Lindsay Burke** for checking if I got home safely. Thank you.

My biggest thankyou goes to **Phil Munnings** who not only shared his extensive knowledge of MX-5s (apparently he's pulled apart every millimetre of the MX-5 barring the gearbox), and pointed out what needed to be done to get me home, but also did most of the difficult part of the trackside repairs himself. I was totally useless trying to get that darn hose from the back of the engine.

Phil, also supplied the makeshift bungs we used to plug the by-pass coolant hoses (fastener driver tool & a spark plug). For a while there, I'm sure my MX-5 was the only one in Australia with five spark plugs in the engine bay. Many thanks to you Phil.

This is one of the reason I love doing track days with the MX-5 Club. Not only is it well organised but the people at the MX-5 events are truly generous and kind hearted people; people who appreciate a great car, a great track experience, and are great company.

Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone. It makes me very proud to be part of the club. ■



# NSW Supersprint Championship

• Words & Photos: Bryan Shedden

• 26th February 2011



The 2011 Supersprint season kicked off at Eastern Creek on 26th February, hosted by NSWRRRC. The MX-5 Club of NSW was represented by fourteen drivers in a field of 110 entrants, with another three drivers from other clubs also in MX-5s. Unfortunately, we were missing several regulars: Mark Hellmund, Glenn Thomas, Mike Hicks, Phil Ashton, Bob Gage, Leigh Hemmings, Steven Pender, Kevin Addison and Peter Feutrill, just to name a few. Both Mark and Glenn were registered but were late withdrawals due to illness.

We had blue skies most of the day, no rain, and a forecast maximum of 31°C, starting from a cool morning of 19°C. The mercury eventually peaked at 32°C! Yes, it was a hot one. Remarkably, there were six Class records broken on the day, including Allan Bugh, who broke the Class SVC record, which was previously held by his father John, with time of 1:40.951 - congratulations Allan.

## Round 1 Eastern Creek Results

Class	Place	Driver	Car	Time
1A	1st	Bryan Shedden	MX-5	2:01.722
1B	2nd	Stewart Temesvary	MX-5	1:57.829
1B	3rd	Keith Monaghan	MX-5	2:08.227
1B	4th	Anthony Crott *	MX-5	2:14.792
2A	2nd	Tony Williams	MX-5	1:56.830
2A	6th	Scott McGarry	MX-5	2:01.913
2B	4th	Steve Green	MX-5	1:55.768
2B	7th	Ralph Thompson	MX-5	2:00.164
2B	8th	Phil Munnings	MX-5	2:00.877
2D	1st	Bradley Cecil	Evo	1:50.557
3A	2nd	Drew Rodwell	Charade	2:02.491
3A	3rd	Adam Callender	Charade	2:03.131
3B	2nd	Phil Abraham	Elise	1:54.288
3B	3rd	Peter Price *	MX-5	2:01.031
3B	5th	Ben Sullivan *	MX-5	2:02.258
SVC	1st	Allan Bugh	Clubman	1:40.951
SVD	12th	Patrick Bramston	MX-5	1:58.159

\* Anthony, Peter and Ben represent other clubs at the Supersprints but drive MX-5s. Peter is also a member of the MX-5 Club.

Fastest MX-5 on the day was Steve Green with a 1:55.768 - a new PB by almost 2 seconds! Steve was busy over the Summer break doing a few new modifications, and the results are impressive. Stewart Temesvary's 1:49.6163 recorded on the Natsoft website

was a mistake by the timers - his first three lap times belonged to another car. Likewise, Keith Monaghan was briefly credited with a 1:58 but later finished with a new PB of 2:08.227. That didn't stop Stewart and Keith from teasing their rivals about their amazing times! Finally, the less said the better regarding Phil Abraham's disagreement with a pole in the carpark.

After Round 1, the MX-5 Club of NSW (101) are third in the Club Championship, behind ARDC (120) and NSWRRRC (112). At least twenty club members are registered for Round 2 when normal service should resume. Our club has won the Club Championship *seven times* since joining in 1999, and we are all striving to make 2011 the *eighth*. For those interested in competing at the Supersprints, please contact Mike Hicks. ■



## 2011 NSW Supersprint Calendar

Rnd	Date	Venue	Host Club
1	Sun 26th Feb	Eastern Creek	NSWRRRC
2	Sun 10th Apr	Eastern Creek	ARDC
3	Sun 8th May	Wakefield Park	MX-5 Club
4	Sun 22nd May	Eastern Creek	ARDC
5	Sun 19th Jun	Wakefield Park	Mini Car Club
6	Sat 30th Jul	Wakefield Park	NSWRRRC
7	Sun 14th Aug	Eastern Creek	ARDC
8	Sun 16th Oct	Wakefield Park	Mini Car Club
9 *	Sat 12th Nov Sun 13th Nov	Eastern Creek	ARDC & MX-5 Club

\* Round 9 is a two-day event that will also serve as the Australian Supersprint Championship

# Festival of Sporting Cars Regularity

• Words: Mike Hicks

• Photos: Oz Event Photo

• 12th & 13th February 2011

Overall the number of entries for this race meeting was well down on expectations resulting in events for six categories, two of which were Regularities. Four of our club members competed, Kevin Addison and myself in Regularity 'A', and Bathurst's Tony King and Canberra's Rob Wall in Regularity 'B'.

First runs on Saturday were in the wet with lap times generally some ten seconds slower than in the dry. At closing times for Saturday's nominations it was still raining so we all nominated wet times. By the time the B group went out for their first official run, the track had dried so the decision had to be made to either travel around ten seconds over our potential or just go for it. Being MX-5 drivers and with no Sheep Stations hanging off the results, we all went for it. As a result our regularity finishing positions ranged from a best of thirteenth (Tony King) and a worst of twenty-second (Kevin Addison) with total points lost over 2000 for all.

On Sunday we could re-nominate our times, the weather was fine so all nominated dry times for our three events. The Regularity 'B' guys were lucky they had three dry runs. Kevin and I in Regularity 'A' weren't quite so fortunate; we encountered a short shower mid-way through the final event of the day putting paid to any chance of a low regularity score. Casting aside Saturday's results Rob Wall proved to be the most consistent MX-5 member finishing with a third, fifth and seventh with a total of 383 points on Sunday. Tony King would have been close to Rob but for an indiscretion in event 1 on Sunday resulting in a nineteenth, followed by a fourth and sixth. In Regularity 'A' Kevin and I had a great time without ever achieving a top three finish, we spent most of the day circulating in close company with a late-70s Porsche 911.

For those wishing to step up a little from Club Track Days or Supersprints; Regularity Events is a good option. Your CAMS L2S licence is sufficient to compete. Next Festival of Sporting Cars race and regularity meeting is a three day event over the Easter Weekend at Eastern Creek. ■

## *For those who came in late ...*

*What is a regularity? Believe it or not, regularities have nothing to do with getting enough fibre in your diet! The idea is that you nominate a laptime and then try to get around the track as close as possible to that time. Points are allocated on the basis of time difference, and the lowest overall score wins. It's a popular event amongst drivers as it rewards consistency rather than outright pace.*



# Aussies Shine at MX-5 Ice Race

• Words & Photos: Mazda Australia

Mazda's MX-5 roadster has again shown its pure sports car genes, this time on ice at the 2011 Mazda MX-5 Ice Race in Sweden. Clear blue skies and polar temperatures provided the right conditions for an exhilarating festival of drift and control as drivers from 26 nations competed in specially modified roadsters for a podium finish. Australia was the only non-European team and was considered to be the rank outsider given the distinct lack of ice driving facilities in Australia.

However, lack of ice driving experience didn't seem to faze the Australian team as it dominated Day One's qualifying and practice sessions grabbing pole position for the next day in the process. They also won the hearts of everyone with their friendly attitude, by wearing board shorts over their racing overalls – in honour of summer Down Under – and driving with a tiny kangaroo mascot fastened to the top of their car's safety cage. They made it look easy on Day One setting the quickest lap times with their only real challenge coming from the Russian team, which took second on the grid.

Race day featured beautiful blue skies, glistening snow and a morning temperature of -31°C. This ensured ideal conditions on the ice of Lake Kallsjön, which is located in the Östersund region of west-central Sweden. The race itself was conducted in two sessions, each two hours long, with the car completing the most laps the winner. Like last year's MX-5 Open Race in Italy, it was drifting control and not pure speed that proved the decisive factor in the race. The Australians continued to perform well as they had on Day One and continued to set some of the fastest lap times on the ice as they took the chequered flag in race one. Race two, in the afternoon, saw the Russian team relying

on their significant ice driving experience to put them out in front. A spirited chase by both the Australian and Belgian teams resulted in spectacular bumper-to-bumper racing. The chase continued right to the chequered flag but ultimately it was the Russians who took the overall win ahead of Australia and Belgium.

The unforgettable day out on the ice culminated with a Champagne spray on the podium from the three winning teams.

Mazda Australia public relations manager and team coach for the MX-5 Ice Race, Steve Maciver, was delighted with the efforts of the Australian team. "To place second in such unfamiliar driving conditions is really an amazing effort. Coming in to the event we knew that we had some good drivers but weren't sure how we'd go against the more experienced Northern Europeans. It was clear early on that we had the pace and I was delighted to see the Australian spirit come to the fore allowing us to get the best out of the MX-5," he said. ■

Visit the *Sydney Morning Herald* website for a personal account of the race by one of the drivers: <http://smh.drive.com.au/motor-feature/ice-racing-in-a-mazda-mx5-20110304-1bgsu.html>



# TechTalk: Check those drainage holes!

• Words: Murray Finlay

• Photos: Will Campbell

Reprinted courtesy of MX-5 Club of Victoria

Is it just me ... ? (I bet it's not!)

In all the recent heavy rain, I discovered that I had neglected checking my car's drainage holes during the recent drought years, when car leaks have been the furthest thing from my mind.

How did I discover this? My daughter put a cardigan up on the shelf behind the passenger seat ... when she came to remove it, the cardigan was wringing wet, and it hadn't been raining during the drive ...

When I reached into the corner behind the seat (where the soft top pivots, beside the seatbelt tower), there was a puddle about 10mm deep!

**So, what's the cause ... and how do I fix it?**

In the MX-5, water from the roof makes its way down through two channels inside the car to get to the ground. It is essential to make sure that these channels are free from any blockages if you want to avoid getting wet or listening to the water slosh up and down the sills and causing them to rust. It is a very simple task – the whole procedure should take no more than a few minutes.

In the NA and NB, the top of the drainage tube is a circular hole about the diameter of a bloke's index finger, situated in the "nook" where the soft top roof hinges on the body. It's right between the seatbelt tower and the car's side bodywork.



However, it's hidden under a small flap of rear sill carpet. To access it easily, you need to fold back this carpet flap.

With the seats tilted forward, unclip the soft top and tilt it back slightly ... enough to allow you to get your hand in behind and around the seatbelt tower so you can lift and fold back this carpet flap.



Once this is done on both sides, fold the

soft top down flat so that it will hold both carpet flaps back out of the way.

You should then be able to see the drainage holes.



In the NC, the arrangement is much more civilised, and the rectangular draining hole can be seen clearly behind the seatbelt tower, and accessed very easily.



**Once I've found the drainage hole, how do I clean it?** There are different opinions ... some suggest using a wire coathanger (straightened of course!), a length of that springy plastic-coated wire used for hanging light curtains, some 10mm poly garden irrigation pipe ... Some even claim that the original metal NA aerial with the knob at the top was designed for exactly this purpose! I used a thin (about 6mm diameter) piece of dowel.

Whatever you use, be gentle! The drainage tube has a flap towards the bottom which is designed to let water drain out beneath the car, but stop dirt (and noise?) getting back up into the car, and you don't want to damage that.

There may be quite a lot of resistance initially as dirt can really clog up the hole, but repeated prodding will break it up. Repeat the procedure on the other side.

Some owners also clean these drainage tubes from the bottom. The tubes can be seen under the car, protruding from just in front of the rear wheels. Again, be wary of damaging that flap.

At the front of the car ... in my old NA I had to make sure I regularly cleared leaves and sludge from inside the panel at the rear of the front wheel arch. Leaves and debris washed down inside there from the front windscreen drainage channel collected between the metal of the front guard and the plastic lining.

I discovered that all this vegetation, dust and dirt began to compost, and was concerned that the wet gunge sitting against the metal would rust the panel.

I admit I haven't yet addressed this in my NB; the plastic wheel arch lining is attached a bit more securely!

Other leaks:

- side windows: if water is leaking in near the soft top weather-stripping, try closing the door after closing the window. This forces the window to contact the weather-strip differently from when the window is closed after the door is closed.
- where the soft top meets the windshield frame: usually caused by dirty or damaged moldings or the latches not being tight enough. Usually you will notice the top will squeak and rattle if it isn't latched down tight. The NA/NB latches may be adjusted: open the latch and examine the inside. There is a small plastic 'cover' that keeps the latch adjustment screw from moving. Pop the cover off and adjust the screw as needed to get the latches to close smoothly, yet tight enough to keep the top from rattling or leaking. If the latches become difficult to open or close, a small amount of oil on the moving parts should help. Don't over-tighten, as this will make the top difficult to close.
- water in the boot: can be caused by one of several factors – dried out weather-stripping around the boot, a cracked rain rail on the convertible top, or dried out weather-stripping around the tail lights (especially on older vehicles).

Sources:

- bitter experience!
- [www.mx5ireland.com](http://www.mx5ireland.com)
- [www.pistonheads.co.uk](http://www.pistonheads.co.uk)
- [http://ox.mx5oc.co.uk/hints\\_tips.htm](http://ox.mx5oc.co.uk/hints_tips.htm)
- [www.miata.net/faq/faq3.html](http://www.miata.net/faq/faq3.html)

# TechTalk: Installing Coilovers on an NC

• Words & Photos: Phil Ashton

I purchased some Tein Flex coilovers and went searching for some installation instructions from the Tein web site but found that they were only in Japanese and therefore no help at all apart from a little diagram that showed if you adjust the height on the shock body by 15mm, the difference at the centre of the wheel is 10mm.

So after a quick chat with Chris Gough on how he installed them in his race cars, I went about installing them and decided that I should write it down as I went to help others in the future who may want to install coilover shocks.

**Time for removal and replacement:** It took me around 4 hours to do the work the first time (some bolts had been done up with an air gun and were decidedly hard to undo), 2½ hours the second time. Here are the removal instructions:

## Front

- Jack the car up on both sides and place on floor stands.
- Remove the wheels.
- Remove the tower bracing and loosen the three nuts holding the top of the shock absorber.
- Remove the 17mm nut at the bottom of the shock absorber, leave bolt in place in the control arm.
- Undo the bolt that holds the ABS line to the inner body work and unclip the ABS line from the plastic guard liner.
- Remove the 17mm nuts from the two bolts holding the upper control arm. Just leave the bolts holding the arm in place.
- Remove the 17mm bolt from the bottom control arm and disconnect the shock absorber.
- Remove the three nuts previously loosened from the top of the shock absorber. The shock absorber is now free from the bodywork but still contained within the upper control arm.
- Remove the two bolts from the upper control arm and pull the control arm away from the bracket. Tie the upper control arm off to prevent strain on the ABS line (Photo 1).
- Pull the shock absorber down, push the bottom of the shock towards the rear of the car to clear the lower control arm. Now tilt the top of the shock



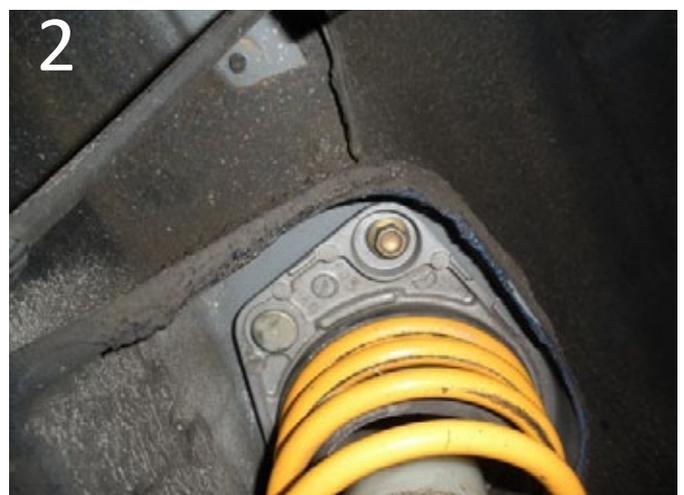
forward to clear the guard and remove it.

- Replacement is the reverse of removal and will be easier because the Tein setup is shorter than the original shock unit.

**Note:** You need to drill a hole in the top of the tower brace to allow access to adjust the damping screw. I drilled a 12mm hole and then inserted a short length of reinforced plastic hose over the damping screw. This hose protrudes out of the tower brace and allows the damping to be changed easily. You could also drill a smaller hole, say 3mm, to enable an Allan key to be inserted directly into the top of the damping screw.

## Rear

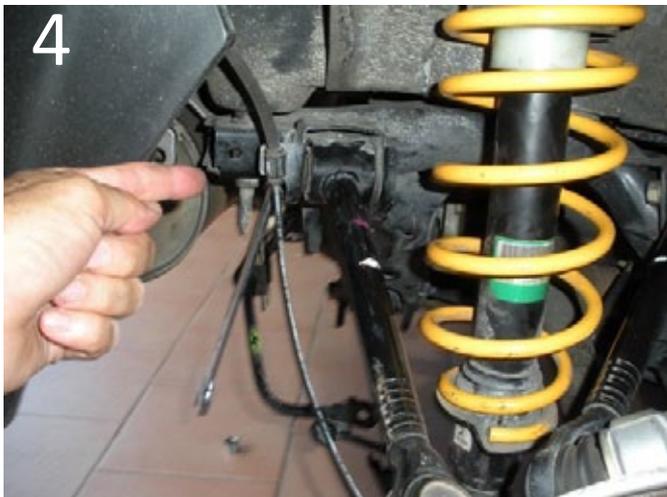
- Jack the car up on both sides and place on floor stands.
- Remove the wheels.
- Remove all the trim panels and the fuel line guard in the boot to allow access to the top of the shock absorbers.



- Undo the 17mm bolt connecting the bottom of the shock absorber to the lower control arm.
- From underneath the car, remove the single bolt that locates the top hat of the shock absorber to the bodywork (Photo 2).
- Remove the two nuts inside the boot attached to the shock absorber (Photo 3), and disconnect the bottom of the shock absorber from the lower control arm.



- The shock absorber is now free from the body but contained within the rear suspension control arms.
- Remove the 17mm bolt connecting the upper control arm and pull it away from the body of the car (Photo 4).



- You can now remove the shock absorber.
- Once out (have a beer, you deserve it) replace in the reverse order, though it will be easier because the Tein setup is shorter than the original shock unit.

When fully assembled and back on the ground, check the height of the car front and rear measuring from the centre of the wheel vertically to the lip of the guard.

Stock height is approximately 385mm F / 370mm R, I'd suggest you adjust the height to 345mm front and rear initially. After a few weeks you can decide if that height

is suitable for your driving conditions.

You adjust the height by unlocking the bottom ring nut with your "C" spanners, disconnect the shock from the lower control arm and turn the shock base in to lower the car, or out to raise it. Don't loosen the ring nuts at the base of the spring and adjust because this will affect the preload. Note the preload should be just enough to capture the spring on full suspension droop.

Adjust the damping on the top of the shocks to the same "click number" front and back. Start with 10 clicks off full hard. Wind it clockwise till it stops then count the clicks as you turn it anti clockwise towards soft. Don't refit boot liner yet.

Over the next few days experiment with the damping until your desired setting is determined. I've ended up with 12 off full hard front and 13 off full hard rear.

Then head off to your wheel alignment specialist and get the alignment checked. Corner weighting is an option should you do track work.

Following the alignment you may need to fine tune the damping to suit your handling requirements. Assuming the handling is now neutral, firming up the rear induces oversteer as will softening the front. Refit the boot liner panels.

### Additional Information and Tips

You can access the top of the rear shocks to adjust them by just removing the centre panel in the boot.

Remember the Tein Flex spring rates are 7kg front (2.2 times stiffer than standard) and 5 kg rear (1.75 times stiffer than standard) which makes the ride a lot firmer and the car sits very flat through the corners using standard sway bars. Chris has found that it is not necessary to use heavier adjustable sway bars, such as the Whitelines, to control body roll and car balance. Tein Superstreet have 6kg front and 4kg rear springs.

Have a look at the Fat Cat site for more suspension facts: [http://www.fatcatmotorsports.com/FRC\\_NC/FCM\\_MSDS\\_NC.htm](http://www.fatcatmotorsports.com/FRC_NC/FCM_MSDS_NC.htm)

Plugging information into this table I found the roll stiffness for the various springs / sway bar combinations:

- Stock NC springs and sways: 1436 lb/ft
- King springs & Whiteline sways on soft: 2153 lb/ft
- Tein springs & stock sways: 2526 lb/ft
- Tein springs & Whiteline sways on soft: 2941 lb/ft

So you can see that the Teins with the stock sways have 17% greater roll stiffness than my old King/Whiteline set up. ■



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