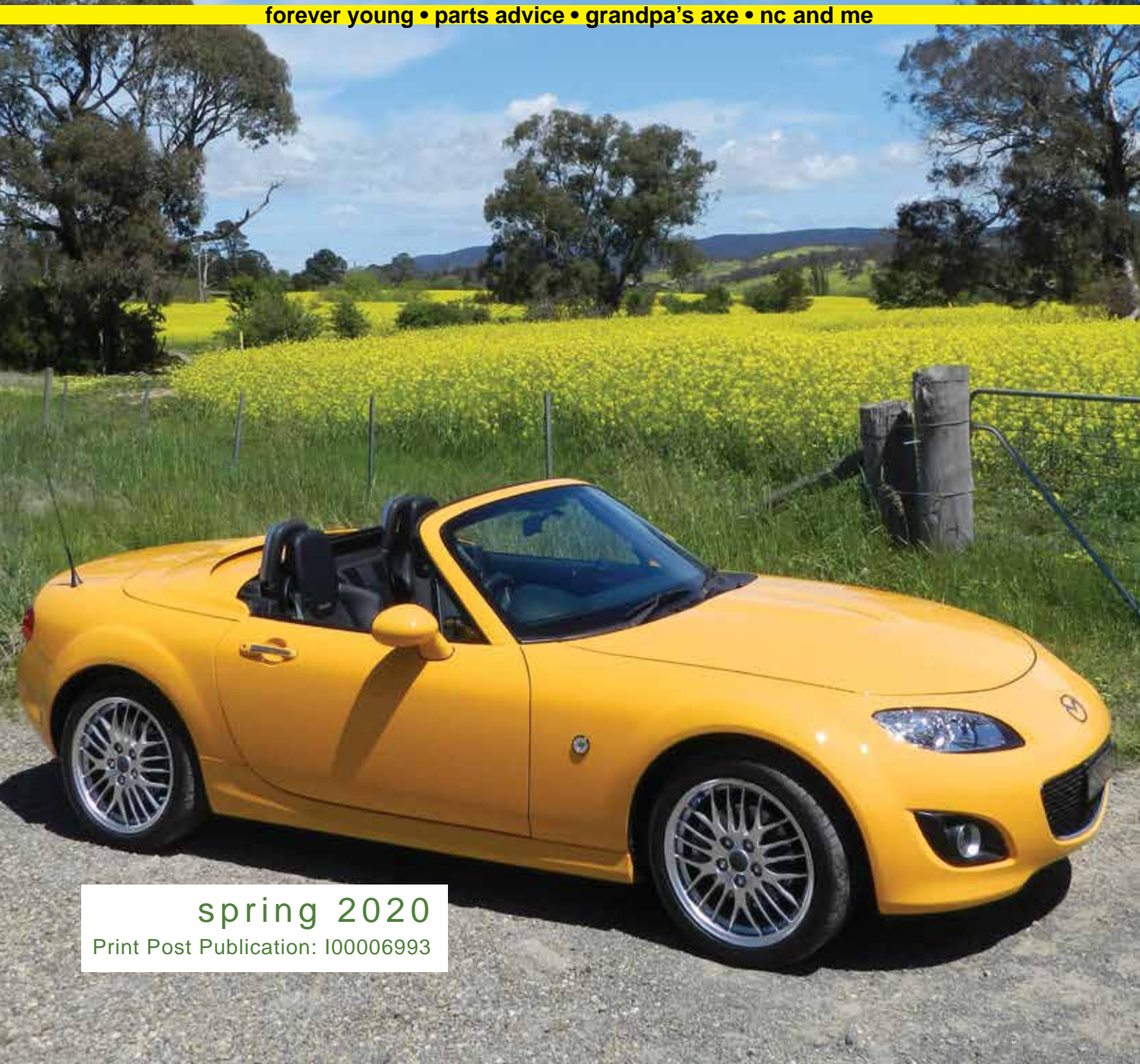


club

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

TORQUE

forever young • parts advice • grandpa's axe • nc and me



spring 2020

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Spring Cover Competition

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Cataract Dam - NSW



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His Garage - NSW



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Portland - NSW



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Maroota - NSW



MIKE LAWLESS & ANNE BLACKBURN
Mollymook - NSW



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Summer Cover Competition

Entries are now open for the cover competition of the Summer edition of Club Torque and can be submitted to:
publications@mx5.com.au

Entries close 1st February 2021.

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

President's Report



A Strange Time

I would like to wish everyone all the best for the festive season and I hope your MX-5 gets all the presents it deserves.

It has been an interesting year, like no other to say the least. As we have started to see an easing of COVID-19 restrictions we have been able to relax some of the restrictions on the club's events. This has allowed our chapters to start holding events and allowing our members to get together and enjoy our cars and the friendship that comes with that. This is great but we will continue to monitor the requirements and modify our procedures to suit.

A meeting of the chapter convenors and their run leaders was held online, and a program of runs developed for the start of the year. We are taking this approach due to the COVID-19 situation as this will allow us to set up the events to meet the restrictions at the time and allow us to react to any changes in the restrictions. COVID-19 has led to the cancellation a number of major events during our 30 year anniversary period. Going forward we will be running these events next year, 2021. A 30 year plus 1 anniversary.

So please watch the event page on our website for information on these events.

NatMeet 2020 was another victim of COVID-19 and after meetings with the club presidents, from around Australia, and our club's committee it was decided to postpone the event until April 2022. So please keep this time free for this great event.

I would like to thank all our members for their patience and support in this difficult time.

On a lighter note, I was pleased to present this year's Presidents award to Ian Combes. Thank you, Ian, for all the work you have done for the club.

The Christmas break is almost on so please enjoy the time with family and friends. It is also a great time to enjoy top down motoring in our MX-5s and always, remember the sunscreen.

I hope to see you on the road.

Keith Monaghan

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We've had 57 new members join since the Winter edition of the magazine was published.

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

Canberra Welcomes

10 New Members

Matthew Carson	Colin McNally
Joe Craddy	Matthew Prestipino
John Fenwick	Tara Valerius
Sonia Fenwick	My Duyen Yong
Nicholas Hart	Stephen Yong

Hunter Welcomes

13 New Members

Matthew Carson	Nicholas Hart
Joe Craddy	Colin McNally
John Fenwick	Matthew Prestipino
Sonia Fenwick	Tara Valerius
	My Duyen Yong
	Stephen Yong

As at 6 December 2020...

**CURRENT
MEMBERSHIP
1052**

Mid North Coast Welcomes

3 New Members

Roger Fance
Jett Herring
Tracy Hughes

Other Region Welcomes

1 New Member

Richard Swinton

South Coast Welcomes

1 New Member

Rina Kelsey

RPM Welcomes 1 New Member

Marco de Jongh

Illawarra Welcomes 4 New Members

Leon Sawyer	Lesley Willing
Kevin Taylor	Peter Willing

Sydney Welcomes 24 New Members

Edward Baker	Nick Kelly	Alesha Schaafsma
Ashoke Banerjee	Robert Kriletich	Louella Schaafsma
Sergio Carpio-Parquet	Michael Lam	Tali Schaafsma
Matthew Charwood	Meredith Long	Tim Schaafsma
Joshua Collins	Madhura Manohar	Glenn Strong
Sanjeev Desai	Ann Modzelewski	Louise Strong
Huong Duong	Timothy Molesworth	Matt Thomas
Adam Jenkins	Nik Pavkovic	Ury Zhang

Membership Renewals - if you are having any difficulties logging into the Membership portal to process your renewal, please contact Bryan Shedden on 0422 340 010 and he will happily assist in resolving any issues. It rarely takes more than a few minutes and then you are good to go for another year.



LOSING CONTROL...

EDITORIAL

When it comes to so called driver assist technology used increasingly in new cars, call me a dinosaur, a troglodyte because I am not by any means a "techo" disciple. Why?

Well, there are number of issues that spring to mind not the least being how it's manufactured – to the cheapest price possible. No doubt when under development, the designers/engineers/scientists had a certain level of quality in mind but once car company bean counters get involved that goes out the door. It's "as cheap as possible" to maximise profits, and it shows. Obviously, when you are dealing with "sophisticated" electronics, you don't want it made by un-educated peasants (no offence intended) in a developing country. But that's what happens.

You'd be horrified to see how many components used in modern cars are basically made in a cottage industry situation with mum, dad and

the kids cranking out car parts on the dirt floor of their hut. I have experienced malfunctioning or poorly functioning driver assist technology fails plenty of times.

Some of these instances were downright frightening such as the time an SUV I was driving went into full panic lock up autonomous braking mode driving between two trucks on a multi-lane freeway while rounding a curve. The control camera obviously wasn't "discrete" enough.

Auto high beam is problematic too because it doesn't take into account the elevated driving position of a large truck when there's a solid concrete dividing wall between the two carriageways. The oncoming truck drivers cop full high beam...and you can't dip the beam because the car won't let you.

Then there's active lane keeping that actually takes steering control away from the driver when IT thinks it's necessary... yep some algorithm is deciding to take control of the car.

Bloody dangerous if you ask me. Think of a large obstacle on the road, like a rock....

Some of this "safety" tech is way too intrusive, wresting control of the car from the driver when there is obviously plenty of safety margin.

The ute I drove last week went into panic braking mode way before I was anywhere near the rear of cars in front.

And you can't turn it off in many cases.

Another thing to grapple with is the point that if you need this level of technology to drive safely then you can't really drive.

I would have thought being able to reverse park was a basic requirement for getting a driver's licence. That's why I can't understand why you'd want or need an automated reverse parking function in your car... because you can't drive, that's why.

As a motoring journalist I get to drive a lot of new cars and the act of actually driving them is being eroded by things like radar cruise control, blind spot monitoring, rear park assist,

full parking assist, active lane keeping, adaptive high beam, autonomous emergency braking and plenty more.

Some of this tech is set for the lowest common denominator - driving numpties, which calls into question the very essence of our licencing system.

We as a society are too soft on licencing, it's too easy to get one and the standard of drivers is fairly poor as a result.

Barely a day goes by when I don't see many examples of poor driving or plain stupid driving.

Perhaps that's what advanced driver assist technology is all about, keeping stupid drivers on the road.

And that my dear friends is a real worry.

Good thing we as MX-5 Club members take our driving seriously... and it shows.

Stay safe, see you on the road.

Barney



MEANDER TO MOGO ZOO

SOUTH COAST CHAPTER

Words • Kerry Warne

Pics • Brian Clayton • Anda Clayton

Sunday October 18, 2020

It was a great plan, a drive down the beautiful South Coast to spend some time at the Mogo Wildlife Park before a picnic lunch

Unfortunately, the weather gods did not co-operate with MX-5 weather, delivering both rain and cloud.

Absolutely no good for a visit to the zoo or for top down motoring.

Our group of three cars headed out from Milton for an uneventful drive to coffee at Surf Beach. We met up with James and Giulia from Canberra Chapter.



Anda shared her delicious brownies while we discussed Mazda MX-5s and other serious matters.

Having decided that the zoo could wait for another time, we drove to Mogo for a little retail therapy, for the greater good of Mogo of course.

Anda, Brian, Anne and

Graeme enjoyed lunch and met a new Sydney member.

Lesley and Kerry had their picnic lunch at Long Beach before heading home.



CAN'T WAIT...

SIR RODEN & LADY CUTLER FOUNDATION

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • Phil Donnelly

Pics • Phil Donnelly

For the past 18 months I have been volunteer driving for The Sir Roden & Lady Cutler Foundation based in Sydney at Moore Park and Concord.

This Foundation provides invaluable services driving people to medical appointments. These are people with no other way of attending appointments, usually socially isolated or with no family or friends who can assist them.

It is not a para medic service, purely driving only, so no medical training is required, the clients are able to get in and out of the vehicle unassisted, (mostly anyway).

I drive one day per week from the Concord office, most volunteers do one day per week, they are mostly retired or semi retired.

I have found this volunteering extremely satisfying.



Like most Club members I'm sure, I still enjoy driving and it's a bonus to be able to assist those less fortunate.

The Foundation always need more experienced drivers so give it some thought, you won't be sorry. There are plenty of retired Club members in the Sydney area

who I'm sure would enjoy this as much as I do.

Most of the vehicles are near new Kia Cerato's or Hyundai's, not too exciting but very reliable.

If interested please contact the CEO Vince (Concord) on 1300 747 763 or email info@sirroden.org.au



FOREVER YOUNG

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Peter Wilson • Annemie Wilson

Pics • Peter Wilson • Annemie Wilson • Rod Nicholas

Tuesday 27 October, 2020

It was wet a few days before this run and cloudy as we drove to the Hall Layby. The weather didn't look very good.

Despite the weather, four cars with eight members departed for the drive to Boorowa. A bit of misty rain greeted us and we sought refuge at the Pantry on Pudman. After some tasty cakes and coffee we braved the elements for the drive to Young via Murrungo. We took a quick photo stop at the Memorial Hall in Murrungo as the rain was enough to keep us on our toes.

It was a short drive to the Chinese Tribute Gardens in Young and, after a walk around the park, we decided it was a pleasant spot for a picnic ... in fine weather. As more rain sprinkled the road, we retreated to the Terracotta Café in Murrumburrah for lunch. After a satisfying lunch we noticed there was now a bit of sun and dry.

Almost good enough to lower the roof...

Then the drive to Galong for another photo stop and chat to the locals who were were friendly and moved a four wheel drive that was disrupting the background of a photo. Once a thriving town, there's not much happening in Galong these days. We headed for Yass and our final stop at Roses Café. Yes, it was more coffee and cake.

Not all events will be in good weather and we made the best of the conditions for a drive in the countryside in good company.

We may organise a picnic at the Chinese Tribute Garden sometime in the future, during fine weather.





a comprehensive list of interchangeable parts between the two popular models.

It's at this web address <https://www.redlineautoparts.com/blog/nb-to-na-miata-compatibility-guide>

Just be a bit careful because there may be unknown differences between our Aussie spec' cars and US models that may compromise the interchangeability advice.

As a passionate MX-5 owner I feel it is my duty to know as much as possible about them. It's all part of the fun of owning an MX-5.

I pride myself on being able to carry out all servicing and most repairs short of pulling down a gearbox.

However, when it comes time to get parts, I usually shock myself and ask the a Mazda dealer what the original equipment (OE) part costs, sit down, take a deep breath and then either ring MX-5 Mania or some interstate MX-5 specialist for their prices... always cheaper,

in many cases by a long shot.

Funny thing is that OE non genuine parts often come in Mazda plastic bags with factory part numbers on them.... go figure...

It would be good to have more knowledge at my fingertips to make part searches easier, such as what parts are interchangeable between the NA and NB models, both fairly old cars now and often in need of replacement bits and pieces to stay on the road and to stay fit and healthy.

So, it was with some excitement that I came across a US website called Redline Autoparts that has

It's a good reference resource that's worth a look even if only out of general interest.

What I would really like to know is what bits and pieces from other mainstream Mazdas such as Mazda 323s, 3s, 6s, 121 and so on might interchange with MX-5s. Surely there would be plenty of cross-over given the requirements of mass production.

Whatever, this US website is handy to know



THIS GOES WITH THAT



KEEPING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES



ILLAWARRA CHAPTER

Words • Brendan Barr Pics • Brendan Barr

Sunday September 20, 2020

"The rain to the wind said,
you push and I'll pelt." – Robert Frost

"The way I see it, if you want
the rainbow, you gotta put
up with the rain." – Dolly Parton.

Heading for the meeting point at Haywards Bay, it appeared that Robert Frost would triumph over Dolly Parton as there would be no rainbow or pot of gold. Much to my surprise, everyone was there and eager to go, despite the threatening weather.

Our new club members – Steven and Nadine were inaugurated with new MX-5 hats and we headed off, being careful to keep at least 1.5 metres between cars.

We were going south towards the corrugations of Fountaindale Rd as it twisted its way up towards the summit of Saddleback. I am sure we all looked forward to the vista that would unfold on the way down Saddleback Rd, but as we were soon immersed in an opaque fog that enveloped us all, no view was to unfold.

Back at sea level we emerged from the soup and headed south for Shoalhaven Heads to enjoy morning tea in the Native Botanic Gardens, where

we were assured that we could escape the inexorable rain under the cover of the beautifully crafted entrance way.

This magnificent edifice had one unfortunate drawback, no shelter, so we helped ourselves to the just erected gazebos of ... another club about to welcome 40 or so visitors. After much sociable banter we brushed off the rain droplets and headed for the cars.

By now the rain was really coming down, which was hardly conducive to boisterous driving on the gorgeous winding roads of Cambewarra Mountain. More fog added to the excitement.

We convoyed through Kangaroo Valley and headed to our lunch stop at Bendeela Recreation Area on the banks of the Kangaroo River. Entry to this beautiful area is tarnished by having 12 or so speed humps rearrange the car's suspension and exhaust pipes. Fortunately a pot of gold awaited us as the rain stopped and the sun emerged. Dolly Parton triumphs once again.

Envious glances went Wally's way as he set up tables and chairs, and a sumptuous feast. Some sat and lunched while others

wandered off to explore water views or walk to the far end of the grounds.

Among many topics of conversation two remained in my mind; one now resolved.

First – Hella wanted to know how to rename her upcoming run – 'Third Time Lucky,' to something with fourth in it. 'May The Fourth Be With You,' seemed a good title for a run to be held on November the fourth. Check it out if you want to go.

Second was who will be the new convenor(s) when Jeff and Pam retire? Answer, James Mate. Go James.

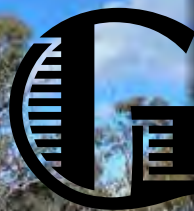
The weather held, we departed for our individual drives home, after, of course, rearranging our suspension and exhaust pipes on the 12 speed humps.

I can say that I had 'the best drive ever' up from the bottom of Barrengarry Mountain all the way to Robertson, top down, cool breeze, no cars in sight.

Robert Frost's poem title 'Happiness Makes up in Height for what It Lacks in Length' seemed an appropriate ending.

Good on Jan and Garry for being our fearless leaders once again.





GUNDAROO GUNNING GOULBURN

CANBERRA CHAPTER
Words • Patrick McBride
Pics • Patrick McBride

Sunday September 27, 2020

When the second car arrived at the Hall Lay-by I thought they were a nice match together, two Soul Red NDs. The next four cars to arrive were also red, making a splash of shiny red along the fence. I was wondering if today's event would be the Red Car Run with all the cars the same colour when Rod Nicholas arrived in his white RF. People were eager to start driving because the Hall

Lay-by has a lot of noise from passing traffic and there was also a swooping magpie to keep us alert. We set off with seven cars, all red in colour except for Rod's white RF. At Gundaroo Colin McNally joined us for part of the drive, and yes, his car is red.

The back roads we drove took us through lush green countryside showing the benefit of the best rainfall in years. Sadly the good

conditions had also fostered the growth of Cape Weed and many open areas displayed the yellow daisy flowers of this exotic pest.

At our Gunning halt we bought takeaway drinks and freshly-baked scones from the Merino Cafe, a cosy place inside with a nice courtyard which unfortunately we couldn't sit down in and enjoy during these Covid-restricted times. A couple of doors away was a local market stall and a few of us walked down to buy bananas and other fruit to take with us. The roads were largely empty of traffic and our line of MX-5s cruised along together until Goulburn. It's so nice to see MX-5s out together. As was the case at Gunning we had to sit outside with takeaway drinks and food. The Roses Cafe offers a huge variety of food and across the road



is a nice park, neat and spacious with lots of flowers. We settled in to picnic tables for a leisurely lunch before hitting the road again.

Most of the drivers elected to avoid the highway home and to continue driving along the back roads through Lake Bathurst and Bungendore. We halted at Tarago for a last photo before dispersing.



NATURE AND TELESCOPES #1

Words • Norm Baker

Pics • Norm Baker

September 12, 2020

CANBERRA CHAPTER



Given previous COVID-19 restrictions the Canberra Chapter ran a few duplicate day/picnic runs, to more readily adhere to member number restriction guidelines, but also providing members opportunities to zoom zoom. September 12 dawned sunny and 8 cars with 14 members gathered at the Caltex servo on the Monaro Highway at

Hume. We set off in bright sunshine and made our way via Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan to Googong Dam. The countryside was green and the dam nearly full. We stopped here for photos, it was new scenery for some of us.

Leaving the dam lookout, we continued on via Burra and

reserve. There were still signs of the summer bush fires in the south western corner and the efforts to stop the whole park going up were obvious.

Once we left the Nature Park, the convoy wound its way down the road to the Tidbinbilla Tracking Station

where photos of the cars among the dishes were popular. The cafe and the museum were closed so it was a short stop. Back to the cars, we completed the circuit back to Canberra via Cotter Reserve, past Stromlo Observatory (which is also closed at present)



the Monaro Highway, towards Canberra. Recent growth from the rain had turned paddocks a striking green. At the first intersection we headed to Tharwa and out to the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. There wasn't much traffic so we had a relaxed drive. The group selected a spot

beside the information centre and set up chairs and tables for a picnic. A few got coffees from the shop and after lunch had a short walk. Ice-creams were also popular before getting back in the cars. As entry to the park was free, we decided to do a circuit in the cars through the nature

and finished up at the Canberra Arboretum where we were going to park at the top of Dairy Farmers Hill. However the Arboretum was popular and there were no parking spaces. We found a

space further round to make our goodbyes and all head home.

All in all it was a great day out which everyone enjoyed.



NATURE AND TELESCOPES #2

Words • Ian Bottcher

Pics • Robyn Bottcher

September 16, 2020

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Yes, you will have read of the Nature and Telescopes Run #1 held on Saturday 12 September 2020. Correct, same run within a week.

On a typical 'great one day, perfect the next' Canberra day, seven MX-5s carrying 10 members left Hume for a picnic lunch at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Two new members Frances and Lili,

both with new red NDs were welcomed to join in their first MX-5 club run.

First pit stop was Googong Dam for some photo opportunities before heading along Old Cooma Road onto Cooma Road before negotiating some southern Tuggeranong roads.

We crossed the Murrumbidgee River into



Tharwa before heading straight to the Nature Reserve via Tidbinbilla/Paddys River roads.

Nature at close quarters was witnessed when a very friendly emu joined us at the lunch table – head first into Frances' lunch basket. Unfortunately, he/she didn't hang around long enough for a selfie. After lunch a 16 kilometre drive through the nature reserve soon found us heading onto the Canberra Deep Space Tracking Complex. There we ran into a group of BMW trail motor bikers who had come from Jindabyne on the day, heading on their way eventually, back home

to Newcastle. By the look of the dirt and mud on the bikes they certainly took different routes than us MX-5ers.

Many in their 'senior' years took a keen interest in the MX-5s.

Getting back onto Paddy's River road and then on to Cotter Reserve we had another pit stop and encountered a swooping magpie, before heading back to Canberra via Cotter Road.

Tidbinbilla, Paddy's River and Cotter Roads never disappoint, providing a great backdrop to join other like-minded people for a drive, chin wag and most enjoyable day.



BREAKFAST CLUB
Words • Brett Hardey
Pics • Stephen Lord • Jason Brown
Sunday October 11, 2020



With the disappointment of the COVID cancelled MX500 run back in September buried deep in our memories, it was time for the BreakFast Club to put rubber on the road once again. October's event, The Pheasant Wood Long Circuit gave us the opportunity to explore some of the beautiful back roads

between the Southern Highlands and the rural city of Goulburn. With the recent streak of fantastic spring weather over the past few weeks, hopes were high for this to continue to allow the registered members a great top down run. The early morning start at Pheasants Nest caught a few drivers by surprise with a little more chill in the air than expected. However, all the signs were there to indicate a great day was on its way. Besides, once we were on the road and behind the

wheel of our beloved MX-5s the suffering was eased. It's not hard to forget your troubles when you get to steer your little weekend warrior.

We hit the start line at 7.00am for a rather mundane run down the Hume to Jerrara Rd to meet a couple who had travelled up to join us from Gunning. Once off the Hume, it was MX-5 roads all the way. The rubber band was stretched and the peloton split as we all found our own pace down to. Bungonia, a place barely visible



THE PHEASANT WOOD





on the map. For anyone adventurous enough to take one of these exits that line the Hume, the rewards are great.



THE LONG CIRCUIT

While the highways are a great way to get from point A to B with minimal fuss, these back roads offer some glimpses of rural life rarely seen if you are a city or suburban dweller. Some of the places only minutes off the highway look barely touched for decades and it is a joy to be able to pass through, stop for a snapshot and continue to the next pretty little dot on the map.

The first stop for a comfort stop was the sleepy town of Tarago, a very tidy little place that didn't look like it had seen much traffic at all. The biggest building in town, like most tiny country towns was the pub. The Loaded Dog, a great Aussie name for a pub or even a rock band I thought. While we stopped and stretched our legs a

little, bonnets were lifted, and a little tech' was talked before we all got back behind the wheel to spread our wings again.

It was my turn to lead the way for the very first time and I was a little nervous about being able to set a pace that would please the group. On these back roads it hard not to enjoy steering through the bends and stretching out along the straights. It clears the head, opens up the senses and allows you time to think of what is important in life and in these times of COVID stress, it has never been more important to do so.

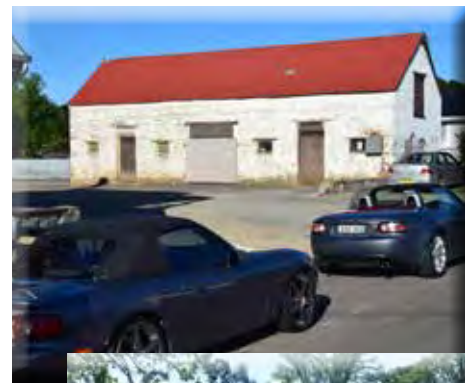
On this final leg to Goulburn we were brought to a halt by a flock of sheep being herded by two sheep farmers and their trusty Kelpies. What a fantastic thing to witness, something

designed and created to do one job and one job only. That is to respond to its owner and round up the balls of wool into the paddock. Kind of makes you think.....created for one purpose.....do what your owner wants..... round things up. Sounds awfully like a little MX-5 to me, rounding up as many bends as the owner can find on a perfect spring day.

We made it to Belmore Park in Goulburn by mid-morning to enjoy some nicely brewed coffee and fresh rolls and wraps in the park sourced from the very fancy Roses Cafe. As always, the conversations were varied and open to all but like always, good things come to an end and we parted company and each found our way

home however we pleased.

Tom Cochrane said it in his song "Life is a Highway" but there are times when you just have to get off that highway I think.



Club Torque 15

RPM STARTS REVVIN'...

RPM CHAPTER

Words • Brigid Gallop

Pics • Gary Joss

Wednesday 28th October, 2020



Things have certainly been a lot quieter than we are used to in RPM, but a few of the intrepid weekday wanderers have continued as best they can within the recent restrictions and held the flag high for our little group.

A big thank you must go to Jacqui, Ron, Gary, Jackie and Grant who have done their best to get us to the other side of the pandemic with our little chapter intact.



This time however, it was John and Frances Molden who came forward with a terrific drive which was really enjoyed by the 8 members who came along.

We left Mulgoa and took a not unfamiliar route through to Camden. The MacArthur area is always beautiful and the recent rain meant that it was even greener than usual.

Our first stop was at Curry Reserve in Camden for comfort and coffee. It's a lovely spot with excellent facilities... keep it in mind for the future.

Back on the road and before we knew it we were on Douglas Park Road which is an adventure and members would have been praying not to run into a car coming the other way as the road is quite narrow and winding.



Having traversed the overhead rock formations and bend, we were pleased to find the causeway was not flooded and we could continue with our run.

Then via Wilton Road to Appin Road and eventually onto the Old Princes Highway to Sublime Point which lives up to its name.

With views up and down the coast for many kilometres we enjoyed seeing the cockatoos in flight quite some distance below us.

This run had initially been a picnic run and we certainly were holding our breath as the weather was predicted to be rainy indeed.

So when the restrictions were relaxed recently, we were delighted to finish our run at Sporties Club, Hammondville.

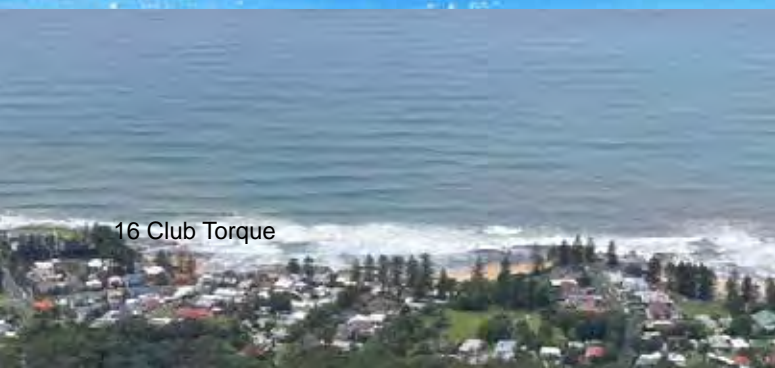


The meal met with approval from all. It is a great little Club, another spot to keep in mind for the future.

I am pleased to say that I have met some lovely people in the MX-5 Club whom I now consider great friends and a few of them were there at Sporties.

Seniors who have been there and done that and I must say that no topic is off the table for discussion.

Much laughter emanated from our table, and really, what more could you ask than that, a group of mates having a great time together...



Sunday in the Park

Sunday morning dawned clear and calm, a change from two days of gale force winds before the drive. Phew.

Even die-hard 'top down' drivers probably have limits.

Mick and I were off on our first run with the Sydney Chapter. We have only been MX-5 owners for a short while and even slightly less as members of the MX-5 Club of NSW.

We always intended to buy a 'fun' car for our retirement but recently thought "why wait?" We have always loved seeing owners of the same cars driving along together and now we were tickled pink to be in such a procession.

Pulling away from McDonalds at McGraths Hill with the other 12 MX-5s, we were looking forward to a driver's delight of country winding roads. We cruised through lovely country estates with enormous mansions, turning into farming properties and then into the bush.

River Road lived up to its name with lovely views arounds bends of the Hawkesbury River and great driving corners.

Some of the road was very narrow and added extra heart pumping excitement when another vehicle came from the opposite direction – especially a campervan.

When we pulled up at the Stone House Café, Maroota, the bell birds were in full song - beautiful. It wasn't long after setting up our picnic that Mr Magpie sussed us out as a captive audience to strut his stuff and see what tidbits he would be thrown. He wasn't disappointed with a few bits of bread and some tasty leftovers of pizza.

It was wonderful to see all sorts of motoring enthusiasts out. We had various groups of motorbikes go by and a parade of Volkswagen Golfs (and an assortment of other Volkswagens and Audis), making full use of their turbos.

It probably wasn't the most serene spot for a picnic but for those who enjoyed the takeaway pizzas from Stone House Café, it was well worth it.

They were having a special today, you could have pizza, pizza or pizza.

The lads in their worked Volkswagens soon came back to invade our carpark (and get some pizza) and there wasn't much room for any other types of vehicles.

We were silenced in awe and wonder as they all arrived and gave us a noisy demonstration of their DSG gearboxes.

Actually we couldn't hear ourselves think, let alone talk, but it was great to see a younger generation also enjoying their motor vehicles.

We look forward to some more adventures with the Sydney Chapter and getting to know the other members of the group, through car talk, picnics (for the COVID time being) and sharing stories.

Thanks to Andy and Vicki for being very gracious in sharing their unique status of owning a Competition Yellow MX-5, though now we know it is affectionately referred to as a 'mango'. To us, our new little pride and joy is named Sunny. Sunny in colour, sunny in disposition and she makes us feel sunny as we drive along.



SYDNEY CHAPTER

Words • Lea James • Mick James

Pics • Lea James • Mick James

Sunday September 27, 2020



MOUNTAINS TO THE VALLEY

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • John Purcell • Barry Luttrell

Pics • John Purcell

Sunday October 25

"Here we go again," I thought while sitting down watching the weather report on Saturday's 6:00pm news - 40mm of rain expected over the Hunter Region from Saturday evening into Sunday. Tomorrow was the first run we were doing where we could have more than 20 members (22 registered in fact) and we were doing a fun mountain road towards Walcha to check out the views from Pioneer Lookout before our return run back down to Gloucester.

Our meeting point was at the Riverside Park in Raymond Terrace, not a bad location as we were able to gather under the Band Rotunda for our pre-run briefing. (As an observation I have found meeting in parks to be an advantage over our previous meeting locations like McDonalds, the reason being that the membership appears to be able to go longer before requiring a comfort stop - no prestart coffees) Back to the briefing... still short one couple, Barry decided to call to see their status only

to be told one was sick and they had sent a text earlier, yep 12 hours earlier. With one other prior cancellation 19 members and 12 cars set off on a 390km, 8-hour day in very wet conditions. It goes without saying that some of our Hunter members are NUTS.

We started the run in a light misty rain following the course of the Williams River to Clarencetown before heading on to Limeburners Creek road and then the Buckets Way to Gloucester for our morning tea stop in Billabong park. The large covered picnic area (Jenny's find) provided plenty of welcome cover for the group.

Morning tea over, we had the choice of going ahead of the convoy for a quicker run up the mountain which 3 of us decided to do. About 48kms of winding mountain road in the rain meant for a bit more caution but all this was to no avail as no sooner had we got onto the winding section than the first of 3 groups of slower vehicles appeared and with very few and very short overtaking places available

we didn't get to the top any quicker than the convoy led by Barry and Jenny.

It did stop raining as we approached the top, turning into low cloud and limiting visibility to about 200 meters. I

could say the view from the lookout was magnificent, but only if you looked at the wall of the cutting opposite as cloud completely filled the valley. A quicker run this time back down the mountain to Gloucester for lunch where Rob entertained a group of interested local boys, showing them how the roof of the NC roadster retracts. We then proceeded on the Buckets Way to Nabiac and the Pacific Hwy before turning south for home.

There's this section of road between Nabiac and Raymond Terrace that was the dread of all motorists 30 years ago, it goes through a place called O'Sullivan's Gap. Now it's a little bit of paradise for us car enthusiasts on the boring

run down the Pacific Hwy, yep it's called Wootton Way and it couldn't be ignored.

We may not have been able to drive as quickly, but the rain and wet roads offered up their own challenges so many thanks to Barry and Jenny for not only organising and leading the run, but also having the fortitude to not cancel it.

P.S. Did I mention due to the nature of the weather and the roads that Barry and Jenny actually did a risk assessment for this run.



18 Club Torque



CROOKWELL SOCKS & SCENIC DRIVE

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Norm Baker

Pics • Norm Baker

Wednesday November 4, 2020

Eleven cars gathered on this beautiful day for a briefing at the Hall lay-by. Some members had not seen each other for a while and the greetings were more excited than usual.

The run to the Hume Motorway near Yass was an easy drive with little traffic. The convoy kept together well and some new members appreciated an easy pace. On the Hume, the green growth in all the pastures and the clear air was a delight.

Turning off the Hume we entered the little township of Gunning on the old Hume Highway.

But we couldn't stop at the café in the middle of town,

pressing on towards Crookwell.

The route goes through Grabben Gullen - a picturesque drive with many historic homesteads along the way and a number of wind generators on ridge tops.

Since the 1820s, Crookwell has serviced the surrounding farming area and is where you'll find Lindner Quality Sock factory which we visited. It's a small family-owned business producing high quality socks using local Merino, cotton and Alpaca.

Our group had morning tea in the adjoining café which is a good place to

stop as is the car restoration business in Crookwell (Sydney Car Restorations), not open due to COVID.

After a pleasant interlude, we made for Goulburn, stopping at the wind generator viewing area at an altitude of about 950m above sea level.

The original 8 turbines were commissioned in 1998 and each turbine has a 5MW capacity with the 8 generating 8GWh/year. They're still going way beyond the expected service life of 20 years thanks to upgrades and maintenance.

On to Goulburn and it was great to see all the dams full and the grass and crops waving in the wind. At Goulburn the vote was for lunch at the RSL Club where we had

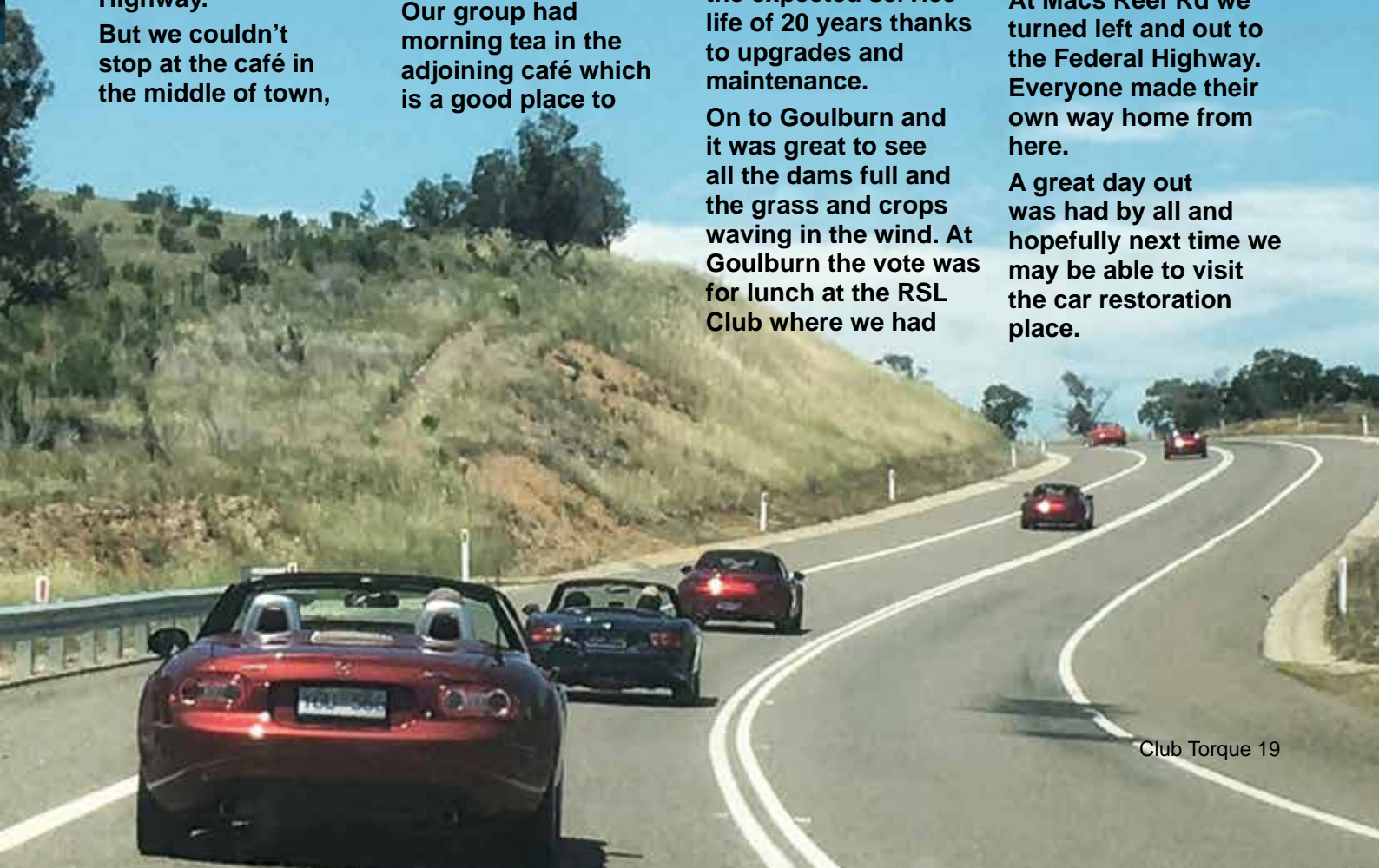
an enjoyable lunch served by friendly staff.

The return journey took us out of Goulburn on the Braidwood road past Wakefield Park but time didn't permit a stop there. At the little village of Tarago we turned right to Bungendore.

At Bungendore we turned right onto the Sutton Rd and then up the hill at the end of Lake George which is now half full.

At Macs Reef Rd we turned left and out to the Federal Highway. Everyone made their own way home from here.

A great day out was had by all and hopefully next time we may be able to visit the car restoration place.



MX-5 CUP ROUND 6

Words • Paul Nudd

Sunday September 13, 2020

WAKEFIELD PARK

Run as part of the MRA race meeting
under the authority of AASA

An overcast day at Wakefield Park with just the slightest shower around lunch time that did not affect any of the MX-5 races.

Fifteen minutes qualifying was more than enough time for all Cup competitors to set a meaningful lap time such that only one driver 'broke out' of class through the rest of the day

Class A was looking very interesting with 5 competitors setting qualifying times from 1:09.4158 to 1:09.7593

Class B also interesting with 3 competitors setting qualifying times from 1:11.3092 to 1:11.7791

When the real was done, Tim Herring won the day with three outright wins and three wins in the Open FI Class.

Stuart McFadyen was second on the day with three wins in Class A.

Steven Head was third on the day with three wins in Class B.

Craig Barney qualified for

Class C but 'broke out' on five laps over the 3 raced so was 'bumped' up into Class B.

Thus Class C was won by Kerry Smith with a three wins, followed by Rob Herrick with three seconds and Peter MacDonald with a third and 2 DNFs.

Class B second was Ken Davis with two seconds and a third, next was Sarah Medley with two thirds and a second.

Class A second was David Johnson with two thirds and a second, next was Ben Oldfield with a 4th, a second and a third. Next was Paul Nudd with a second and two 4ths. Andy Boydell did not finish race 1 and did not start in races 2 and 3.

Open N/A was won by David Lawler taking all three races from Todd Herring.

Open FI Terry Johnson did not finish race one and was second in two and three. Richard Herring also dnf race one and was third in two and three.

MX-5 CUP FINAL POINTS TABLE

COMPETITOR	OVERALL	PLACE
Tim Herring	111	1
Stuart McFadyen	111	2
Steven Head	97	3
Ben Oldfield	95	4
Robert Herrick	91	5
Ian Combes	81	6
Kerry Smith	71	7
Paul Nudd	67	8
Peter MacDonald	53	9
David Johnson	52	10
Andy Boydell	42	11
Sarah Medley	41	12
Mathew Fraser	38	13
Craig Barney	37	14
Graham Withers	35	15
Andy Harris	34	16
Verne Johnson	32	17
Ken Davis	32	18
Ben Cathcart	31	19
David Lawler	30	20
Richard Herring	28	21
Bob Hay	27	22
John Connolly	25	23
Terry Johnson	23	24
Mitchell Hall	21	25
Stewart Floresta	20	26
Robert Withers	19	27
Jason Russell	18	28
Stephen Brennan	17	29
Curran Brennan	16	30
Ian Caldwell	11	31
Lou Lezzi	9	32



MX-5 CUP ROUND 5

Postoned from August

Words • Paul Nudd
Saturday October 3, 2020
WAKEFIELD PARK

**Run as part of the MRA race meeting
under the authority of AASA**

A hotly contested 2020 MX-5 Cup saw the championship decided in the last race of the series.

With Round 5 washed out in August the rerun became the final round.

Going into this final round 2019 Champion Stuart McFadyen had a comfortable lead in the series.

Running second was Steven Head with Ben Oldfield next then Tim Herring.

Ben didn't come to Wakefield Park this time and Steven Head broke a ball joint resulting in no points scored today.

Stuart also broke a ball joint, in qualifying and the Herrings got stuck in, repaired the car and got him on the grid for Race 1.

Tim Herring won the day with 3 class wins for 24 points (max possible).

Stuart however did not score any class wins on the day and finished with 19 points.

So the final point score saw Tim and Stuart each on 111 points after dropping their worst round.

The rules dictate that a tie is broken in the favour of

the car setting the faster lap times and/or the most class wins so the crown for 2020 goes to Tim Herring with a brilliant clean sweep.

Gridding up for the final race of the final round Stuart needed a class win in this race to take the series. He started well on that course but David Johnson and Paul Nudd had different ideas.

Paul fought with David for several laps and finally got past.

Followed several laps with Paul hot on Stuart's heels and finally a missed gear change by Stuart exiting turn 2 allowed Paul through to take the class win in the final race.

One missed gear change made the difference. One more point would have given Stuart the crown again

So, the wrap-up of Round 5 rerun was as follows...

Tim Herring won the day with three wins in the Open Class to score 24 points.

Ken Davis with two wins and a second in Class B scored 23 points for a Class B win and second overall on the day.

David Johnson took out

third overall and a Class A win with two wins and a third in Class A.

Richard Herring was second in the Open Class with two second places and a DNF in Race 2.

Paul Nudd was second in Class A with two second places and a win in Race 3.

Stuart McFadyen came back from his crash in qualifying to score two third places and a second in Race 3 for a third in Class A.

Andy Boydell managed to finish race 3 for a fourth place in Class A.

Ian Combes, with a win and two second places took out second place in Class B.

Kerry Smith was our Class C winner with three second places in class.

John Connolly was second in Class C with a fourth in Race 1 followed by a class win in Race 2 and a third in Race 3.

Peter MacDonald took out third in Class C with two third places and a fourth.

Rob Herrick was clearly fastest in Class C with class wins in Races 1 and 3 but a DNF in Race 2 relegated him to fourth in class on the day.

2020 MX-5 Cup Wrap-up

Thirty Five MX-5 drivers entered for the 2020 series and thirty two scored points.

Only one, Stuart McFadyen, driving his 1840 cc naturally aspirated NB, scored points at all six rounds. Stuart had to drop his 17 points from Round 4 as only your best 5 results count for the point score.



PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2020

Ian Combes

An Extraordinary Effort



Mazda MX-5 Club of NSW
President's Award 2020

"It was all worth it," said a humble Ian Combes on receiving his award at this year's final MX-5 Club track day.

Ian loves putting his black NB beast on the track so it was fitting the winner of this year award should receive it doing one of his favourite things.

Ian joined the club in 2011 and became an active member in club motor sport. For quite a number of years he supported David Lawler running events.

In 2016 Ian took over the role of competition secretary and put his all into that position. It helps that Ian is a number cruncher by

profession.

In this role he carried out many tasks including the restructuring of the class system, setting up the annual calendar and the day-to-day running of the motor sport section of the club.

The activities that the motor sports section of the club runs include track days, motorkhanas, driver training and a round of the New South Wales super sprint championship. These add up to over 14 track events per year. On top of this the Ian runs his car in the MX-5 Cup series.

Part of the role in organising our motor sport events is the need to organise volunteers, the paperwork,

and the services to run these great events. Ian has continued to build on the respect our motor sport events have generated from inside and outside the club. As you all know, 2020 became a very difficult year with COVID-19 developing into a major complication to the program. As restrictions were eased, we were able to start running motor sport events within the necessary approved guidelines and procedures.

Ian developed these procedures and in doing so allowed our club to start our motor sport activities a lot earlier than most organisations.

We were the first organisation to run a COVID affected New South Wales state championship motor sport round successfully. This highlights the standard of the work

and procedures that were developed by Ian and put in place by the team.

Club President, Keith Monaghan presented the award to Ian, "As recognition of the work and dedication he has not only put into the motor sport section, but the whole club." In reply, Ian said 2020 was a huge challenge as a result of the pandemic but he said the club missed only one event as a result of health restrictions.

"Next year looks good as restrictions ease which should go some way to making motor sport events easier to organise."

"We have a full motorsport calendar across the whole year which is pretty exciting," he added.

Congratulations Ian.

Keith Monaghan
President



Membership Tenure Awards

Words • Bryan Shedden

Pics • Kim Jacobs

Saturday October 24

Membership Tenure Awards
24 October 2020 / Bryan Shedden

At the AGM on 23 October 2020, the first recipients were announced for a brand new award that is eligible to all members of the MX-5 Club of NSW. The MXV Award is designed to supplement our annual Member of the Year and membership tenure awards. It is awarded to any member who achieves the milestone of 1015 MOTY points during a continuous period of membership. The tally commences from 2013 when MOTY became a Club-wide award with all Club events being considered in their determination, including Chapter events and motorsport. Only four members have achieved the lofty summit. This award recognises their sustained commitment to the Club over many years of event attendance, organising events, and contributions of stories and photos for our website and magazine.

What's so special about the number 1015, and why is it called the MXV award?

Obviously, we are a Club dedicated to the

appreciation of the Mazda MX-5. The letters M and X happen to be Roman numerals (M is 1000, X is 10), while 5 corresponds to the letter V. Hence, MX-5 can be represented by the sum of these numbers, 1015, and the letters MXV. A tally of 1015 MOTY points was considered to be an appropriate criteria for the MXV award.

Recipients of the MXV Award are presented with a special metal badge. The first recipients of this award, and the number of MOTY points each has earned up to the 2020 AGM, are:

Barry Luttrell (1066 points)

Barry joined the Club in October 2012 and after a gradual start with Hunter Chapter, he became Event Secretary for our track days in 2015, following the retirement of Zan Menzel. He continues in this role today. Barry was Convenor of Hunter Chapter in 2018-2019, has organised many runs, and regularly contributes stories and photos. Barry was Club MOTY Runner-Up in 2017 and Hunter Chapter Motorsport MOTY in 2017.

Bryan Hicks (1199 points)



Bryan joined the Club in July 2016 after attending three events as a visitor, and before he bought his first MX-5. Bryan has been Convenor of Sydney Chapter since 2017, typically organising and attending at least one run or social gathering every week. He is also a very active motorsport competitor at our track days. In 2017, Bryan was awarded Club NMOTY, Illawarra Chapter MOTY, and Sydney Chapter MOTY.

Rob Wilkins (1338 points)

Rob joined the Club in February 2016 and immediately made a huge impact with his camera. "Wilko" typically attends a couple events every week, sometimes 2-3 in a day, and generously shares his photos for the appreciation of all - especially our motorsport competitors. Our magazine has benefitted enormously from his contributions.

Rob is a regular at Sydney

Chapter runs, and is the only member to have participated in events with every Chapter of the Club ... except for South Coast (COVID prevented that this year!). Rob was awarded Club NMOTY in 2016, Club MOTY in 2017, and Sydney Chapter MOTY in 2019.

Bryan Shedden (1659 points)

Bryan joined the Club in February 2009 and has served as a Committee member since October 2010 in the roles of Publications Officer (2010-2012), President (2012-2016), and Membership Database Secretary (2016-present). His MOTY points are spread across attendance, organisation, officiating, and story/photo contributions, primarily with Motorsport, Illawarra Chapter and All Club events. Bryan was awarded the President's Award in 2011 and Life Membership in 2015.



Run With It

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

EASY

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

CRUISER

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

LONG

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

HARD

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

CHALLENGING

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

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

Beautiful Bodalla

SOUTH COAST CHAPTER

Words • Bill Short

Pics • Anne Zattera • Bob Downing • Anda Clayton

Friday August 28, 2020

Five MX5s departed the Heritage Bakery at Bodalla on a glorious late winter morning for the first leg of our drive to Mossy Point en-route to Bodalla. With the tops down we paused at Ulladulla RSL to regroup before heading on to Batemans Bay.

After all the recent rain the countryside was green and bush fire affected areas seem to be recovering well.

Bar intermittent roadworks rectifying damage from the recent bushfires the trip was uneventful until we

reached Batemans Bay bridge works where the "Bolt Fairy" decided to insert a roofing bolt into my rear tyre.

We regrouped for an unscheduled pit stop at Hanging Rock where Bob kindly offered to lend me the non-existent spare from his ND.

The remaining four cars with Brian in the lead left for Mossy Point while Rose and I went looking for a tyre shop to extract the bolt.

Fortunately, we ended up at Tyre Torque where Adam Pike repaired the

tyre and had us on our way to re-join the others at Mossy Point within 20 minutes.

Mossy Point is a great location for a socially distanced morning tea stop where we were joined by Janet and Malcom in their NA.

After a pleasant stop the group left for Bodalla minus Bob and Linda who had to leave us.

The drive from Mossy Point to Bodalla was a perfect MX-5 run, great scenery, pleasant road and glorious weather.

We had a look through the shops at Bodalla.

Bill was disappointed the bakery didn't sell rock cakes, Brian found a magical \$5 putter that was going to improve his golf game and we all completed the local council's survey on what need to be done to improve Bodalla as a tourist spot.

After that we headed to the back deck of the Bodalla Cheese Factory for a socially distanced lunch.

All in all another top day out with the MX-5 Club.



Good Things Come in Small Packages

RPM CHAPTER

Words • Jean Cook

Pics • Gillian Fletcher

Wednesday October 7, 2020

Perhaps that headline should be "Good runs come in short distances."

This one only ended up being 53km, but it took us through some lovely countryside and to some areas in my neighbourhood that I did not know existed.

We met at our favourite meeting point, Glenbrook, close to coffee shops and toilets.

We then headed through Springwood and stopped at the Hawkesbury Lookout.



It was great to see all the green grass around after so many years of brown.

There are a number of horse studs and adjustment paddocks around that area, so it all looked lush.

We then had a spirited run down through the hairpins towards Windsor.

On our way we went past the location of the "Body Farm" where forensic scientists learn their trade.

After driving through Richmond we turned onto some back roads and



headed into unknown territory at the back of the Richmond Air Force base.

There we passed though some more horse studs and adjustment fields.

The horses were curious as we went past all turning to look at these funny little cars cruising by.

I was really surprised at the number studs all with lovely white wooden fencing, close to the riverall very green.

After the horses we moved into turf farms with kilometres of beautiful smooth green paddocks and not dandelion or weed to be seen.

As we got closer to the river again we saw all the market gardens growing

veggies for our dinner.

Our final destination was Macquarie Park on the banks of the river for lunch. The kiosk was open so we were able to order and enjoyed each other's company.

It happened to be Brigid's birthday and as part of my Covid (keeping sane) activity I had by chance baked a cake, but had no candles.

We sang Happy Birthday as she cut the cake.

For me it was a short but surprisingly pleasant run on unfamiliar roads very close to home.



Cause Celebre...

Club member, Chris Jirgen, took part in the annual Camp Quality Classic Cruise on September 13 around Canberra.

The idea is for lovers of classic cars to gather for a cruise around our National Capital to raise funds for Camp Quality. The annual event is open to vehicles 20 years or older, luxury exotics, company-branded cars, members of car clubs, unique vehicles and motorbikes.

COVID limited 2020 to 100 vehicles..

Participants mustered at their designated time and start point, landside in Fairbairn, in preparation for the tour.

Entrants started their engines and cruised (under escort) across the Canberra Airport airfield.

From there, they headed off on a meandering route through Canberra finishing at Black Mountain for a photo op before heading off to Maccas for a feed and to collect show bags full of goodies.

The Classic Cruise raises money for Camp Quality through event registrations and by attracting donations. Entrants are encouraged to share their fundraising page to raise as much as

they can, with the top fundraisers winning pole position to lead the Cruise. With so many events cancelled this year due to COVID, charities like Camp Quality need as much assistance as they can get.

All monies raised is donated to Camp Quality, raising much-needed funds for children affected by cancer.



NSW SUPERSPRINTS

ROUND 6

Words • Joe Kovacic

Pics • Joe Kovacic

Sunday November 1, 2020

SMSP

It was a gloomy, damp start to Round 6 hosted by ARDC Club at Sydney Motorsport Park.

A drying track dictated a cautious start for group 1 cars but by the 2nd run conditions had deteriorated to wet conditions which

slowed the lap times considerably. After the lunch break a drying track led to some super quick lap times for the rest of the afternoon. Fastest lap time of the day went to Douglas Barry in his Lola T8750 with a 1.28.27.

Luke Kovacic was once again the fastest MX-5 on the day in his SE with a hot time of 1.45.07. Because there were only 80 cars entered for the event in 6 run groups we managed to get 5 sessions with 20 timed laps. There were

3 major incidents on the day involving 3 non-MX-5 drivers putting their cars into the wall in the wet conditions. Thank you to all of our 11 MX-5 Club drivers who represented the club against a barrage of ARDC drivers.

Our eleven driver's results are as follows

Malcolm Steel	1st Place	Class 2R2	1.52.66
Russ Maxwell	2nd Place	Class 2R3	1.50.28
Mike Kelsey	4th Place	Class 2R3	1.55.81
Marty Voormeulen	1st Place	Class 2S2	1.56.09
Ian Combes	2nd Place	Class 2S2	1.58.66
Jamie Martin	1st Place	Class RR1	1.58.73
Ken Hardy	1st Place	Class RR2	1.55.66
Les Patterson	2nd Place	Class RR2	1.58.25
Dave Alland	5th Place	Class RR2	2.03.02
Luke Kovacic	2nd Place	Class TA1	1.45.08
Greg Bunn	4th Place	Class TA1	1.58.94



NatMeet XIV Update

Everyone would be aware that Covid-19 meant it was not possible to run NatMeet as scheduled in April this year. It has been a challenging time for many this year and the impact in the NatMeet Committee has also been a challenge.

After we postponed the event from April we thought it might be possible to run it later in 2020. That obviously has not been possible so we thought about having it in April 2021 but have decided against that because of the ongoing uncertainties with restrictions, borders etc. We are also very conscious of our demographics and the fact that a vaccine may still be some way off. So the NSW MX-5 Committee in conjunction with the NatMeet XIV Committee has decided the following:

1. NatMeet XIV will be held in 2022 and will be hosted by the NSW MX-5 Club;
2. The date is yet to be finalised- however April 2022 is most likely;
3. A location is also not finalised - however we hope to have it in the Hunter and possibly at Cypress Lakes Resort - as details will need to be renegotiated;
4. For those who were still registered details will be sent regarding a refund of fees paid;
5. For those NSW members who had ordered a NatMeet shirt an email will be sent to provide options.
6. The NatMeet XIV Committee will be reconstituted in 2021 to arrange the 2022 event and communicate the details through all State Committees.

On behalf of the current committee we would like to extend our appreciation to all those people who have assisted us, particularly the hardworking members of the Hunter Chapter.

Your current NatMeet XIV Committee

Peter & Jill Feutrill

George & Jenny Boyko

Elaine & David Gazzard

WOLLONGONG BOTANIC GARDENS

Words • Jeff Rowe • Pam Rowe

Pics • Chrissie Zaremba • John Zaremba

Sunday October 6, 2020

ILLAWARRA CHAPTER

At last some of the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. Not early enough though for us to change

the destination, again, of our run to a botanic garden.

Mount Annan was our original choice, but due to regional boundaries restrictions, this was changed to Wollongong.

Why we ever thought about going anywhere else made us wonder, especially when we saw how beautiful our own City Botanic Gardens are.

Spring is an amazing time to visit any garden.

Our group, including new members Bret and Dianne Tierney, all arrived at the starting time keen and ready to go.

First job was to welcome Brett and Dianne and the Chapter Co-Convenors, Jeff and Pam, present them with a Chapter Cap.

After doing our pre-run briefing we started our run from Mount Keira Lookout to the world famous lookout at Bald Hill.

You have to be impressed with the glorious view from

here down the coast toward the Sea Cliff Bridge and Wollongong.

Our picnic style morning tea was shared looking over this view with the thought of us driving across

the Sea Cliff Bridge on our way to Wollongong Botanic Garden.

Not disappointed with the drive across what has become the most photographed bridge in the

country, we continued along the coast checking out the beach views and enjoying the smell of the fresh sea air.

Turning before Bulli Pass we then headed toward Wollongong arriving at the Botanic Garden to find a parking spot.

We were met at the garden by another Illawarra Chapter member, Adele Weatherall.

Picnic tables were found close to the Duck Pond for us all to enjoy our picnic lunch.

After lunch Adele shared some history of the formation of the Botanic Garden and club members walked around them with Adele pointing out different plant species and

different style gardens...

The weather was kind to us on the day so we all enjoyed one of those great relaxed, less traffic,

easier to find a park mid-week runs.

Morning tea and lunch was pretty good too.

We're out 'Living the Dream' in our MX-5.



MX-5 CLUB TRACK DAY

ROUND 8

Words • Joe Kovacic

Pics • Rob Wilko

Sunday November 8, 2020

WAKEFIELD PARK



A fresh spring morning greeted a healthy field of 68 enthusiastic motorsport competitors at Round 8 of our last Wakefield Park Track Day for 2020.

Before anything else, on behalf of all motorsport competitors in the club we should thank our Race Secretary, Ian Combes for organising numerous motorsport events in this very difficult COVID-19 season.

Club President, Keith Monaghan presented Ian with a special award for

all the hard work he put in this year.

Race proceedings started at 9.30am with Group 1 cars going out first in fine and sunny conditions. Clerk of Course, David Lawler, welcomed 7 nervous first time competitors who followed Luke Kovacic in his pace car for a practice session.

On the day, there were only some minor spins offs but one major incident involving an MX-5 turbo race car catching fire.

"Fireman" Russell

Maxwell, and the track fire services were quick to respond and put out the fire while ensuring the driver was okay.

There were a total of six run groups and we managed to give everyone 6 sessions with up to 46 timed laps. Once again the track day was run under a new simplified Class system comprising of 5 Classes including, Standard, Clubman, Super Clubman, Supersprint and Open Class.

Benchmark times are

used to award points for places in each class. This system is a lot fairer for all competitors, resulting in possible class wins for any model MX-5 from NA through to ND.

Ralph Thomson in his turbo NC clocked fastest lap time of the day in 66.93 secs.

Luke Kovacic clocked fastest naturally aspirated NC2 lap time of 69.98 secs.

Jamie Martin and Michael Demaio achieved their benchmark times.

Congratulations to all 1st Place getters in their respective classes as follows:

Michael Demaio in Standard Class in his NB8B with a time 73.68 secs at 100.02%

Jamie Martin in Clubman Class in his NA6 with a time 73.66 secs at 100.33%

Andrew Digney in Super Clubman Class in his NA6 with a time of 74.38 secs at 98.27%

Malcolm Steel in Supersprint Class in his NB8A with a time of 70.53 secs at 98.25%

Ralph Thompson in Open Class in his NC turbo Race Car with a time of 66.93 secs.

Peter Barnwell in Non MX-5 Class in his EVO 6 with a time of 67.60 secs.



30 Club Torque



MX-5 CLUB TRACK DAY'S OVERALL CLASS RESULTS 2020

Words • Joe Kovacic
Pics • Rob Wilko



Michael Demaoi	1st Place	Standard	172pts
Jason Atkins	2nd Place	Standard	122pts
Bryan Sheddan	3rd Place	Standard	116pts
Jamie Martin	1st Place	Clubman	175pts
Sean Byers	2nd Place	Clubman	110pts
Chris Barnes	3rd Place	Clubman	88pts
Andrew Digney	1st Place	Super Clubman	162pts
John Karayanis	2nd Place	Super Clubman	151pts
Gerardo Martin	3rd Place	Super Clubman	122pts
Gustavo Elias	1st Place	Supersprint	136pts
Martin Steel	2nd Place	Supersprint	114pts
Joe Kovacic	3rd Place	Supersprint	94pts
Luke Kovacic	1st Place	Open	129pts
Russ Maxwell	2nd Place	Open	108pts
Lou Lezzi	3rd Place	Open	79pts
Malcolm Fotheringham	1st Place	Non MX-5	154pts
Gerald Drechsler	2nd Place	Non MX-5	125pts
Peter Barnwell	3rd Place	Non MX-5	60pts
Kelly Fulcher	1st Place	Ladies	125pts
Yuki Chau Kam Yu	2nd Place	Ladies	102pts
Kieran Taylor	3rd Place	Ladies	86pts

Club Torque 31

SCENIC RUN TO MITTAGONG

RPM CHAPTER

Words • Jacqui Quester

Pics • Gary Joss

November 18, 2020



32 Club Torque

On this slightly overcast Wednesday morning, 10 people in six different coloured MX-5s, lined up at Mulgoa tennis courts ready for a run down to Mittagong for lunch.

The group welcomed two new members, Bruce and Annette, who were embarking on their first run with the club.

The run was led by John Molden who had to navigate and use the CB radio by himself as

unfortunately Francis was at home nursing a tummy bug. He did an excellent job in getting us to our locations.

The rain held off and it was mostly tops down as we made our way through picturesque towns to our first stop – Burragarang Lookout for morning tea.

A slight mist only served to enhance the spectacular views over Lake Burragarang, Holding over four times the capacity of Sydney Harbour the lake is the source of almost 70 per cent of Sydney's drinking water.

As a club we have been to Burragarang Lookout for a pit stop a number of times.

We have never paid an entry fee so were surprised to see parking meters in the carpark... \$4.00 entry fee for the day.

Maybe they have always been there but we just never noticed.

Onwards to Lake Alexandra Reserve. The lake started life as a dam supplying water for engines hauling coal to the

Fitzroy iron works almost 140 years ago.

The whole area has been revamped and renovated. A parkland reserve surrounds the lake and birdlife lives in profusion in the water and shores.

Some of us took a stroll around the lake while others preferred to stay in the viewing area to chat and enjoy the scenery and to make friends with a family of ducks – mum, dad and their four gorgeous ducklings.

It was almost lunch time so we got back into our little cars and headed for Mittagong RSL.

After complying with the club Covid procedures we were shown to our table to enjoy a refreshing drink and to peruse the menu.

The food was fantastic.

I can personally recommend the Boeuf Bourguignon... in other words French beef stew.

As usual, there was much laughter and storytelling at the table and a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.



NSW SUPERSPRINTS

FINAL PLACINGS 2020

Words • Joe Kovacic

The Club Championship Final Point score after the sixth and final round for 2020 has the ARDC in 1st place on 2156pts, 2nd place HSV Club 1028pts and 3rd place MX5 Club of NSW on 994pts

Accolades go to fourteen members of the club who participated.

Marty Voormeulen	Class 2S2 1st Place	Type 2S 1st Place
Luke Kovacic	Class TA1 2nd Place	Type TA 2nd Place
Ralph Thompson	Class TA1 3rd Place	Type TA 4th Place
Russell Maxwell	Class 2R3 1st Place	Type 2R 4th Place
Malcolm Steel	Class 2R2 1st Place	Type 2R 8th Place
Mike Kelsey	Class 2R3 7th Place	Type 2R 14th Place
Jamie Martin	Class RR1 1st Place	Type RR 8th Place
Les Patterson	Class RR2 1st Place	Type RR 6th Place
David Alland	Class RR2 3rd Place	Type RR 10th Place
Ken Hardy	Class RR2 6th Place	Type RR 15th Place
Ian Coombes	Class 2S2 2nd Place	Type 2S 6th Place
Jaxon Fraser	Class 2S3 2nd Place	Type 2S 8th Place
Greg Bunn	Class TA1 7th Place	Type TA 14th Place
Aristo Pieratos	Class TA1 8th Place	Type TA 17th Place

It would be pretty awesome to improve the club's results next and at least swap places with the HSV Club.

Taking on the ARDC is a much bigger ask.

So, if you're interested registering your interest early for the 2021 NSW Supersprints.

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GRANDPA'S AXE

(DON'T SHOW MY WIFE)

HUNTER CHAPTER

Words • Andrew Digney

Pics • Andrew Digney • Kim Jacobs

What is the saying about Grandpa's axe?

The head and the handle have been replaced many times, but it is still Grandpa's favourite axe.

This relates to my NA and its conversion from beat up old hack into a fun track toy.

It began in December 2015 after I test drove an ND then ordered one the next day. It arrived in March 2016.

After 2 years of social runs and numerous club motorsport events, the feats of Jamie Martin in his NA6 inspired me to acquire a \$2000 NA as a cheap track car.

What do they say about best laid plans?

The journey has been interesting but not as "budget" as intended.

The idea was to modify the car ready for the 2018 Phillip Island Regularity. When I got the car from

the dealer, the dipstick was dry, so I swung into Supercheap, dropped in 500ml of engine flush for the 15 minute drive home ready in for a quick service and oil change and yes, the dipstick was still dry. The South Australian registered NA had now turned into a \$3000 car with a blue slip, rego and basic service completed.

Then the fun began.

The carpet and insulation were rotten and the poorly installed alarm and central locking were unnecessary, so the whole interior was removed, the wiring

returned to stock and the carpet and insulation removed with the interior rhino lined for that hard-wearing faux carpet look.

The car must have had an interesting past as various items were under the carpet including an unused prophylactic, cigarette papers and a politician's business card...

I fitted a roll bar and race seat and my son helped re-install the dash to get the car going, I was stabbing the accelerator intermittently and smiling at the smooth idle and fantastic 29 year old throttle response.

Only problem was, after 10 minutes of engine running, I saw a large pond of coolant on the garage floor.



34 Club Torque



Around that time, we found out our regularity team missed the 2018 cut, so I tacked on an engine rebuild to the expanding to-do list.

Thankfully, my brother is an engine reconditioner and surprisingly the engine was still in reasonable shape. The bores were glazed but a light hone allowed us to re-use the original pistons.

Initial drives also revealed some very tired suspension bushes and so began a 9 month rebuild.

Mechanically, pretty much the only things that have not been touched are the gearbox and diff' internals.

On closer inspection, the body was in good condition. The car, showed virtually no signs of rust, a few pock marks under the sodden floor insulation from the leaking roof, surface rust under the battery tray in the boot and the drivers mirror just fell off from retained water in the shell.

It had been resprayed but showed no signs of panel beating other than some bog in a front guard. The soft top was on its way out and after the rear window zip failed, the rear section ripped so I sourced a hard top. The biggest problem with 30

year old cars is every time you touch something, it breaks, so I adopted an 'if you don't need it, remove it' approach for its track life.

Due to the bigger-than-planned rebuild, some cheaper parts (wheels, tyres, shocks and springs) were sold and newer parts were purchased as required by the bigger, better, quicker, faster mandate.

Below is a breakdown of the costs and subsequently, the reason for the second half of the title, 'DON'T SHOW MY WIFE'

ENGINE \$4930 - engine re-condition \$1700, header ceramic coating \$280, catalytic converter \$300, muffler \$200, radiator \$150, heavy duty clutch \$200, clutch master and slave cylinder and hose \$240, cold air intake \$400, valve cover ceramic coating \$50, coolant re-route \$300, silicon coolant hoses and clamps \$150, Maruha stainless coolant pipe \$80, MazdaSpeed engine mounts \$140, alternator recondition \$120, short shifter kit \$180, temperature sensors \$140, miscellaneous (seals, gaskets, consumables) \$300

SUSPENSION/WHEELS/TYRES/ BRAKES \$5630 – coil overs \$1350,

wheels \$1250, suspension, diff and steering bushes \$650, race brake pads \$410, tyres \$380, brake rotors \$130, braided brake lines, \$150, brake calliper overhaul kit \$150, wheel nuts \$100, brake master cylinder stopper \$90, sway bars \$560, end links \$150, extended ball joints \$260

INTERIOR \$2990 - roll bar \$500, driver's race seat \$350, seat rails \$150, passengers race seat \$170, rhino lining \$200, console delete and window switches \$350, stereo, speakers, antenna \$350, ABS door panels \$120, driver's door regulator \$300, window guides \$50, steering wheel, hub and offset \$180, instrument hood \$200, fire extinguisher \$20, floor mats \$30, clutch/brake pedal covers \$20

EXTERIOR \$3215 - fibreglass hard top \$1400, vented headlight cover \$120, front spoiler \$180, turn signal indicators \$300, fibreglass boot lid \$385, chassis rail braces \$300, radiator intake grille \$90, tow hooks \$140, fixed headlights \$300

PURCHASE PRICE AND ENGINEERING \$3300 – car \$2850, engineering for race seat, roll bar, cold air intake and coil overs \$450

Worth it?

You bet.



Bungonia Double Loop

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Rod Nicholas • Maryanne Nicholas

Pics • Rod Nicholas

Saturday October 17, 2020

The weather forecast was not looking promising. Almost certain rain, maybe heavy at times, possible thunderstorm. 'Oh, goody' I mumbled as I made my first coffee for the day, 'just what we want for a run'.

But by the time I'd got the car out of the garage, the sky was not so bleak. I was humming Here Comes the Sun as we motored our way to the start point in Bungendore. I left early enough to grab another coffee at a lovely little café and sauntered up to the car

snaking line of cars – as we zoomed (at legal speeds) through the countryside, roof down, warm wind blowing through our hair, listening to the hum of the exhaust; just enjoying the ride. The countryside was looking good. Recent rains had greened the paddocks and patches of attractive Salvation Jane (Patterson's Curse to non-apiarists) and canola brightened the vista. Our final car joined us as we trundled through Tarago and now we were eleven. The last 25km before we

But we were good little boys and girls and took it easy as we enjoyed the day.

There's not much in Bungonia. According to the ever-reliable internet 'Bungonia is a tiny town made notable only by the presence of the oldest Roman Catholic church in Australia and the beautiful Bungonia State Recreation Area' (<https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/bungonia-nsw>).

We didn't attempt to explore the reserve but stopped for a while by the church to take a few pictures and have a chat. Even if it is the oldest RC church in Australia, it is quite small, perhaps as befitting its humble development and location, and the external appearance is decidedly plain. Even so, it took eight years to complete by a couple of ex-convicts who started work in 1839. Unfortunately, it was not open, although a peek inside was possible through the rear window. It's not clear whether the church is still in use, but if so, I expect there are but a few parishioners.

We left Bungonia in sunshine and headed on to



Goulburn along the lovely Mountain Ash Road, a quick 25km away. We noticed a surprisingly large number of farms and properties along the way, a few bright with canola fields. Entering the outskirts of Australia's first inland city, we chucked a hard right and ascended a narrow road to the landmark Rocky Hill War Memorial and Museum, perched high above the city. As Run Leaders we had the 'delight' of spooking a couple of kangaroos, one of which seemed intent on joining my wife in the passenger seat. Between the roos and a local in his ute, who clearly believed he owned the whole road and pushed several of us off into the verge, I was almost surprised we made it to the top intact. But we did, and with just enough room for us in the carpark, we wandered through the museum and took in the sights from the top of the tower. The visit was a first for many of our group. It is



park. Barely minutes later I had 18 of the registered twenty participants gathering around for the pre-run briefing, all eager to jump in the cars, drop the lid and set out on the road. Our last two participants would join us later in Tarago, having already travelled 120 km just to take part.

The day was warming, and the traffic was minimal – no one interrupted our

reached Bungonia was speed signed at 80kmh, probably because there are a few one-way bridges to cross and plenty of 'hidden' driveways into properties. It's a pity because the road is sound and for much of it fairly recently upgraded.

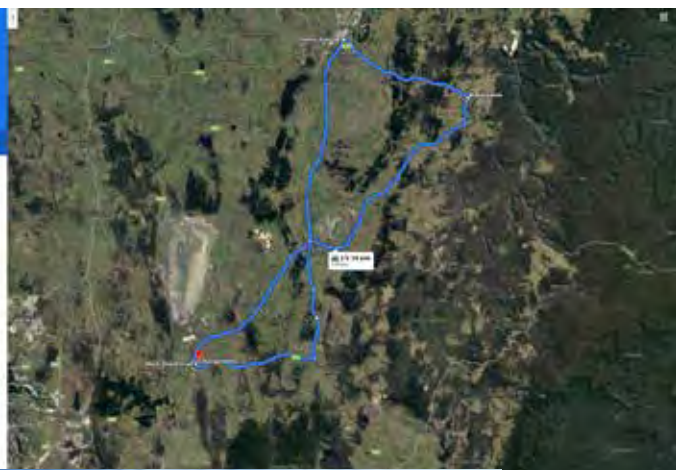




a genuinely interesting and worthwhile stop if you are in town.

I thought we might be talked out by the time we left Rocky Hill and made our short way into Belmore Park for a picnic. I was wrong. There was plenty to talk about in the lovely grounds of the park, with its mini floriade to dazzle the eyes. We gave local café Roses a decent work out with our takeaway orders for coffee and lunch. With the threat of rain (according to our Bureau of Meteorology), I issued starter's orders and was immediately ignored. Eventually we were underway. The return route was back to Bungendore along a couple of different roads, all intended to create an untidy figure-eight on the map (hence the 'double loop'), although a few decided to take the short cut straight back to Canberra along

the highway. The threatened rain hardly eventuated (you could almost count the spots on the windscreen) but nevertheless several of us had weakened and put the top up. (I received a later report that at least one car got home, topless and dry.) Strangely enough, many of the group regathered at Bungendore for more coffee, a spot of shopping and another round or two of solving all the problems of the world. (We're going to need a few more runs if we are going to get them all solved) All up, we clocked up around 190km from the official start to finish, and had a damn good time doing it.



Wollondilly Wander

BREAKFAST CLUB

Words • Stephen Lord

Pics • Stephen Lord

Sunday, November 22, 2020



Where once stood a level crossing spanning the then Hume Highway, a band of eight MX-5s (we accepted David's Abarth as one of ours) gathered in Narellan at an American fast food outlet with a Scottish name, ready to tame the winding country roads and lanes of Wollondilly and Wingecaribee. After a quick briefing from convener Andrew, the convoy set an appropriate northern course on The Northern Road towards Cobbitty.

This quaint village served as a warm-up for a brisk run up Werombi Road, with some interesting curves through Theresa Park, before joining Silverdale Road and heading for The Oaks, where we made a short stop. Brett then

led us around his "home turf", breezing through Belimba Park and into Oakdale, before turning onto Barkers Lodge Road for some velocity time as we closed in on Lakesland. The dips and crests of Fergusson, Ruddocks and Scroggies Roads provided some challenges for drivers and cars before we rolled to our second stop in the main street of Thirlmere.

The plan was for Steve to set some pace along Barbours Road and Wilson Drive, taking in the hamlets and villages of Couridjah, Buxton, Balmoral, Hill Top and Colo Vale. Sadly, this was thwarted by some local traffic, but our members exercised patience and restraint, and we were able to put in a more concerted

effort along Drapers Road into Willow Vale and Mittagong, where we followed the Old Hume Highway through Balaclava and onto Wombeyan Caves Road. This route, finishing via Greenhills Road, presents an alternative, scenic path to the township of Berrima.

The early patrons were tucking into their smashed avocado and sipping their lattes as we passed several cafes in this historic town, pushing farther south until we finally joined the boring tarmac of the M31 and cruised down to Elling Forest Winery, where Andrew had organised a table for us. The menu was limited, but the quality was superb as we enjoyed an al fresco

breakfast and, in true BreakFast Club style, lively conversation and good-natured banter. The venue is within easy reach of metro Sydney, and this author would recommend it for a refreshment stop, be it morning/afternoon tea or lunch.

Once again, Andrew had curated an enjoyable yet stimulating run that still allowed everyone to be home for Sunday lunch. As it was our last for 2020, on behalf of the BreakFast Club, I thank all who have joined us during this challenging year. Some traditions may have had to be modified, but our spirit stays true. A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all, and we hope to see you in 2021.





Running the Sheep Boorowa, Binalong, Bowning

CANBERRA CHAPTER

Words • Peter Wilson

Pics • Julie Austin

Sunday, October 4, 2020

In non-COVID times, the Running of the Sheep and Wool Festival at Boorowa is an annual feature on the district calendar for the long weekend in October. Like so many other events it was cancelled this year, but the Canberra Chapter thought “what the heck we’ll go anyway”.

Six red cars and two grey cars, with one late scratching, took off for a drive through the countryside which was at its very best – full dams, lambs everywhere, canary yellow canola crops next to that pretty, purple pest known as Paterson’s Curse, and acres of green spring grass and wheat crops.

Despite COVID, the farmers should be happy this year.

It was a leisurely run and we allowed plenty of time to enjoy our first coffee break and explore Yass on foot for a change. Being only 30 minutes from Canberra, we normally zoom past Yass and never take the time to explore what this lovely town has to offer. From Yass we turned off the Hume Highway onto the Lachlan Valley Way heading to Boorowa. Again this is a town where you might stop at the bakery as you pass through the main street. Instead, we took our time and enjoyed our picnic in the beautiful park behind

the main street, before driving around the backstreets to explore Boorowa’s heritage which is hidden off the main route.

The real highlight of the trip was our visit to Corcoran’s Plains homestead, just a few kms west of Boorowa. The ancestors of our host, Eddy Corcoran, went there as convicts in the early 1800s and established this beautiful property and homestead. It is still in the Corcoran family and, while it is a working farm, the

homestead is a regular venue for weddings and other events. In such a beautiful setting, our cars looked superb lined up across the front driveway in front of the old house.

From there we leisurely made our way back home through Binalong and Bowning, stopping off to take photos of the canola crops, which were in full bloom.

Even without the Running of the Sheep, it was superb day and we all learnt a bit more about these towns that are so close to home.



Run to Mowbray Park

RPM CHAPTER

Words • Chris Wyatt

Pics • Chris Wyatt

Wednesday September 23, 2020



I've been on many runs down to the southern highlands via The Oaks and Picton because it gives access to many great MX-5 roads.

Turning right from Montpelier Drive onto Barkers Lodge road and sharp left into Mowbray Park Road, I have often been intrigued by a pair of large white farm gates of some early vintage leading onto a wide driveway disappearing into the valley. Welcome to Mowbray Park Farm.

Grant and Jackie Briggs promised us an interesting day and boy were they right. Having taken a long and convoluted track to get there from Mulgoa via Picton and Warragamba catchment, we turned down this long driveway to be welcomed by a beautiful green valley dotted with farm buildings large and small.

Grant led us down to a huge barn where we parked up our seven cars and were introduced to Blair Briggs the owner of the property.

The history of this place is huge starting some 198 years ago and including many famous and infamous names that have been involved with the farm since its inception. Please take the time to research the place. If you love Australian history as much as I do you will be enthralled.

Being a run under Covid rules we were having a "picnic" with food from home.

The surprises kept coming, Blair introduced us to his Michelin hatted chef who cooked our meat for all 13 of us to go with the vintage Aldi wine that we'd brought for the occasion.

After feasting we were taken on a quick tour of the homestead and its outbuildings many of them restored to their original luxury standard. This place is big and not only provides family farm stays but large school farm outings and catered conferences.

Put it on your short list for a day out.



St Albans

SYDNEY CHAPTER

Words • Mark Garvan

Pics • Greg Unger

Thursday November 26, 2020

"Eleven MX-5ers met up for a mid-week run through Sydney's northern outskirts to an historic pub at St Albans for lunch. A couple of ferries, lots of lush countryside and even a few peacocks made for a great day out ..."



Club Torque 41

Life With An MX-5 NC

Words • Peter Barnwell

I'm lucky to have both an NB of my own and access to an NC in the garage and it's always a coin toss as to which one I will take for a spin. Both look great and both are entertaining driver's cars.

The older NB delivers more of a raw feel compared to the newer NC which feels more civilised.

One was born in the 1990s the other in the mid noughties, roughly a decade of difference.

What I can't understand is the derision some people aim at the NC with detractors calling it a rear wheel drive hatchback with the roof sliced off..... cruel and completely unfounded.

Sure, the NC is slightly larger and slightly heavier and doesn't have double wishbone suspension all round but it's still a great car to drive, to look at and to be in.

All the MX-5 essentials are there such as the Power Plant Chassis, 50:50 weight distribution, front mid-

engine (behind the front axle), rear wheel drive, short throw gearbox, (simplified one latch) soft top, better brakes and more go compared to the NB.

The 2006 NC I "borrow" has a mere 60,000km on the clock and drives like a new car even at nearly 15 years of age. It handles predictably, sounds awesome and never fails to put a smile on your dial, even in the rain. You can drive it all day and get out at the end in decent condition for dinner.

Although there have been some EFI wiring issues caused by heat retention under the plastic engine cover, the Series 1 engine (with the less desirable cast iron crank) seems bulletproof with few problems in "normal" or even excessive use.

This car has done maybe 50 track days and about half a dozen regularities, some motorkhanas and umpteen social drives and is tight as a drum except for the

front sway bar bushes (Racing Beat bar fitted) that wore out and started rattling.

It's still on the original discs with one light touch up on the grinding machine and has gone through maybe half a dozen sets of front pads, mostly Hawk Blues. It has only used two sets of rear pads and the standard discs are untouched.

The ultra-reliable engine, transmission and peripherals make the NC a super cost effective way into grass roots motorsport.

Then, as a bonus, you can happily tag along on social drives with other club members.

The NC referred to gets only Nulon full synthetic 10W-40 oil changed after every motorsport event along with the filter.

The spark plugs have been changed once and, with the new ones in, the car grew another leg. Don't believe the

assertion that platinum plugs last 100,000km.

The modular 2.0-litre L-series engine (it comes in capacities ranging from 1.8-litres through to 2.5), has plenty of pull churning out a handy 118kW and 188N but feels stronger than that. Fuel economy hovers around the 7 – 8 litres/100km mark.

Of the new cars I have driven this year (about 60 of them) I still rate the NC as a more engaging drive with better manners and drive feel compared to sporty cars costing a lot more and with a lot more power. And, apart from high threshold ABS, it doesn't have any intrusive "driver assist" technology spoiling the fun.

At the launch of the then new NC back in 2005, I was smitten by the Porsche-like steering, slick gear change and strong brakes of the Series 1 model.



It was every bit as good to drive as the NB with the benefit of being designed in the 21st century using 21st century components, materials and technology.

And it was the first to be designed using Mazda's "Jinba Ittai" design language – that malarkey about rider and horse being as one..

The NC was built by Mazda under Ford control as Mazda had been in financial poo a few times over the years due to economic down-turns and the like so they signed up in a partnership back in 1974.

Ford gradually increased their share in Mazda to 33 per cent... a controlling interest, which explains why the NC and other Mazda engines are found in Ford vehicles.

Mazda was a great source of excellent engines for Ford, not the other way around.

As you'd expect, not only engines crossed over between the two automakers as ancillary

NC = Nasty Comments? No Chance Nice Car No Compromise Nil Criticism

components were also common between the two, hence the FoMoCo brand on plenty of bits you see on an NC and an NB.

Thankfully, Ford is gone from Mazda now.

Apart from the multi-link rear suspension, the Series 1 had a cast iron crankshaft, possibly due to cost constraints.

They went back to a forged steel crank on the series II NC that allowed the 2.0-litre all-alloy engine to

rev higher to around 7500rpm.

That gives the Series 2 an edge at track days as it can spin out further through the gears for theoretically faster lap times.

But you don't see too many heavily modified NCs around unlike NBs and NAs for that matter, many of which have been turbocharged.

This is because of two things, the NC engine is the other way around compared to the NB with the exhaust on the driver's side... the same side as the

steering column which makes fitting a turbo somewhat difficult.

The other issue is the NC's complex CanBus wiring that makes changing to a tuneable ECU seriously problematic. You can't just go out and buy a Haltech ECU and start tuning your NC.

Doesn't really matter because it's easy to optimise your NC according to your needs. It will never fail to put a smile on your face.

And that's possibly the main appeal of our favourite sports car.





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